

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0885/10  
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to the Commission

Subject: Airbus-Boeing dispute before the WTO

Since October 2004, the WTO has been dealing with a dispute between the European Commission and the US Administration regarding the subsidies granted to Boeing and Airbus.

The preliminary, confidential report on the case against Airbus was submitted to both parties in September 2009. However, owing to a series of delays, the preliminary report setting out the case against subsidies granted to Boeing, will not be submitted before June 2010, despite written assurances from the WTO that it would be ready before the end of 2009.

This gap between the two reports, both of which set out the same accusations, is unacceptable and, what is more, it threatens to place Airbus at a serious commercial disadvantage. In the context of the US Air Force refuelling contract, several members of Congress have used the conclusions of the report against Airbus to discredit the European plane-maker.

The fact that the report against Boeing has not yet been submitted, and the Commission's failure to take a public stance in defence of Airbus, has created an unbalanced situation, in which the European aviation industry's flagship company is unable to compete fairly for a contract which is crucial for its future development.

In light of this situation, what will the Commission do to ensure that the WTO makes every effort to draft the long-awaited report concerning the subsidies granted to Boeing as soon as possible? What measures will it take to make sure that public opinion and the political community on both sides of the Atlantic are given a fair account of the dispute? With due regard for the confidentiality of the report already submitted, is the Commission prepared to publicly and actively defend Airbus, with reference to both the lawfulness of the subsidies granted to the company to date and on Airbus's right to participate on an equitable footing in the call for tenders for the refuelling contract?