

ORAL QUESTION H-0712/99

for Question Time at the part-session in December 1999

pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure

by Pierre Schori

to the Commission

Subject: The assumption of responsibility within the Commission and the irregularities at the office of the Commission representation in Stockholm

The reports of unlawful remuneration payments by the Commission representation in Stockholm have shocked many Swedes and aroused their distrust of the EU. People are asking how the Commission can be expected to manage its other payments if it cannot even do so in a small office with a staff of no more than 20 people. This bad impression is further strengthened by the unavailability of senior staff for comment and the fact that the person in charge at the time is suddenly on holiday. The absence of any sense of responsibility was the main criticism in the report by the Committee of Independent Experts which led to the resignation of the previous Commission. The President of the Court of Auditors has pointed out that, when irregularities are revealed, senior Commission staff all too often claim that they did not know what was going on. Many will regard the Commission's handling of this matter in Stockholm as a test of the new openness and sense of responsibility it promised. This is a matter of principle, regardless of the small sums that may have been involved. It is also important for Swedish confidence in the EU that the Swedish police be given access to all the material it needs for its investigation.

How is the Commission going to bring about an immediate change regarding the assumption of responsibility so that the public is not again to be forced to associate the Commission with a combination of irregularities and senior staff who shirk their responsibilities?

Tabled: 19.11.1999

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