

ORAL QUESTION H-0376/03

for Question Time at the part-session in July 2003

pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure

by Lennart Sacrédeus

to the Commission

Subject: Member State's tax subsidy of abortion for other EU citizens

In early April 2003, the Swedish Government announced in the Riksdag, through the Equal Opportunities Minister Margareta Winberg, that it was prepared to review the law on abortion to consider whether women who are not resident in Sweden, and therefore not Swedish citizens, should still be able to have an abortion in the country. The underlying logic of the proposal is that taxpayers in one Member State of the EU - Sweden - would bear the costs and therefore, in practice, offer services to citizens from other Member States for an activity which is illegal in Member States such as Ireland and Portugal as well as in the new Member States of Poland and Malta.

Does the Commission consider that the Swedish Government's proposal is consistent with the Treaties or the spirit of the Treaties concerning mutual solidarity given that it is prepared to subsidise an activity in Sweden for other EU citizens, which is illegal in other Member States, through taxation? Would such conduct support or undermine other Member States' legislation?

Tabled: 05.06.2003

sv