

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0294/04
by Herman Vermeer (ELDR)
to the Commission

Subject: Disclosure of the rate structure for the Central European Pipeline System

Is the Commission aware of the existence of the Central European Pipeline System (CEPS)? The system was built up by the NATO allies between 1950 and 1989, during the Cold War, in order to transport fuel during wartime. This military infrastructure is now being used on a commercial basis to cover a proportion of the maintenance costs. The rates charged by NATO are anything but transparent for the system's various customers, however. Does the Commission believe that the CEPS' maintenance costs ought to be disclosed and linked to a transparent transport rating structure? In the final analysis, this system is offering a service on the European internal transport market, and its rivals would willingly take a look at the rates applied on the European transport market by what is a transport system funded by public monies. Would the Commission be willing to make arrangements with NATO's logistics arm in the near future in order to establish a transparent system of rates? I myself would advocate a system of annual reporting of the CEPS' maintenance costs, with a minimum and a maximum rate to cover as large a proportion of them as possible. In addition, not all routes within the system are equally commercially attractive. Are the maintenance costs for those routes also charged for, however?