

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2625/08
by Marco Rizzo (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: Aviation security and diplomatic bag

Article 27 of the Vienna Convention of 1961 on diplomatic relations lays down that the diplomatic bag 'shall not be opened or detained' by any authority. Clearly, the diplomatic bag is in theory a real Achilles' heel for aviation security systems: in the past ten years many incidents have occurred involving this peculiarity of the law governing diplomatic relations which have endangered passengers and crew on airliners. Since the events of 11 September, the Council of Europe has also expressed a certain concern on a number of occasions.

1. Will the Commission investigate the real risks to the security of airliners arising from the so-called diplomatic bag?
2. Does not the Commission consider that at a time of genuine terrorist threat, the diplomatic bag could be used to place explosives and arms inside the cabin of an airliner virtually unhindered?
3. Does not the Commission consider that, having ascertained that risks exist, action should be taken at Community level?