

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0903/04

by Ingo Friedrich (PPE-DE)

to the Commission

Subject: Termination of European Documentation Centres' (EDCs) preferential subscription to the EC/EU Official Journal (printed edition)

The rights and obligations of the EDCs are set out in the written agreements last concluded in 1996 between the then DG X and the individual EDCs. Article 2 of the agreement states that the Commission shall supply publications of the European Union's institutions to the EDCs on a regular basis and free of charge.

Unfortunately, since 1 January 2004 and 1 May 2003 respectively, the paper editions of the Official Journal of the EU and COM documents have no longer been supplied to the EDCs under the free subscription system. As the sole official source of legislation, the Official Journal of the EU is legally binding only in its paper edition. There are discrepancies between the printed and electronic versions. It is, therefore, of great importance for EDC users. It would be desirable if the 55 European Documentation Centres in Germany continued to receive it free of charge.

The Commission requires the EDCs to maintain archives. Having to research and print electronic EU documents for users would entail a major additional input of staff and financial resources and would require checks to see whether the EDCs have the necessary technology available for that purpose.

The Commission has thus far not granted the EDCs any financial aid. Would it be possible, in the public interest and in support of transparency, to continue to supply the important publications free of charge?