

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4942/08  
by Johan Van Hecke (ALDE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Mapping Africa

Geographical information systems and maps are urgently needed for the African continent. Such systems may play a vital role in improving agriculture and food security in Africa. Knowledge of such matters as erosion, natural resources and sources of water is essential, and knowledge of all these factors combined is of inestimable value. Geographical information systems (GIS) such as Google Earth make this possible.

GIS systems are able not just to clarify which regions are suitable for a particular type of agriculture, but also to permit effective marketing. GIS can also be used to tackle environmental problems.

However, what Africa lacks is the resources to develop such systems. Not only is the existing data incomplete, the available information is also often out of date. Is the Commission active in this area, and does it recognise the need for GIS for the development of Africa?