

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3463/01  
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to the Commission

Subject: Air safety checks

The collision at Milan's Linate airport on 8 October 2001 between an SAS MD-87, which was about to take off, and a private plane (a German Cessna), which was on a side runway, killed 118 people and caused great alarm worldwide. After the impact the Scandinavian airliner crashed into the hangar which houses the baggage handling centre, cutting it in half. This started a fire involving both the wreck of the aircraft and the hangar.

The mistake and faulty information seem to have been caused not only by the fog, but also the ground radar, which had not been working since November 1999 and therefore contributed substantially to the human error.

Although the SMGCS (Surface Movement Ground Control System) at Linate was considered antiquated and it had been decided to replace it two years before, it was actually never replaced. Such inefficiencies happen not only at Milan, but also a large number of other airports in Europe.

Does the Commission not consider it appropriate to adopt stricter Community legislation for safety checks at airports, obliging Member States to adopt appropriate provisions, including some designed to reveal the malfunctioning of safety instruments, which, in the event of an emergency, would be capable of preventing disasters on this scale?