

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2644/07
by Hiltrud Breyer (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Trade in stem cells and organs from newborn children killed in Ukraine

According to a BBC report, stem cells and organs removed from newborn children who have been killed are being traded in Ukraine. Ukrainian mothers report that in 2002, in a clinic in Kharkiv, their newborn children were taken from them and that they were told, with the flimsiest of explanations, that the children had died. However, the parents were not allowed to see the bodies. In 2003, on the authorities' orders, the bodies of a number of newborn children were exhumed from one of the hospital cemeteries. It emerged that organs and, presumably, stem cells too had been removed from them. According to a Ukrainian NGO, more than 300 newborn children could have been killed between 2001 and 2003 for the same purposes. In the meantime, the Council of Europe itself is investigating these incidents.

1. Does the Commission know about these incidents? Have stem cells and organs from newborn children been brought into EU Member States from Ukraine? Can the Commission confirm that there is trade in organs and stem cells?
2. The Council of Europe has pledged support for Ukraine in clearing up these cases. Will the Commission offer its support, too, to the Ukraine authorities?
3. Does the Commission know about similar cases in other European states? If so, which?
4. There have also been reports that, in Ukraine, there is trade in stem cells removed from aborted fetuses. Can the Commission confirm that?
5. Should it be confirmed that stem cells and organs are being traded, will the Commission act to stop that trade?