

**Question for written answer E-002963/2012
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE)

Subject: Operational use of helicopters and on-board safety issues

French and European helicopter operators have been badly affected by the crisis. The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has published a new text, OPS 3, on the operational use of helicopters and on-board safety issues, which is to be applied from 8 April 2012. From comments made within the industry it would seem that this document raises concerns among operators, particularly regarding the requirement to have two crew members – a pilot and a ‘qualified’ crew member – and the requirement to use multi-engine helicopters in various situations, including operations over mountainous areas.

1. In what way did the Commission consult the sector when drawing up these new standards?
2. Can the Commission clarify what is meant by ‘qualified’ in relation to the two on-board helicopter crew members? Can it specify what type of qualifications, training or exams are required?
3. Finally, in view of the difficulties cited by the industry before OPS 3 has even been implemented, has an assessment of these new measures been planned? If so, what is the timetable for this?