

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3604/09
by Richard Corbett (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Diving qualifications

Is the Commission familiar with the UK's HSE commercial diving qualification, which has amongst the highest standards in the world and is widely recognised in countries both within and outside the European Union? Is the Commission aware of the failure of the Dutch authorities to recognise the British diving qualification and of their insistence that divers prove instead that they meet certain requirements for a Dutch diving qualification? The proof required involves travel to the Netherlands for an interview, the checking of diving logbooks, and often a supplementary in-water test. These requirements are extremely onerous (costing €375, excluding tax, just to obtain the Dutch certificate, plus the cost of flights and accommodation), and are also redundant given that the British diving qualification is already seen as the global gold standard. Furthermore, each year there appear to be only two assessment days, and a limit to the maximum number of divers permitted to qualify.

Will the Commission investigate matters and consider taking action against the Dutch authorities for restrictive practices which hinder the free movement of workers, and will they also consider investigating the wider issue of the recognition of diving qualifications across the EU?