

(1999/C 341/140)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0365/99**by Joaquín Sisó Cruellas (PPE) to the Commission**

(1 March 1999)

Subject: Combating the black economy

In December 1998 the social partners in the cleaning industry — the EFCI (employers) and EURO-FIET (trade unions) — sent a communication to the Austrian Minister for Social Affairs and Health and President-in-Office of the EU Social Affairs Council and to the European Commissioner with responsibility for the same policy areas. In the said communication they announced that they had signed a joint statement containing an undertaking to combat moonlighting and called on the Member States of the Union to adopt specific measures providing business and unions with the means with which to avoid this type of illegal work, without which any such undertaking would prove worthless. There are approximately 47 000 undertakings in the European cleaning industry employing about 2,3 million workers.

Can the Commission say whether it has taken or intends to take any measures in this respect?

Answer given by Mr Flynn on behalf of the Commission

(7 April 1999)

The joint statement by the European social partners in the cleaning industry, the European Federation of the Cleaning Industry (EFCI) and the International Federation of Employees and Technicians (Euro-Fiet), on the black economy, adopted in October 1998 in the framework of their European social dialogue, follows up the Communication from the Commission of 7 April 1998 on undeclared work ⁽¹⁾. In this joint statement the social partners endeavour to make a joint contribution to the employment strategy and in particular the employment guidelines for 1999 ⁽²⁾, adopted by the Council on 22 February 1999.

The EFCI and Euro-Fiet thought it necessary to express their desire to combat undeclared work, which they consider harmful both for the sector and for job creation in the Community. In their joint statement they undertake to contribute actively to combating undeclared work. They also testify to their desire to encourage employment and hope that their appeal will be heard and that the guidelines adopted at European level will lead to concrete results.

The Commission believes that the problem of undeclared work could be addressed by Member States under several of the proposed 1999 guidelines, such as redesigning tax and benefit systems to make work more attractive, reducing overhead costs and administrative burdens for businesses; reducing non-wage labour costs on relatively unskilled and low paid labour, and recognising more diverse and flexible work patterns. Sanctions and compliance controls also have a role to play.

The importance of this issue was recognised by the Member States in the explanatory memorandum which accompanies the employment guidelines for 1999. The Commission will continue to monitor policy developments in this area.

⁽¹⁾ COM(98) 219 final.

⁽²⁾ COM(98) 574 final.

(1999/C 341/141)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0367/99**by Roberta Angelilli (NI) to the Commission**

(1 March 1999)

Subject: Liberalisation of the sale of periodicals and newspapers

On 12 January the Italian Chamber of Deputies approved draft law No 3911 on new rules on sales points for newspapers and periodicals which provides for an experiment with new ways of selling newspapers, which will be available at sales points other than authorised shops such as tobacconists, petrol stations, bars, supermarkets and bookshops.