

ORAL QUESTION H-0389/03

for Question Time at the part-session in July 2003

pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure

by Christos Zacharakis

to the Commission

Subject: Contravention of international legal rules by Turkey, and danger of causing a serious accident to a passenger aeroplane in Greek airspace

On 9 June 2003, two Turkish F-16 fighter planes harassed an Olympic Airways aircraft on the Athens-Istanbul route, placing the lives of the passengers in direct danger. The aircraft's automatic crash avoidance safety system was triggered and Greek fighter planes were forced to intercept the Turkish planes.

This action constitutes a clear contravention of the rules of international law and, more specifically, a violation of European Union airspace and thus of its territorial integrity, placing the safety of EU citizens in danger, and represents a violation of fundamental standards of international conduct, such as those enshrined in the Treaty on European Union and in the United Nations Charter and included within the Copenhagen criteria. It is a reflection of a systematic Turkish policy which leads to tension in relations between Greece and Turkey and directly threatens the peace and security of the region. In view of these facts, what urgent steps does the Commission intend to take to put a stop to such aggressive acts by Turkey and to prevent their repetition in the future, and what consequences will the Turkish strategy adopted to date have on the assessment of the country's progress towards EU membership?

Tabled: 11.06.2003

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