

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0567/03  
by Armando Cossutta (GUE/NGL)  
to the Commission

Subject: Conflict of interests at the Commission

Mr Detlef Eckert, head of the INFSO.01 unit (Analysis, policy planning, eEurope - strategy formulation unit reporting to the Director-General) has been granted unpaid leave (CCP) for three years.

According to the Financial Times, Mr Eckert is currently working for Microsoft. It would appear that he dealt with the Microsoft case and the firm's dominant position as part of his responsibilities in formulating a strategy for the sector, as confirmed by Mr Ed Black, President of the Computer & Communications Industry Association.

1. What administrative measures does the Commission intend to take vis-à-vis this manifest instance of a conflict of interests?
2. On what information did the Commission's spokesman base his statement that Mr Eckert had not dealt with the Microsoft case, given that the people he was in contact with firmly maintain that the opposite was true?
3. What investigations has the Commission conducted into the damage which any proven convergence of interests between Mr Eckert and Microsoft would cause to EU industries and the Commission's supplies?
4. Can the Commission guarantee that the competition services, placed under the authority of Commissioner Monti, did not receive information, however incomplete, on the Microsoft case?
5. Does the Commission not consider, in any case, that all the strategies relating to the IT sector should immediately be reviewed?