WRITTEN QUESTION E-2321/01

by Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE-DE) to the Council

(3 August 2001)

Subject: Trafficking in human beings in the EU: the example of Greece

The recent US Department of State report on trafficking in human beings notes that some EU countries and candidate countries lack the appropriate legislation and infrastructures to combat trafficking in human beings.

The report is especially critical of Greece which, it says, receives women from Balkan and former Soviet Union countries who either stay on in Greece or are channelled to Western European countries.

Greece is the only EU country to be classified by this report in the worst category together with countries of the Third World.

Does the Council consider that the measures it is taking are sufficient to ensure the safety and dignity of persons threatened by this scourge? What initiatives does it intend to take to deal with these phenomena effectively?

Does it intend to take practical initiatives to promote cooperation between Europol, Interpol and the police authorities of the Member States on this specific issue?

How does it judge the particularly negative situation in Greece as regards the legislative framework, prevention, repression and the provision of help for the victims? How does it intend to address this situation?

Reply

(12 February 2002)

The Council reminds the Honourable Member that at its meeting on 27 and 28 September 2001, it reached political agreement, without prejudice to parliamentary reservations and the examination of the European Parliament's Opinion, on the draft Framework Decision on combating trafficking in human beings. The aim of the Framework Decision is to ensure that each Member State takes the necessary measures to ensure that the following acts are punishable: the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, and subsequent reception of a person, including exchange or transfer of control over that person, for the purpose of exploitation of that person's labour or services, including at least forced or compulsory labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery or servitude, or for the purpose of the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, including in pornography. At the same meeting, the Council agreed on guidelines with a view to reaching political agreement on the draft Framework Decision on combating the sexual exploitation of children and child pornography and instructed its preparatory bodies to continue their work expeditiously.

All Member States of the European Union have appropriate infrastructures for receiving illegal immigrants under conditions of dignity which meet the requirements of various international Conventions, such as the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights.

However, those infrastructures may on occasion prove inadequate, in particular when there is a huge influx of illegal immigrants over a short period of time. Several States affected by such temporary situations have coped as well as possible, making considerable efforts.

The Honourable Member will, however, note that the measures to be taken by Member States to accommodate illegal immigrants come within the sphere of competence of the Member States and he should, as regards the measures undertaken by the European Union to combat trafficking in human beings and their sexual exploitation, refer to the reply given at the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg in May 2001 to his Oral Question No H-0431/01 on trafficking in children in Africa (joint reply with H-396/01 by Mr Manuel Perez Alvarez — ‘The vessel Etireno’).