

**Question for written answer E-000617/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Cristiana Muscardini (PPE)

Subject: Banking secrecy

Following the publication last summer of an investigation by the New York Times in which it reported that as part of its 'War on Terror', the US Government had for many years had access to the entire database of the interbank consortium SWIFT, we question what has happened to the banking secrecy of Europeans. The investigation showed that not only had the banking details of US citizens been acquired, but that those of EU citizens using the SWIFT system were also being intercepted. The government of Belgium, where the headquarters of the SWIFT consortium are located, has already declared the transfer of these data to the US administration to be illegal. Switzerland, it would appear, has acknowledged the death of banking secrecy and the EU itself has asked for the matter to be discussed with urgency.

1. Can the Commission say whether these discussions have taken place and, if so, what the outcome was?
2. Does it not consider that the disappearance of banking secrecy represents a serious attack on privacy and the sacrosanct principle of private property?
3. Does it consider it acceptable that American or European 'bureaucrats' are able to contravene banking secrecy without the authorisation of a magistrate in the context of an alleged offence?
4. What measures does it intend to take to guarantee the right of European citizens to banking secrecy?