

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2032/06
by Johannes Voggenhuber (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: State of repair of the Jean Monnet building in Luxembourg

There are repeated rumours that the JMO building in Luxembourg has no valid building regulations approval. The building, which dates from the early 1970s, is often described as shabby and as a risk to health. Back in 1997 there were plans for staff to vacate the building in the near future so that it could be demolished or renovated, but this move is now not planned until 2012. The most important complaints relate to the materials used in the building (asbestos, glass fibre wool) and fire protection.

The Commission has had the JMO building examined for asbestos and the expert opinion showed that, although asbestos is to be found, it is only in the form of bound asbestos which is not dangerous as long as the partition walls remain intact. According to information that I have received, however, before Christmas 2005 work started on major conversion work which included the demolition and partial rebuilding of partition walls and suddenly the building was said to be free of any asbestos whatsoever.

According to an expert opinion delivered by an independent company, carcinogenic glass fibre wool was used as the insulation material in the ceilings and during the conversion work referred to above the ceilings panels were systematically removed leaving glass fibre wool hanging over the heads of staff for days.

There are apparently also problems in relation to fire protection. A report dated 24 July 2001 setting out the findings of a study by the firm GESTEC highlighted various shortcomings in fire protection, which were confirmed by a further independent opinion from the engineer Paul Corall on 2 March 2006.

Does the JMO building have valid building regulations approval? Were materials containing asbestos or carcinogenic glass fibre wool used in the building? In view of the building's age, state of repair and the materials used, is there any risk to the health and safety of the staff working in it? When will the shortcomings identified in the GESTEC report be dealt with?