

European Communities

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ORAL QUESTION (0-114/76)

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with debate, pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure,

by Mr Willy MÜLLER, Mr GUERLIN, Mr EVANS, Mr SPILLECKE and Mr ADAMS

to the Commission of the European Communities

Subject: Danger to health of asbestos

At major international scientific conferences, most recently in Lyons, recognized experts from all over the world have warned of the dangers to human health of the production and use of asbestos. In view of the uncontested carcinogenic properties of asbestos, parliaments, governments and responsible authorities were called upon to take urgent and suitable measures to eliminate the hazards to human health arising from asbestos.

Despite this, an advertizing campaign is being run by the French Asbestos Trade Association and the Asbestos Cement Association, calling for a 'just, reasonable and dispassionate attitude' and assuring the public that the World Health Organization and the highest scientific authorities in the world had hitherto been unanimous in declaring that there was no proof that the population in general was being exposed to particular risks by the asbestos industry.

PE 47.946

1. How does the Commission view the pseudo-informative advertizing campaign of the asbestos producers, which is clearly aimed to present their product as harmless?
2. Does the Commission still uphold the principle it has always stressed, that informing the public as a means of preventing health hazards is an essential part of public health policy?
3. Will it therefore, so long as there is still no proposal for a directive regulating the use of asbestos, take immediate action to inform the citizens of the Community of the risks to human health inherent in the use of asbestos, and what preventive measures can be taken to protect their health?
4. Will the Commission further support any efforts aimed at limiting the production and use of asbestos and promoting research into the development of safe substitutes for asbestos?