



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**NOTE**

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from :	General Secretariat of the Council
to :	Delegations
Subject :	Report on the meeting of the Temporary Committee on the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transport and illegal detention of prisoners, held in Brussels on 23 November 2006

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The meeting was chaired by Baroness Ludford (ALDE, UK).

**Exchange of views with Ms PRZEWLOCKA, former director of Szczytno/Szymany airport, Poland**

Ms PRZEWLOCKA told the Committee that she had been working at the airport between 2001 and 2005. During 2001-2003 she was the head of the technical unit and was responsible for the airport infrastructure. From 2003 she was the director of the airport.

Asked about the procedures for landing of the suspicious Golfstreams that passed through the airport in 2002 and 2003, Ms Przewlocka confirmed that there had been special procedures for these aircraft. The flights were considered to be “special flights”. One or two days before the arrival of such a special flight, the airport would receive a call from the border guard and one from the military staff. No information was passed on to customs. When the aircraft landed two border guards walked out to it. The aircraft did not park at the terminal but was positioned at the end of the runway. The aircraft always parked with the front directed towards the forest. It was not possible

from the control tower or the terminal to see if people got on or off the plane, but Ms Przewlocka could not dismiss with 100 percent certainty the possibility that no detained person was taken off the plane. The border guards, who were the only ones that could approach, stayed at the aircraft for a few minutes and then left. Once they had left, vans with dark windows and Polish army registration plates drove out to the plane. Once the vans had been there, the aircraft took off again. Ms Przewlocka thought that the vans went to the quarters of the special military unit, since they had specific registration plates of that military unit. She could not confirm the information which Mr CATANIA (GUE/NGL, IT) had obtained that someone had followed the vans to a base about 20 km from the airport. Asked to clarify who was present when the flights landed, she said that no military staff were present, only the border guards. Mr FAVA had understood that once the border guards had left the aircraft, and the vans were there, no Poles were present. Ms PRZEWLOCKA confirmed this. No further questions to clarify the identity of the drivers of the vans were asked.

On one occasion an ambulance was present. Ms Przewlocka did not know why it was there. When asked who sent the ambulance, she replied that she did not know, but that under Polish rules all ambulance transports had to be registered, so it should be possible to find out. She said that it was not sent from the regular health care service, and thought that it could be from the special military unit or the police academy. She finished work at the same time as the ambulance left the airport, and had seen it drive in the direction of the police academy, not to the local hospital.

Asked about the status of the airport, Ms Przewlocka explained that the airport was a civilian airport, but that it was also a “back-up” airport for the border guards. The civilian management could not oppose what the boarder guard decided.

Owing to weather conditions, the airport did not normally accept flights during winter and snow was not removed from the runway. However, in February 2002, when the runway had not been cleared for six weeks, she was ordered to prepare the runway for a landing. Her manager told her that if it was not ready “heads would roll”. Six Gulfstreams landed between 2002 and 2003, two in 2002 and four in 2003. Furthermore, in September 2003, a Boeing 737 landed. On that occasion, the airport only got a phone call from the military staff, announcing the arrival of the flight, not from the border guards. The arrival of the Boeing 737 caused some concern, since the airport was too small to handle such a large aircraft. The fuelling facilities and the stairways were not adapted to bigger aircraft. Ms BREPOELS (PPE-DE, BE) said that according to the Marty Report<sup>1</sup>, the Polish

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<sup>1</sup> Report by Dick Marty on behalf of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the

authorities had said that the data concerning the flight were lost. However, Human Rights Watch had provided information on this flight, which showed that it had landed at Szymany airport. During the mission to Poland of a delegation of the Committee, a former director of the airport had told the members of the delegation that this particular flight never landed at the airport, but others had confirmed that it did. Ms PRZEWLOCKA confirmed that the flight had landed. She was there herself, and was worried since the airport did not have the required technical facilities to arrange for a proper landing. She considered that the Boeing 737 should have landed at another airport. The flight data were available for authorised airport staff, and had to be somewhere. Asked about passengers on the plane, Ms Przewlocka said that no passengers entered the control tower building. She did not have any “active memory” of any passengers boarding the plane, although she thought it was possible.

Asked about the arrangements for payment of the landing fees of the special flights, Ms PRZEWLOCKA explained that one day or a few days after the landing a person who was Polish, or at least had an excellent command of Polish, came to the airport and gave the name of the company to be invoiced. The person then paid in cash, regardless of the amount. It was different persons who paid, but there was one person who paid on at least two occasions. Ms Przewlocka did not have any person to contact if the person who should pay did not show up. It was the military staff of the airport who told her that someone would come and pay. She presumed that the military staff had contact persons. There was never any problem with the payment and it was never suggested that the fees were too high. She did not remember the names of the companies, but they were different ones. It should be possible to find the information about the companies in the airport’s register. The companies were not Polish and in her opinion they seemed to be American, although she was not completely certain. The staff of the airport were quite happy about the landings, because they meant additional income, which meant that salaries could be paid. The staff referred to the planes as “spy planes” and used to ask each other if “anyone had seen the spies yet”.

Ms PRZEWLOCKA informed the Committee that she had been called to the local customs authority in an inquiry. It was not an inquiry to clarify what had happened. Instead, she had been criticised for not following procedure for the landings. She had no knowledge of any inquiry by the Polish government to shed light on the landings. The investigations by the customs authority had started in June or July 2006. Asked whether the investigation had opened before or after she had participated in a film by Canal+ about the CIA-flights, she said it was after. She had not thought

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about that before, but now she saw it quite clearly. She had lost her job in 2005. She did not want to comment on any potential link between the investigation and the fact that she had lost her job. No-one had put pressure on her with regard to her visit to the Temporary Committee of the European Parliament.

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