

**Question for oral answer O-000025/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 115

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

Subject: Use of mobile phones in airborne aircraft

For several years there has been a debate over the use of mobile phones in airborne aircraft. Airlines across the world, in accordance with the obligations imposed by their respective civil aviation authorities, ban the use of mobile phones in aircraft throughout the cruise, takeoff and landing phases. The reason for this ban stems from the fact that the use of such devices onboard may cause disturbances to terrestrial mobile communication networks and could potentially interfere with the onboard equipment.

A recent article published in the *New York Times* disputes the validity of these arguments, quoting a 2006 study conducted by the Radio Technical Commission for Aeronautics, a non-profit corporation active on an international level and known for its studies and research in the field of radio communications in the aeronautical sector. The study showed that onboard equipment in aircraft is not only shielded to protect it from interference from mobile devices but also uses a different set of frequencies from those used by mobile networks, and that, although it is not proven that mobile phones do not interfere with onboard equipment, there is no evidence to prove the opposite. Last October, the Federal Aviation Administration (the US federal agency for civil aviation) established a study group in order to thoroughly analyse the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices onboard aircrafts, on the back of arguments outlined in various studies.

In addition, there have been cases of disputes over the use of mobile phones between cabin crew and passengers, resulting in several threats to flights' safety.

In the light of this information, we ask the Commission:

1. What are the scientific studies on which the ban on the use of mobile phones in airborne aircraft is based?
2. Does the Commission believe that such a ban is still justified?
3. If so, should the arguments on which this ban is based prove to be unfounded, rendering the ban imposed by air carriers and civil aviation authorities useless, does the Commission think it would be necessary to issue new rules authorising the use of mobile phones in airborne aircraft?

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