

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3033/04

by Ioannis Varvitsiotis (PPE-DE) and Georgios Papastamkos (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Seismological research under the 7th Research Framework Programme

The Commission's Communication of 16 June 2004 (COM 353 final) proclaims science and technology to be the keys to the future of Europe. In addition to the Commission's proposed areas of major research topics of European interest, which include two new areas for Union action - space and security - stakeholders are called upon to submit proposals for new thematic research priorities as part of the process of developing the EU's 7th Research Framework Programme.

The Commission itself recognises the need for and proposes close ties between research projects and Union policies. Moreover, 'civil protection', which is already an aim of Community action, is included in the list of additional competences by virtue of the Treaty on the Constitution, which states that 'Union action shall aim to: support and complement Member States' action at national, regional and local level in risk prevention, in preparing their civil-protection personnel and in responding to natural or man-made disasters' within the Union. Earthquakes unquestionably constitute such disasters. The European community of seismologists has voiced its legitimate concerns and has stressed the need for seismological research in Europe, particularly in countries such as Greece and Italy which have high levels of seismic activity.

In the light of the above, can the Commission say whether it will support the inclusion of seismological research and seismic risk management in the thematic topics for the 7th Research Framework Programme?