

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3827/02
by Theodorus Bouwman (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Road transport fraud, involving fake letters giving time off, in the Netherlands and other EU Member States

On 12 and 13 December 2002, the Dutch newspaper 'De Volkskrant' reported on repeated instances of fraud and breaches of the law on driving hours, involving fake letters giving time off which goods vehicle drivers receive from their bosses. Since, upon submission of a letter giving time off, it is no longer compulsory to have tachograph discs for previous driving days checked, a fake letter makes it possible to put in additional driving time.

Would the Commission investigate whether such practices also take place in Member States other than the Netherlands and report in the near future?

Is the Commission prepared to take action in the short term in order to put an end to these fraudulent practices in the Netherlands and, possibly, other Member States, and, if so, would it say how it will do so?

Does the Commission agree that goods vehicle drivers, as the final link in the transport chain, are the victim of the excessive market power wielded by shippers' organisations, which can exert such pressure on prices that drivers are forced to work irresponsibly long days and weeks?