

Italy has notified to the Commission draft provisions in application of Articles 31-33 of Italian decree 22/1997 on waste. The notification was made on 27 August 1997 under Directive 83/189/EEC and on 17 October 1998 under Directive 91/689/EEC. A supplementary Annex to the draft measures was notified under Article 3(4) of Directive 91/689/EEC on 12 February 1998. The standstill periods under Directive 83/189/EEC and Directive 91/689/EEC expired respectively on 28 November 1997 and 17 January 1998. As regards the Annex notified on 12 February 1998, the standstill period expired on 12 May 1998.

(98/C 386/224)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1825/98

by Freddy Blak (PSE) to the Commission

(11 June 1998)

Subject: Monitoring of employees on the net

The latest hit with managers is programs that are marketed quite innocently as 'reporting tools'. In reality they are surveillance programs that allow the boss to keep an eye on every single page that staff visit when they surf the Internet and to check their e-mail. This is legal so long as firms inform staff that they are being monitored, even though the information is hidden away somewhere in a thick staff book.

Does the Commission not think that there is a need for ethical guidelines for monitoring staff on the net?

Answer given by Mr Bangemann on behalf of the Commission

(16 July 1998)

If companies install reporting mechanisms where data is processed which can be related to individual users, questions of data protection arise. If electronic mail messages are read, questions of confidentiality may also arise, although this confidentiality is not safeguarded within a company network to the same extent as it is when using public telecommunications networks. These questions are governed by national law, in conformity with relevant provisions of Community directives on data protection.

Member States may also have regard to these questions in their legislation concerning relationships between employers and employees.

It does not appear appropriate at this stage to attempt to lay down more detailed rules at European level as to how companies should approach these issues. The Commission would however welcome it if companies faced with similar issues were to discuss practical solutions together and with their employees or their representatives.

(98/C 386/225)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1884/98

by José García-Margallo y Marfil (PPE) to the Commission

(16 June 1998)

Subject: SMEs

The Commission's report to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the coordination of activities to assist small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the craft sector (COM(97) 0610) (p. 30) states that in 1997 a reform was undertaken of the operating procedures of the Committee on Commerce and Distribution (CCD). At present there is also a parliamentary intergroup on commerce and distribution.