

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2035/10
by Riikka Manner (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Use of methanol in windscreen washer fluids

Since Finland joined the EU it has had to allow the use of methanol in windscreen washer fluids. Methanol is a poison which, on account of EU legislation, can be freely sold with no restrictions whatsoever.

Because they are cheap and easily obtainable, methanol-based windscreen washer fluids readily lend themselves to abuse and are used regrettably often to induce intoxication. Methanol abuse of this kind has been found to have caused hundreds of deaths, the victims in many cases being young people who drank the methanol in the washer fluids in order to get drunk.

Given the situation in Finland in particular, it would be useful if the sale of methanol in the form of windscreen washer fluid were examined more closely. There are other fluids on the market intended to serve a similar purpose, but they do not contain methanol. In addition, the denaturation of methanol-based fluids should, to my mind, be made compulsory: if they tasted and smelt unpleasant, they would be less likely to be used for intoxication.

Is the Commission aware of the numerous deaths in Finland caused by methanol? What steps will it take?