

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2648/09
by Katerina Batzeli (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Electronic waste exported to third countries instead of being recycled

The leap in sales of electronic equipment in EU Member States has, inter alia, produced a large volume of highly toxic waste which is frequently channelled to third countries. Recently, the international NGO Greenpeace, in conjunction with Sky News reporters, revealed the actions of a UK gang which, instead of recycling electronic equipment at centres specially set up for this purpose, sent this waste to a non-EU country where it was recycled without the safety rules – imposed because the toxicity of the materials involved – being respected, thereby having a direct impact on the health of workers and severely polluting the environment.

Greece, in compliance with Community legislation, has introduced a national collective system for the alternative management of electrical and electronic appliances: the company 'Anakyklosi Syskeron A.E.' which is supervised by the relevant ministry. However, it is estimated that it covers only between 10% and 15% of the electrical and electronic waste (EEW) produced. The municipalities involved in this scheme are very few and private initiatives are limited.

Has the Commission received accusations about violations of Community legislation regarding the recycling of electrical and electronic waste, in particular as regards the transfer thereof to third countries?

Does the Commission intend to take more stringent measures to prevent the practice of transferring electrical and electronic waste to third countries where even minimum safety rules are not respected, which apart from the environmental threat it represents, constitutes another form of exploitation of the less developed countries by the developed countries?

Finally, is the Commission aware of any recent data on the development of recycling of electrical and electronic waste in Greece?