

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1154/04
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to the Commission

Subject: Fight against terrorism

The Madrid attacks have once again proved the rule that Europe requires crises, or even tragedies, in order to make progress. After months of futile procrastination, it has finally been recognised that Europe needs a constitution in order to provide the EU with the means of protecting itself against those who threaten it, and in order to create the common area of freedom and security for which the citizens have long called.

Priority should however not be given to expanding existing bodies or increasing bureaucracy, as some have suggested, but to the question of whether governments are determined to make use of European structures to develop police and judicial cooperation. Although Europol and Eurojust have already been set up for this purpose, they are used infrequently and inefficiently. More seriously, the report by the Council Secretariat on the plan of action to combat terrorism shows that the main obstacle to efficient cooperation is of a political nature, namely mistrust. It is unacceptable that terrorists should be able to operate without borders while this is impossible for the police, judicial and intelligence services, even within the European Union.

What is the Commission's position with regard to this 'culture of secrecy'?

Have measures been taken to correct the shortcomings exposed in the above-mentioned report by the Council Secretariat and, if so, what measures have been taken?