

ORAL QUESTION O-0000/08

pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure

by Miroslav Ouzký, on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety to the Council

Subject: On the review of Recommendation 2001/331/EC providing for minimum criteria for environmental inspections in the Member States

On 14 November the Commission published a Communication (COM(2007)707) on the review of Recommendation 2001/331/EC providing minimum criteria for environmental inspections in the Member States. The Communication recorded inter alia that

- the information submitted by the member states on how they were implementing the Recommendation was "incomplete or difficult to compare"
- there are still large disparities in the way environmental inspections are being carried out by national, regional and local authoritative in the EU
- the scope of the Recommendation is inadequate and does not include many important activities, such as Natura 2000, and the control of illegal waste shipments
- Inspection plans in many instances have not been implemented and, where they do exist, are often not publicly available.

Good and even enforcement of EU environmental law is essential. Anything less deceives public expectations and undermines the reputation of the EU as an effective guardian of the environment.

Can the Commission therefore explain

1. Why it wishes only to amend the Recommendation and why it does not propose to take up the reference in the Recommendation to the possibility of it submitting a proposal for a directive on environmental inspections?
2. Why it has opted instead for a piecemeal approach, and proposes to attach environmental inspection requirements to existing directives individually - a process that is bound to take time?
3. Why it is not prepared to use a directive to define terms such as "inspection" and "audit" which it admits are "interpreted in different ways by member states" when set out in a Recommendation?
4. Why it is not prepared to transform IMPEL into an effective EU environmental inspection force with the right to demand the cooperation of member state authorities, since ultimately it is only through the creation of such a force that the commission will free itself from reliance on those it is trying to control?

Tabled: 00.00.2008

Forwarded: 00.00.2008

Deadline for reply: 00.00.2008