

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4664/08
by Marco Rizzo (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: Spanair crash

On 20 August 2008 at Madrid airport, aircraft MD 82 belonging to the Spanair airline crashed at takeoff, causing 153 deaths. This accident appears to have been the result of the failure of the left-hand motor. An earlier attempt at takeoff had been made, but the pilots had arrested the procedure after identifying certain technical anomalies. In such cases, it is usual for the chief pilot to inform the airline of the problem, and responsibility for deciding whether or not to go ahead lies with the airline's technicians. Unfortunately it is frequent, for financial reasons, for airlines to allow planes to take off even when something is obviously wrong, as the - invariably anonymous - testimonies of many pilots reveal.

1. Does the Commission not believe there is a need for a review at Community level of the inspection procedures for aircraft, with particular reference to the risk assessment criteria?
2. In the face of the clear evidence that low-cost policies are leading airlines to cut corners on safety, does the Commission not consider it unacceptable that take-off is being authorised for some flights even when technical faults have been detected in the aircraft?