

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0349/01
by Garrelt Duin (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Danger of deep-vein thrombosis for passengers on long-haul flights ('economy class syndrome')

Flying as a passenger in a cramped economy-class seat is more dangerous than has hitherto been admitted. With freedom of movement being restricted, blood may coagulate in passengers' legs on long-haul flights, and that can lead to the formation of potentially fatal blood clots. Especially in economy class, where the seat pitch is generally less than 80 cm, the danger of damage to health is particularly high, hence the tag 'economy class syndrome'. A study carried out by British medical specialists comes to the horrifying conclusion that, in Great Britain alone, as many as 2000 passengers die every year from 'economy class syndrome'.

Can the Commission indicate:

- any further findings or statistics available at European level,
- its assessment of the current situation and any action it might take,
- whether it will review the technical specifications for civil aviation with regard to seat pitch,
- whether any legal bases exist for the settlement of potential claims for damages against airlines,
- whether airlines are legally bound to refer to the dangers of thrombosis on the flight tickets they issue,
- whether similar problems exist with regard to long-distance coach transport?