

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3152/01  
by Lousewies van der Laan (ELDR)  
to the Council

Subject: Biometric passport

Netherlands recently introduced a new passport, offering the possibility in two to three years of recording of biometric data, for example using fingerprinting or iris scanning. This will mean proof of identity which is far more reliable than current evidence. The minister responsible, Mr Van Boxtel, has indicated that he is very willing to share this advanced Netherlands technology with other EU Member States.

1. Does the Council take the view that standardisation or harmonisation in line with the highest standard for evidence of identity in Europe can increase security, without citizens' freedoms being sacrificed as a result?
2. Is the Council willing to place this matter on the agenda for the JHA Council or the next European Council summit?
3. In the light of recent endeavours to introduce new measures to reduce the terrorist threat in Europe, is the Council willing to treat discussion of this matter as a priority?