

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4182/09  
by Thomas Ulmer (PPE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Connection between thefts of coaches in Italy and unauthorised access to the Italian register of coach journeys

More and more coaches are being stolen in Italy. Since 2007, more than 300 coaches from Germany and Austria have been stolen, representing an estimated loss of more than € 60 m. One striking feature of this is that a great many coaches are stolen during the night before they are due to return home. As all coach passengers and drivers have to be entered in a central register in Italy, together with travel data, this suggests that unauthorised third parties have gained access to the register with the aim of misusing travel data for their own purposes. The Italian authorities have indirectly confirmed cases of abuse. If a coach is stolen shortly before its scheduled departure, the thieves have several days' respite before the coach is announced missing because of language barriers and formalities between the injured parties and the police. During this period, a coach can pass through Italy inconspicuously and can easily be taken outside the European Union. New owners are to be found in the Middle East, the Balkans and Russia.

What can the Commission do to put an end to this practice and protect Italy's coach register against unauthorised access?