

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4367/09
by Toine Manders (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Fitting global positioning systems (GPS) in cars in order to combat theft

Car alarm systems are becoming more and more secure and complex. Apart from the fact that it is odd that consumers should have to take their new car to a firm in order to have an expensive alarm fitted, the problem is being shifted elsewhere and carjacking (stealing a car and assaulting the driver or threatening him or her with violence) and what is referred to as 'homejacking' (where car keys are stolen from a house and the perpetrators use violence or threaten to do so) are more and more common occurrences. For many people, this is an unpleasant invasion of their privacy. The internal market has no effect, in this connection, because insurance companies in the various Member States have different requirements concerning alarm systems.

To a large extent, this would be resolved if a GPS were fitted in every car. A GPS transmitter is inexpensive and compact and thus easy to conceal in a car. If car manufacturers fitted such transmitters in cars ex-works, thieves would think twice about stealing them, since GPS would make stolen cars easier to trace. Naturally, it would be for consumers to decide whether or not to activate the transmitter, otherwise their privacy would be encroached upon. Most GPS-equipped stolen cars (99%) are found. A GPS transmitter can ensure that an expensive alarm system is no longer necessary, in every instance, unless the consumer opts to have one fitted in addition to a GPS transmitter. By means of a self-established European tracking system, insurance companies could verify the location of stolen cars and report it to the police.

1. How does the Commission view the idea of inducing manufacturers to have GPS transmitters fitted in cars which consumers themselves can decide to activate?
2. What action is the Commission taking as part of its policy to counter carjacking and homejacking in the Member States?
3. Does the Commission agree that an alarm system approved in one Member State should not be subject to additional requirements in other Member States?