

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3491/10
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to the Commission

Subject: Single European Sky and SESAR programme

The ash cloud from the Eyjafjöll volcano severely disrupted European air traffic. For almost a week, most airports were closed and aeroplanes were grounded. This situation has cost airline companies close to EUR 2 billion.

These exceptional circumstances have called into question current air traffic control practices. While the EU is working on a daily basis to bring its citizens and territories closer together, in the sky each Member State has retained full sovereignty over its airspace.

In 1999, the EU launched its Single European Sky programme. The first stage of this promising project was to take effect in 2012. What is the current status of this project? Following Commissioner Kallas's note of 27 April 2010, which measures will the Commission prioritise?

The SESAR programme, the technical aspect of the Single Sky, is scheduled to be set up in 2020, with a development phase due to draw to a close in 2014. It is this programme which has the highest funding needs and the greatest economic impact (there is talk of a total cost of EUR 30 billion). Yet the SESAR programme is not listed among the priorities of the Commission's 2010 work programme. Why is this?