

The handling of classified information within the Commission is governed by Commission Decision C(2001) 3031<sup>(1)</sup>. These rules are the same as those in Member States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and the Council. According to this Decision, the protection of classified information requires a wide range of security measures, including the construction of security areas in which classified information may be dealt with. Technical inspections to detect listening devices form part of these measures. In conformity with customary security practise, depending on the actual threat, and the level of confidentiality, — and in accordance with Decision C(2001) 3031, — technical inspections are carried out if considered to be necessary in a given situation.

The policy of international organisations such as the Commission, the Council or NATO for sweeping rooms is to investigate those premises where information classified 'EU SECRET' and higher is regularly processed.

By the Commission Decision in question, the Commission Security Directorate has been given the responsibility for carrying out such measures, and has the necessary equipment for doing so.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 317, 3.12.2001.

(2003/C 268 E/219)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-1401/03**

**by Alexander de Roo (Verts/ALE) to the Commission**

(16 April 2003)

*Subject:* Vaccination of pet poultry

As an indirect result of the outbreak of avian influenza in the Netherlands, there has also been a preventive culling of poultry kept by hobby farmers in certain regions. The poultry involved are chickens, turkeys, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, swans, quails, pheasants, peacocks, partridges and walking birds (ostriches, emu and nandos) and doves that are not kept for consumption.

At present the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Fisheries says that the vaccination of livestock susceptible to avian influenza is not an alternative method of combating the disease. Italian sources claim, however, that a home-made Italian mixture of a vaccine against avian influenza, which is endemic in Italy, is in fact effective. Intervet, a division of Akzo Nobel, the market leader in veterinary vaccines, claims to have developed a marker vaccine which could help the Netherlands government and poultry farmers tackle this outbreak effectively (see the Intervet website [http://www.intervet.com/contentframe.asp?content=http://www.intervet.com/news/prod\\_news/default.asp](http://www.intervet.com/contentframe.asp?content=http://www.intervet.com/news/prod_news/default.asp))

'Vaccination against avian influenza is possible and is in fact practiced in a number of countries. Intervet is already using a number of avian influenza vaccines in other parts of the world. In Europe, vaccine-free control is the preferred method to begin with, in order to avoid further trade bans. Member states of the European Union require the European Commission's approval for vaccination. During an outbreak, ring vaccination or regional vaccination can be used to prevent the virus from spreading or in cases where there is insufficient destruction capacity. During the recent outbreak in Italy, for example, the authorities requested permission for vaccination within a certain area.'

Can the Commission say whether a Member State can authorise the vaccination of pet poultry against avian influenza?

**Answer given by Mr Byrne on behalf of the Commission**

(2 June 2003)

Council Directive 92/40/EEC of 19 May 1992 introducing Community measures for the control of avian influenza<sup>(1)</sup> stipulates in Article 16 that vaccination against avian influenza may only be used to supplement the control measures carried out when the disease appears and under certain provisions.

In particular the decision to introduce vaccination shall be taken by the Commission in collaboration with the Member State within the framework of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (Scofcah). Provided that fundamental interests of the Community are not jeopardized and as a matter of urgency, the decision to introduce emergency vaccination around an outbreak may be taken by the Member State concerned, following notification to the Commission. Such a decision has to be re-examined by the Commission and within the Scofcah. The Commission may then adopt further appropriate measures on this matter.

Birds not intended for the production of meat or eggs for consumption or for restocking supplies of game are explicitly not covered by the control measures laid down in Directive 92/40/EEC. However, if the disease is detected in birds other than poultry kept for commercial purposes, the Member State concerned shall inform the Commission of any measure it takes. The Commission may then adopt further appropriate measures in the context of Council Directive 90/425/EEC<sup>(2)</sup> concerning veterinary and zootechnical checks applicable in intra-Community trade in certain live animals and products with a view to the completion of the internal market.

Indeed, in relation with the current outbreak of avian influenza in the Netherlands, the Commission has already adopted a number of measures supplementing the minimum measures established in Directive 92/40/EEC, including a very recent one on vaccination of birds kept in zoos<sup>(3)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 167, 22.6.1992.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ L 224, 18.8.1990.

<sup>(3)</sup> Decision being adopted by the Commission on 25 April 2003, OJ L 105, 26.4.2003.

(2003/C 268 E/220)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-1406/03**

**by Luigi Vinci (GUE/NGL) to the Commission**

(23 April 2003)

*Subject:* Territorial employment pact at Lamezia Terme (Italy)

Knowing that:

- Over the period 1996-2001, under the Structural Funds, 89 territorial employment pacts were financed in the EU, among them that for Lamezia Terme (Italy), adopted via Decree No 948 of 29 January 1999 of the Italian Finance Ministry, on the basis of a total investment of approximately EUR 48 million funding 66 business initiatives, 30 of them dispersed over the territory of Lamezia Terme.
- The company responsible for implementing the Pact is the consortium 'Sviluppo ex-area Sir', also known as 'LameziaEuropa'.
- The projects funded concerned 49 new initiatives, 16 extensions and one reopening. Thirty seven were in the manufacturing sector, 12 in the agri-industrial sector, 15 in the tourist sector and two in the services sector.
- 903 jobs were to be involved, 699 of them newly created.
- The management of 'LameziaEuropa' claims success for the Pact, purely on the grounds that on 29 January 2003 the 'Cassa Depositi e Prestiti' savings bank granted a new tranche of financing to the undertakings concerned.
- Lamezia Terme has a high rate of unemployment, especially among women and young people, and job security is increasingly under threat: employers are failing to honour their contracts, health and safety rules are being flouted, and moonlighting is on the increase.
- These circumstances of illegality are being exploited by organised crime in order to fund its own activities. In consequence, businesses in the area are being forced into uncomfortably close relations with local politicians, and one result of this has been the recent resignation of the municipal council.