

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2646/03
by Elizabeth Lynne (ELDR)
to the Commission

Subject: Customs classification of ostomy appliances

Is it true that the European Commission is proposing to reclassify ostomy appliances under CN Heading 3926 (general plastic) instead of Heading 9021 (appliances that compensate for a disability)?

Is the Commission aware that in practice this would make ostomy appliances more expensive, because of import duties, which would be zero-rated if the appliances were classified under Heading 9021?

Is the Commission aware that if the proposed classification is used in the World Customs Organisation, the access of ostomates to such products in Eastern Europe and developing countries would be extremely difficult and expensive, due to higher import duties in these countries?

With which organisations has the European Commission consulted when it decided to propose the reclassification?

Does the Commission agree that ostomy appliances perform the function of the removed part of the gut or urinary tract?

Could they not be considered 'appliances which are worn or carried or implanted in the body, to compensate for a defect and disability' (CN Heading 9021)?

In any event, what does the Commission intend to do in order to ensure that disabled people (ostomates) in the EU and developing countries are not affected by this customs classification?