

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2679/01
by Christoph Konrad (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Protection of the civilian population in the EU

The terrorist attacks in New York and Washington have highlighted serious shortcomings in the protection of the civilian population there. It may be assumed that such shortcomings also exist in the EU Member States. Following the end of the Cold War, the resources allocated to civil protection in Germany, for example, were reduced considerably in the light of the altered perception of the threat. Since then, experts have begun to perceive the threat by ABC weapons from terrorists as a realistic scenario. This raises the question of the protection of the civilian population, particularly in Europe's conurbations.

On 19 September 2001 the German Bundestag adopted an "Anti-Terrorism Package" to strengthen the army and security bodies. Civil protection was not mentioned.

In questions below the term 'protection of the population' covers both the protection of civilians in an armed conflict within the meaning of the Geneva Convention and protection against disasters in general.

1. Is the protection of the population in the European Union regarded as adequate?
2. Are there plans for a comprehensive protection of the population within the Union? If so, what are they?
3. Does the Commission see any reason to step up its efforts in this area in the light of the events of 11 September 2001?
4. Is it conceivable that the EU will develop binding minimum standards for the protection of the civilian population, particularly in European conurbations or cities?