

ORAL QUESTION H-0498/99  
for Question Time at the part-session in October I 1999  
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Pierre Schori  
to the Commission

Subject: Aid for civilian population of Serbia

With their economy and production in free fall, the people of Serbia are heading for a difficult winter. The reprehensible policies pursued by the regime are having severe effects on many innocent people. Popular discontent is directed at both the regime and the outside world which is regarded as compounding the suffering with indiscriminate sanctions. It is important that the EU does not inadvertently strengthen Milosevic's position but that it should make a contribution in the form of targeted, democratically controlled humanitarian aid. In the light of this situation, is the Commission prepared to consider measures in essential areas to assist the Serbian civilian population? Consideration should be given primarily to the growing environmental threats posed by destroyed sewage plants, oil refineries and chemical factories in Novi Sad and Pancevo, for example, and to exempting young students from the academic embargo which is cutting them off from foreign educational institutions and other contacts, making their future bleak and encouraging a brain-drain so damaging to the country. Such measures would relieve the Serbian people's suffering, make it more difficult for Milosevic to demonise the outside world and strengthen democratic forces.

Tabled: 22.09.1999

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