

**Question for written answer E-003621/2012
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Timothy Kirkhope (ECR)

Subject: Withdrawal of customs facilities at French airfields

It has recently been announced that the French authorities have withdrawn customs facilities at about 40 small airfields, and intend to announce further closures in the coming months. This adversely affects UK private pilots.

Since the UK is not part of the Schengen agreement, it will now be impossible to fly into a French airport. Until this announcement, pilots flying to continental Europe have been using a simple exchange of customs forms known as the General Aviation Report (GAR). For outbound flights from the UK these reports must be sent in advance to airfields where customs facilities exist. The process is less restrictive for those coming into the UK.

The withdrawal of customs facilities at so many French airfields used by general aviation pilots is an unreasonable impediment to free travel within the EU, and is not in the spirit of the Union. What can be done to ensure the continued free movement of persons in this way?