

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0063/03

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Klaus-Heiner Lehne, Othmar Karas, Giuseppe Gargani and Stefano Zappalà, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group

to the Commission

Subject: Market regulations and competition rules for the liberal professions

Does the European Commission consider that the specificity of the liberal professions compared with other economic activities results from the high qualifications required, the need to establish a specific relationship based on trust between professionals and their clients, and the asymmetric information and the externalities which affect professional services?

Does the European Commission consider that the crucial importance of public regulations and of self-regulation established under their own responsibility by professional groups, will guarantee the quality of services, establish special value-based standards, ensure that those regulations will be observed in a professional manner and include professional ethics?

Can the European Commission confirm that rules which are necessary, in the specific context of each profession, in order to ensure the impartiality, competence, integrity and responsibility of the members of that profession or to prevent conflicts of interest and misleading advertising, and which, in addition, do not represent obstacles to the free movement of services, are not held to be restrictions of competition?

What initiatives does the European Commission intend to take in order to ensure full protection of the general interest and clients' rights?

Tabled: 12.09.2003

Forwarded: 16.09.2003

Deadline for reply: 23.09.2003