



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 17 July 2006

11720/06

LIMITE

PE-QE 607

PUBLIC

**PRELIMINARY DRAFT REPLY TO WRITTEN QUESTION
E-2592/06 put by Antonios Trakatellis (PPE-DE)**

from : General Secretariat of the Council

to : Permanent Representations of the Member States

Subject : **" Process of Turkish accession to the EU: collision between Turkish and Greek fighter aircraft - violations of the principle of good neighbourliness and compliance with the obligations of the partnership "**

1. Delegations will find attached:

- the text of the above Written Question;
- a preliminary draft reply prepared by the General Secretariat.

2. If no comments have been received from delegations **by 21 August 2006**, this preliminary draft reply will be submitted to the Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1) and to the Council for approval.

Any comments received will be examined by the Working Party on General Affairs.

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2592/06
by Antonios Trakatellis (PPE-DE)
to the Council

Subject: Process of Turkish accession to the EU: collision between Turkish and Greek fighter aircraft - violations of the principle of good neighbourliness and compliance with the obligations of the partnership

On 23 May 2006, a Turkish fighter formation consisting of two F-16s and an RF4 photography/reconnaissance aircraft, without having submitted their flight plan in advance to the Athens FIR¹, approached the area south of the island of Karpathos in the Aegean Sea where two Greek F-16s set out to reconnoitre the three Turkish aircraft. This operation resulted in a collision at 27 000 feet between a Turkish F-16 and a Greek F-16, in which the Greek pilot was killed. The Turkish pilot managed to eject and was subsequently saved by a Greek rescue operation. It emerged that the Turkish aircraft had been ordered out on a mission to take photographs of defence systems on the island of Crete. Given that the air crash was witnessed by an Egyptian pilot flying a civil aircraft close to the explosion and that numerous civil aircraft fly through the Athens FIR, will the Council answer the following questions?

1. Are Turkey's belligerent operations in the Aegean consistent with that country's European strategy and, in particular, with Council Decision 2006/35/EC² on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Turkey, which expressly requires Turkey to commit unequivocally to good neighbourly relations, address any sources of friction with neighbours; and refrain from any action which could negatively affect the process of peaceful settlement of disputes?
2. What explanation is there for a country applying for accession conducting warlike operations against a Member State?
3. Is there or is there not an obligation to respect the principle of good neighbourliness as part of the process of Turkish accession to the Union and what obligations derive from the application of that principle for Turkey given that the abovementioned Council Decision states that Turkey must ensure that civilian authorities fully exercise their supervisory functions, in particular as regards the formulation of the national security strategy and its implementation, and take steps towards bringing about greater accountability and transparency in the conduct of security affairs?
4. Are the provocative acts of the Turkish armed forces affecting relations with Greece registered in any way and will this tragic event be taken into account in the progress report on Turkey, which is expected to be published at the end of 2006?

¹ Flight Information Region.

² OJ L 22, 26.1.2006, p. 34.

REPLY

to Written Question E-2592/06

put by Antonios Trakatellis (PPE-DE)

The Honourable Member is kindly requested to refer to the joint reply recently given by the Council to written questions E-2486/06 and P-2589/06 submitted by Mr Karatzaferis and Mr Dimitrakopoulos on the same subject.
