

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4493/07
by Matthias Groote (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Health risks associated with laser printer emissions

It has been known for some time that the use of laser printers causes dust particles and chemical pollutants to be released. More recently, a number of studies have been published that confirm the health risks associated with such emissions.

1. In the Commission's reply to Written Question P-0264/07, Commissioner Kuneva stated that the Commission intended to ask the Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks to assess the health risks associated with laser printer emissions. Has the Committee been asked to carry out this assessment? When can a first evaluation by the Committee be expected?
2. Laser printer emissions mainly affect people working in offices. Is the Commission planning to take action to protect workers by laying down target and limit values for dust particle pollution in the workplace?
3. Has the Commission consulted manufacturers of laser printers and printer cartridges on possible ways to reduce these emissions? Are manufacturers already taking steps to reduce or eliminate these emissions?
4. In this context and with a view to consumer protection, does the Commission intend to introduce a label for printers and/or printer cartridges with particularly low levels of emissions? Would such a label not be helpful above all for households comprising people from particularly vulnerable groups (small children, the elderly, asthma sufferers etc.)?
5. In recent years, increasing numbers of counterfeit toner products have found their way onto the market. Spot checks have shown that the chemical composition of some of these counterfeit products appears to be highly damaging to health. What is the Commission's assessment of the health risks associated with these counterfeit products, and what measures does the Commission consider appropriate to protect consumers from the health risks associated with such copies?