



The President

Mr Christian Engström
Member of the European Parliament
ASP 08G153
Brussels

305631 28.03.2013

Dear Mr Engström,

Thank you for your e-mail and fax of 12 March in relation to blocking e-mails from citizens concerning the report on "Eliminating gender stereotypes".

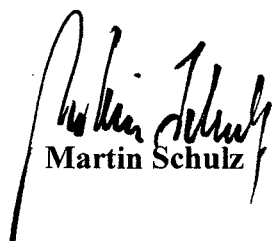
The IT department of the European Parliament noticed on 7 March an excessive number of e-mails towards EP e-mail boxes coming from external senders. An analysis by the IT department in relation to these external e-mails has shown the following:

- the e-mails sent were in relation to the report on "Eliminating gender stereotypes";
- 708.683 messages were sent to the European Parliament (of which 457.325 were blocked after installing a filter and 251.358 delivered);
- the e-mails were received from 850 different addresses: on average this is more than 800 e-mails per address;
- one single e-mail address was responsible for sending 106.771 e-mails to the European Parliament;
- the number of messages per minute shows that there are several levels of continuous sending of e-mails (500 e-mails per minute, 450 e-mails per minute, 400 e-mails per minute, etc) which indicates an organised action using automatic means for sending mass e-mails to the European Parliament;
- when analysing the servers from which the e-mails were sent, two main servers have been identified which are responsible for sending the vast majority of the e-mails to the European Parliament;

Considering that the European Parliament receives on average 250.000 e-mails from external senders per day and that in addition 230.000 e-mails concerning the report on "Eliminating gender stereotypes" were received, this is a strong indication that the European Parliament is being targeted by mass e-mails.

In order to guarantee the functionality of the European Parliament's e-mail system (which is one of the essential services offered to the European Parliament), it was decided to install a filter at 9:30 to reduce the number of external e-mails in relation to the report on "Eliminating gender stereotypes". After the filter was installed, the European Parliament received 250.000 additional e-mails by 16:00 of the same day. At noon on 8 March there were 500.000 e-mails and on 9 March 708.683 e-mails in total were received from external sources all in relation to the report on "Eliminating gender stereotypes". Out of the 708.683 e-mails, 457.325 were blocked (after installing a filter) and 251.358 were delivered. No e-mails have been deleted or cancelled and all e-mails which have been blocked are in the "quarantine" part of the infrastructure.

In conclusion, considering the high number of e-mails received in a very short period of time, the limited number of different e-mail accounts (850) used to send the e-mails, the usage of automated means for producing the e-mails and the usage of mainly two servers to send the e-mails, the IT department considered that the European Parliament was the subject of an abnormal massive e-mail flow and that the intervention of the technical services is justified to install a filter to reduce the number of messages from external sources concerning the report on "Eliminating gender stereotypes" in order to ensure the functioning of the European Parliament's e-mail service.



Martin Schulz