WRITTEN QUESTION E-1622/99
by Antonio Tajani (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(15 September 1999)

Subject: Infringement proceedings against the Italian government for the sale of the Rome Central Dairy

Can the Commission provide the results of the investigation carried out in the context of the infringement proceedings against the Italian government and the Rome City Council in respect of the sale of the Rome Central Dairy?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission
(8 October 1999)

The comments of the Italian authorities which they sent under the procedure provided for in Article 88(2) (formerly Article 93) of the EC Treaty have now been studied and the Commission has requested additional information from the Italian authorities on the measures taken by the City of Rome.

At this stage, the Commission is awaiting this additional information. After analysing all the comments received, the Commission will be able to take a final decision on the measures in question.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1624/99
by Markus Ferber (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(15 September 1999)

Subject: EU funding for a chicken farm in Vseruby (Czech Republic)

A German consortium is planning to build a chicken farm for 1,2 million laying hens and 200 000 chickens on the Bavarian-Czech border. There are considerable objections from the local population because of the possibility of pathogens being carried by the wind.

Will the chicken farm in Vseruby be financed directly or indirectly by European funding (e.g. under PHARE)?

Answer given by Mr Verheugen on behalf of the Commission
(29 October 1999)

The Commission can confirm that the poultry farm to which the Honourable Member refers does not receive Phare support. Neither is the Commission aware of any other Community funds being used for this purpose.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1625/99
by Esko Seppänen (GUE/NGL) to the Commission
(15 September 1999)

Subject: Telephone tapping

A special package of measures related to home affairs is being drawn up in anticipation of the extraordinary Tampere European Council. Will any of the documents produced by the Commission for the meeting, specifically with a view, for instance, to legalising the tapping of satellite telephone calls and Internet communications, be treated as confidential after the meeting, or will all documents relating to the sphere of activity concerned be released for publication once the meeting is over?
Answer given by Mr Vitorino on behalf of the Commission

(25 October 1999)

The Commission is not producing any documents, confidential or otherwise, on the issue of tapping of satellite telephone calls, Internet communications in the preparation of the European Council of Tampere. The only document prepared by the Commission in the run-up to the European Council of Tampere is an information note (SEC(1999) 1518) on the preparation of this special meeting of the European Council that will be devoted to discussing the development of the Union as an area of freedom, security and justice. On the basis of this note, President Prodi has sent a letter to Prime Minister Lipponen on 23 September 1999. In this area, as in others, the Commission works in the maximum transparency as possible and views on both the preparation and the results of the European Council of Tampere will be exchanged with the Parliament.

As regards the issue of interception of telecommunications the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to the debate held by the Parliament on 6 May 1999 on the Schmid’s report on the issue of interception of telecommunications. The position of the Commission on the issue was expressed by the Commission before the Parliament at the occasion of the debate.

In short, the Commission understands the importance of this topic in particularly bearing in mind that the telecommunications environment in Europe is constantly suffering rapid and revolutionary changes.

It considers that as regards this particular issue of interception on one hand account must be taken of the legitimate concerns of law enforcement services (i.e. the development of telecommunications and the Internet should not diminish the capacity of Member States to fight crime and to maintain national security) and on the other hand, it notes that there is an impressive growth in telecommunications services, in particular the Internet, that requires that telecommunication users should have confidence in the services offered if further expansion of the sector is to be achieved.

The Commission believes that it is crucial to strike the right balance between the interests concerned. This can only be done through a dialogue between law enforcement authorities, operators, industry and those most concerned with data protection issues.

Furthermore, a draft convention to improve mutual legal assistance in criminal matters between the Member States is currently being negotiated in the Council. This includes a number of provisions regarding interception of telecommunication. The objective is to ensure that arrangements for interception for the purpose of a criminal investigation can be devised to take account of new satellite telecommunication systems.

(2000/C 170 E/062)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1627/99

by Alexandros Alavanos (GUE/NGL) to the Commission

(15 September 1999)

Subject: Measures to support rice-growing in Greece

Regulation 2072/98(1) established two base areas for rice-growing in Greece. As a result of implementing the Regulation in 1998, no aid was paid to producers in the second area in which the quota was exceeded despite the fact that the overall quota of 24 891 hectares laid down for Greece was not surpassed.

The regionalisation system coupled with the exceptionally high co-responsibility fine for exceeding the quota have left rice-growers in a particularly difficult situation. Will the Commission, therefore, allow quotas to be transferred from one area to another, as is the case with durum wheat? What other measures will it take to support rice-growing (increase in the overall ceiling, allocation of quotas by prefecture, controlling the massive, unrestricted imports from third countries)?