

WRITTEN QUESTION P-5658/08
by Adam Bielan (UEN)
to the Commission

Subject: Name of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) programme

On 15 September Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen announced in Lille the new name of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) programme. He said that the programme would be called *Kopernikus*. Commissioner Verheugen used the German spelling of the Polish astronomer's surname, thereby emphasising the Polish scientist's German origins.

Using the German spelling of the name of an outstanding Polish astronomer is a distortion of historical awareness and demonstrates a lack of knowledge or ill intention on the part of Commissioner Verheugen. The Commissioner's explanation that *Kopernikus* is a registered trademark is unacceptable. The naming of European programmes should not be in any way controversial and should respect the historical truth.

In the light of Commissioner Verheugen's controversial proposal concerning the name of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security programme, could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does the name of the programme proposed by Commissioner Verheugen imply an attempt to rewrite history, or is it merely a linguistic error?
2. What is the Commission's position with regard to the naming of European programmes, which I firmly believe should not arouse any controversy and should respect the historical truth?