

ORAL QUESTION H-0619/03

for Question Time at the part-session in October 2003

pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure

by Minerva Malliori

to the Commission

Subject:           Illegal trade in pharmaceutical products on the Internet without a prescription

The development of electronic commerce has boosted the advertising and sale of pharmaceutical products on the Internet without a doctor's prescription, often endangering the lives of people who obtain the products (as in the case of a 24-year-old man in Britain).

Even though it is well known that the approval, advertising and sale of pharmaceutical items is controlled by strict regulations in the European Union, the international nature of the Internet makes it possible to circumvent those regulations.

Does the Commission have any information concerning the extent of the legal electronic sale of pharmaceutical products in the European Union? Does it have any information on the total supply of pharmaceutical products through the Internet with and without an electronic prescription, within and outside the EU? Will it study the phenomenon in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products, the World Health Organisation and the FDA so that measures can be put forward aimed at averting the danger to health and preventing fraud against the public? Will it conduct a European campaign to raise awareness and inform consumers of the risks posed by the sale of pharmaceutical products on the Internet?

Tabled: 07.10.2003

el