

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3453/03
by Philip Claeys (NI)
to the Commission

Subject: Political position adopted by EU officials' trade union TAO-AFI on night flights over outlying districts of Brussels

At the beginning of November the EU officials' trade union TAO-AFI adopted a public position on night flights from Zaventem airport. Controversy has been raging for months on the Belgian political scene as to which communes the flight paths in question should pass over. It might be possible to reach consensus by means of a distribution plan which shares the nuisance caused by night flights among various parts of the periphery of Brussels and the adjoining communes. Evidently the officials' trade union has a relatively large number of members living in the residential communes to the east of Brussels, and objects to the possibility that the area in question might also have to bear a share of the nuisance. The union argues, inter alia, that rents are high in these communes and that many people went to live there at a time when there was no suggestion that Zaventem airport might cause noise at night.

TAO-AFI's intervention has annoyed residents of the periphery of Brussels who consider that some solidarity should be displayed in sharing the inconvenience caused by the proximity of Zaventem airport. All this is doing nothing to promote the image of the European institutions in Brussels.

Is it normal and desirable that a trade union representing European officials should adopt such controversial positions in public?

Has the matter been discussed with TAO-AFI? If so, what were the conclusions?