Item 5 of this second tranche (2), entitled ‘Award criteria’, notes that: ‘In this second selection procedure, priority will be given to projects which provide the best cover of the Community as a whole, and the following countries in particular: Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland and Germany’.

It is possible that the person mentioned by the Honourable Member misinterpreted this information.

The two tranches of the call for proposals were posted on the Europa site at two different addresses: http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex and http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/women/index.

The Commission offices in the Member States have access to all the Official Journals and to the Europa site.

The Commission sent out 333 forms in response to the requests it received. The selection was carried out in accordance with the rules and deadlines given in the call for proposals.

(2) OJ C 227, 10.8.1999.

(2000/C 219 E/071)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1987/99
by Cristiana Muscardini (NI) to the Council
(9 November 1999)

Subject: Action to combat corruption

In the light of alarming indications of corruption on the part of leading figures in Russia, a recent G7 decision decreed a freeze on loans to Russia after calling for quarterly information about the state of accounts as a condition for restoring the flow of funds to the former Soviet empire.

Would the Council set up a committee of inquiry concerning the destination of Community funds allocated to Russia under the cooperation agreements with that country?

Reply
(31 January 2000)

The Honourable Member asks whether the Council would set up a committee of inquiry concerning the destination of Community funds allocated to Russia under the cooperation agreements with that country.

The Council does not have the power to set up a committee of inquiry. Furthermore, under Article 274 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, responsibility for implementing the general budget of the Communities falls on the Commission. Similarly, loans from by the European Investment Bank, even if they are subsidised or guaranteed under the Community budget, are granted under the Bank’s primary responsibility. Finally, it should be stressed that Russia is a sovereign State.

Nevertheless, the Council uses the powers conferred on it by the treaties to ensure the greatest possible control of the use made of Community funds, particularly in Russia.

In particular, the Council specified in Regulation (EC) 2802/98 (1) of 17 December 1998, organising the distribution in Russia of 1 850 000 tonnes of foodstuffs for a sum of EUR 470 million, that a memorandum concluded by the Commission and the Russian authorities should make it possible for monitoring, auditing, control and evaluation to be carried out on Russian territory, in particular by the Court of Auditors or by outside bodies delegated by the Commission for the purpose. The Council also decided on 26 November 1999, during the second reading of the budget for 2000, to increase the appropriations for controlling the delivery of this aid from EUR 12,4 to 20,4 million. The particularly high proportion of financial means allocated to monitoring the operation demonstrates the importance that the Council attaches to this issue.
Furthermore, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) now has, under Regulation No 1073/99 (1) of the European Parliament and of the Council, general powers to protect the financial interests of the Communities, whether these consist of funds from the general budget of the Communities or loans granted by the European Investment Bank.


WRITTEN QUESTION E-1992/99
by Paul Rübig (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(9 November 1999)

Subject: Draft directive on electronic scrap equipment

– Given the considerable durability of electrical appliances (5-20 years) the costs of disposal for the dealer are scarcely assessable and hence extremely difficult to calculate.

– This gives the consumer all the more incentive to purchase electrical appliances in a non-Member country in order to evade the take-back surcharge at the time of purchase. Such appliances on take-back are indistinguishable from the others and must therefore be taken back without compensation.

– The obligation to report on the situation with regard to disposal or sale creates extra administrative expense in respect of which no allowance is made.

– Are official importers discriminated against vis-à-vis parallel importers in consequence of the obligation to create a disposal system?

In the Commission's view are these doubts on the part of European wholesalers justified and what assistance if any can the industry expect from the Commission?

Answer given by Mr Wallström on behalf of the Commission
(21 December 1999)

Currently the Commission is preparing legislation concerning the management of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE). At this stage the Commission is discussing the main points of this draft legislation, including the respective responsibilities of manufacturers, importers and other distributors. As a general point, it has to be mentioned that distributors are considered to be producers in the sense of the draft proposal only if they professionally import electrical or electronic equipment into a Member State.

The Commission would make some observations on the particular concerns raised by the Honourable Member. It is true that some uncertainties exist as regards future prices for recycling and disposal of electrical and electronic products. However, research on the possible price evolution of these operations indicates that by and large producers could calculate with today's prices when building reserves for the future management of WEEE.

Research also indicates that a disposal fee on the product price would be at such a level that a major shift of consumer habits as regards the purchase of products could not be expected. This assumption takes potential benefits of proximity purchases for the consumer into account. Therefore, purchases by consumers in other Member States induced by disposal fees will be minimal. In this context, it should be mentioned that similar concerns have been voiced as regards an alternative financing system for WEEE, where consumers are charged when disposing of their equipment. Also in these cases consumers might tend to transport end-of-life equipment to third countries for disposal to save the disposal fee or even to dispose of it privately in a way which was not environmentally sound.