ORAL QUESTION H-0691/03
for Question Time at the part-session in November 2003
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure
by Arlette Laguiller
to the Commission

Subject: Merck Santé: preventing redundancies

The Merck Santé company (a French subsidiary of Merck KgaA - a group which, in Germany, has been authorised by the Commission to receive public funding) employs 975 people in the Lyon area. The company's directors have decided to end production by mid-2006 (with the loss of 160 jobs) and to cease research and development activities by the end of 2004 (with the loss of a further 160 jobs). This will affect 500 people at other plants, too. The group's directors believe that this will lead to an increase in productivity and competitiveness. Between 1998 and 2001 the French pharmaceutical division's activities accounted on average for over 40% of the entire Merck KgaA group's operating profit. The planned redundancies should be outlawed through the issue of a threat to the employers that their profits will be requisitioned for the purpose of paying the threatened workers' wages.

Does the Commission think that the stated objective of full employment in Europe by 2010 will be achieved by allowing companies to make huge profits and at the same time to sacrifice the livelihoods of their workers and of those workers' families?

Tabled: 05.11.2003
fr