

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0348/05
by Frédérique Ries (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: User forum

In its communication on terrorism (COM(2004) 698 final), the Commission states that, to ease communication between the public and the authorities in the event of a terrorist attack or other emergency, it is working to set up a user forum made up of officials specialising in public safety and emergency telecommunications.

Could the Commission tell us when it intends to hold the first meeting of this forum, and how much funding from the 2005 budget has been earmarked to cover the costs of organising such meetings?

Reply by Mr. Frattini

Subject: User forum of officials in the field of public safety and emergency communications services

The new global security environment and the rapid technological evolution cause major new challenges upon public safety and emergency communications services. The Commission therefore has intensified cooperation with the Member States at all levels with a view to further improve and strengthen dialogue on these issues.

A user forum made up of officials in the field of public safety and emergency communications services is foreseen in the Commission Communication on consequence management COM (2004) 698 to facilitate a more permanent dialogue between emergency service operators and authorities. The forum would provide an opportunity for all players responsible for public safety and emergency communications to exchange views, discuss common issues, share information and devise common objectives and requirements. This should lead to high levels of interoperability and scale-economies in EU 25 and provide input for the development of global standards where appropriate.

Furthermore, in order to progress rapidly in some key policy areas the Commission envisages holding a series of workshops. These will address issues such as multilingual support for 112 and new concepts for public warning systems and procedures.

The Commission has now entered the preparatory phase and it is hoped that the required financial decision will be finalized in time in order to enable it to organize the first meeting of the forum this year. The amount foreseen would include other security public-private dialogue related meetings and conferences. It is likely that the total available amount (of the 2005 budget) would be about € 500.000.