

(2000/C 330 E/246)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0732/00**by Francesco Turchi (UEN) to the Commission**

(6 March 2000)

Subject: Objectivity of information provided by public broadcasters

Will the Commission say whether the broadcasts by RAI (Radio Televisione Italiana), particularly the Telegiornale news programme (TG1) on the station Rai Uno, which fails to respect the rules of parity in reporting the activities of political parties but gives certain parties special treatment, meet the requirements of European legislation regarding the reporting and dissemination of news in the multimedia sector?

Answer given by Mrs Reding on behalf of the Commission

(31 March 2000)

Community legislation regarding the freedom of movement for services, and, in particular, the provisions of Council Directive 89/552/EEC of 3 October 1989 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by Law, Regulation or Administrative Action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities⁽¹⁾, as amended by Directive 97/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 1997⁽²⁾, does not concern the issue of objectivity and impartiality of political programmes broadcast by television stations.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 298, 17.10.1989.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 202, 30.7.1997.

(2000/C 330 E/247)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0734/00**by Roberta Angelilli (UEN) to the Commission**

(6 March 2000)

Subject: Construction of an underground car park in Piazza Lorenzini in Rome

In the Portuense district of Rome, where a building recently collapsed, the local authorities have issued a permit for the construction of 80 underground garages in Piazza Lorenzini.

The subsoil of the whole area consists of tufa caves and galleries and is particularly unstable, but despite the collapse of the building it does not seem that the subsoil has been properly analysed or a hydro-geological inspection carried out. Furthermore, there does not appear to be a need for parking spaces in the area, since there are already sufficient numbers of them. The work will also mean cutting down some tall trees several decades old in one of the few green spaces in the district. For all these reasons the inhabitants are strongly opposed to the project and have spontaneously set up a number of committees. The Rome city authorities have, moreover, not requested a prior assessment of the project from the XVth administrative district, which is competent for that area.

In view of the above, can the Commission say:

1. whether it does not consider that the project is of the kind for which an environmental impact assessment is compulsory, in accordance with the provisions of Directive 85/337/EEC⁽¹⁾ and subsequent amendments;
2. whether it does not consider it appropriate to contact the competent national authorities in order to ascertain whether the project should be carried out, not least in view of the opposition from local residents?

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 175, 5.7.1985, p. 40.

Answer given by Mrs Wallström on behalf of the Commission

(14 March 2000)

The Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its answer to her Written Question E-0243/00 ⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ See page 108.

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WRITTEN QUESTION E-0764/00

by Bart Staes (Verts/ALE) to the Commission

(13 March 2000)

Subject: Report by the European Round Table of Industrialists on state pensions

A working party of the European Round Table of Industrialists chaired by Carlo De Benedetti has recently submitted to Commission President Romano Prodi its conclusions on the financing of state pensions in the European Union. The members of the working party say that state pensions act as a brake on economic growth in Europe. They advocate the system of private pension schemes as an alternative.

Can the Commission answer the following:

1. Who are the authors of the report of the European Round Table of Industrialists on the financing of state pensions in the fifteen Member States of the European Union?
2. Who are the members of the European Round Table of Industrialists?
3. What are the final conclusions of the European Round Table of Industrialists on the financing of state pensions in the fifteen Member States of the European Union (please quote verbatim)?
4. Does the Commission endorse the final conclusions of the European Round Table of Industrialists on the financing of state pensions in the fifteen Member States of the European Union?
 - (a) If so, is the Commission of the opinion that the existing state pensions in the fifteen Member States of the EU will eventually have to be replaced, either wholly or in part, by private pension schemes?
 - (b) If not, does the Commission advocate maintaining the state pensions which currently exist in the fifteen EU Member States?

Answer given by Mrs Diamantopoulou on behalf of the Commission

(17 April 2000)

1. and 2. The Commission is not responsible for the report mentioned by the Honourable Member. Answers should therefore be obtained directly from the European round table of industrialists.

3. The report is available from the European round table's web site (www.ert.be).

4. The design and structure of pension systems are the prerogative of Member States. The Commission set out its views on pension design and pension reform in its communication 'Towards a Europe for all ages' of 21 May 1999 ⁽¹⁾. Here it was emphasised that the most effective way to counter the threat of ageing to the sustainability of pension systems is to reverse the trend towards early retirement and to raise the employment rate for all of working age. The crucial changes will be those that enable and motivate workers to work longer and to opt for a later and more gradual exit from labour markets, since this will lead to a reduction in pension costs, extra revenue and larger productive input to growth. That pension schemes are employment friendly is more important than whether they are pre-funded or pay-as-you-go.