

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2791/99  
by Luís Queiró (UEN)  
to the Commission

Subject: German contravention of competition rules

In the last few weeks we have witnessed two instances of government intervention in the economic activity of an EU Member State, namely Germany.

The first intervention was to prevent the imminent bankruptcy of the Philip Holzmann company, and saw public funding to the value of DM 257 million (EUR 127,8 million) being granted.

The second intervention came when the German government opposed the hostile take-over bid for the Mannesmann company by the British Vodafone Air Touch company, and called for the establishment of rules to impeded such operations, on the grounds that there is a need to prevent 'culture clashes' between differently-conceived models of capitalism.

1. Do the German government's interventions constitute market operations?
2. Were the interventions made without prior authorisation from the Commission?
3. Are Community competition rules, which the Commission is responsible for promoting and defending, being flaunted or not?
4. Is firm and punctilious Commission intervention called for here, as it was when the Portuguese government opposed the Champalimaud/Santander Central Hispano agreement?