

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0015/09
by Erik Meijer (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: Ending of secrecy surrounding the crash on 30 September 1975 of the Malév flight from Budapest to Beirut and the graves of 17 of the 60 victims

1. Is the Commission aware that on the evening of Tuesday, 30 September 1975 an aircraft of the Hungarian Malév airline on a flight from Budapest to the Lebanese capital Beirut crashed into the sea close to Beirut airport, that none of the 50 passengers and crew of 10 survived the crash and that after a week Malév informed bereaved relatives that the cause of the crash was unknown, that the black box and the mortal remains of the victims could not be found on the sea-bed and that audio recordings were missing from air-traffic control?
2. Is the Commission aware that the complete lack of information on the crash described in Question 1 has meant that the victims' relatives of various European nationalities (including the Hungarian Laszlo Nemeth and the Dutchwoman Francine van der Velde) are still now continuing to enquire about inconsistencies in the details that have since become known, the possible causes of the crash and, above all, the place where the passengers killed in the crash might have been buried?
3. Is the Commission aware that there are photos showing Lebanese recovering bodies from the sea, and that a 1975 secret investigation report by the International Civil Aviation Organisation exists, showing that immediately after the crash 37 of the 60 bodies were recovered, of whom 20 were identified by Lebanese relatives while 17 other bodies that could not be identified were buried in an unknown location in Lebanon?
4. Is the Commission aware that an inquiry by the Netherlands Embassy in Lebanon in the spring of 2007 at the request of the victims' relatives obtained the information that the 17 unidentified bodies are probably located in mass graves, but that the military authorities do not want to provide any information on this, while the relatives have also learned that a Hungarian Government inquiry into the crash in 2003 produced a document that has been kept secret until now?
5. Is the Commission prepared to take action to ensure that this still unresolved question, which is probably related to past events such as the Cold War, the civil war in Lebanon and the conflict between Israel and the PLO, is no longer deliberately kept secret but, in the interest of all the relatives and to prevent inaccurate rumour, is publicly cleared up once and for all?

Source: The Dutch daily 'De Volkskrant' of 30 December 2008.