

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0501/09

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to the Commission

Subject: Commission support for the new European network of official authorities in charge of the totalitarian communist secret police files

Authorities responsible for managing the secret police archives of seven ex-communist states in eastern Europe formed a network in Berlin in December 2008 to assist victims of state repression and aid historical research.

The state agencies serving as custodians of the vast files kept by the intelligence services of East Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria agreed to compare experience and share information.

Their representatives acknowledged that each country had chosen different ways to administer the files since the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 in terms of granting access and conducting criminal investigations.

However, they agreed they could benefit from each other's experiences in the nearly two decades since the collapse of European communism in grappling with the legacy of state spying against citizens and police repression.

Their aim is to be a forum for the mutual exchange and transfer of information; this applies to the archives, the legal regulations, historical and political education, and public relations and involves coming to terms with the past in a European and international context.

The network aims to focus, in particular, on academic research and education in schools as key parts of the transformation processes taking place after the fall of dictatorships worldwide.

How will the Commission support the new European network of official authorities in charge of the totalitarian communist secret police files?