WRITTEN QUESTION P-3643/02
by Olivier Dupuis (NI) to the Commission

(10 December 2002)

Subject: Forced repatriation of Chechen refugees from the Iman camp in Aki Yurt, Ingushetia

The authorities of the Russian Federation and Ingushetia have begun to implement the decision to close all the refugee camps in Ingushetia. These camps house more than 100,000 Chechens who have fled the war, round-ups, torture, rapes, kidnappings, summary executions and other forms of persecution which the Russian authorities are systematically inflicting on the civilian population of Chechnya. In the last few days, the Russian authorities have carried out the forced repatriation of some 2,000 Chechen refugees living in the Iman camp in Aki Yurt. In accordance with the instructions issued by Moscow, all the other camps in Ingushetia must be closed before the end of December, i.e. in mid-winter. Last week, the Commission, through Commissioner Nielson, expressed its concern regarding this matter to the Russian Federation, pointing out that the European Commission and the international community as a whole have repeatedly called on the authorities not to close any refugee camps in Ingushetia until such time as the displaced persons can be guaranteed a safe return to their homes.

Has the Commission officially reacted to this umpteenth violation of the relevant international agreements by the authorities of the Russian Federation and, if so, in what form and in what terms? What practical steps does the Commission plan to take in order to persuade the Russian authorities to call an immediate halt to the forced repatriation of Chechen refugees and to comply with the spirit and the letter of international agreements on refugees? In the light of the extremely serious health and food-supply situation facing the more than 100,000 Chechens who are still refugees in Ingushetia and the more than 300,000 Chechens who are refugees within Chechnya itself, does the Commission not feel it has a duty to propose to the Council and Parliament an emergency plan so that these Chechen refugees, or a substantial number of them, can be temporarily housed on Union territory?

Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission

(15 January 2003)

The Commission has always followed the Chechen conflict and the resulting humanitarian tragedy very closely. The Commission is aware of the scale of the fundamental rights violations in Chechnya and of the breach of international humanitarian law, which requires protection of the civilian population. On a number of occasions it has expressed its deep concern to the Russian authorities about the threat to close the camps for displaced people in Ingushetia. The Commission is also taking part in a number of diplomatic initiatives launched by the EU in the framework of the political dialogue with the Russian Federation.

Its formal response to the closure of the Aki Yurt camp has taken a number of forms. The Commissioner responsible for development and humanitarian aid has strongly condemned this forced displacement of civilians in the middle of winter. The EU delivered the same message at the ministerial meeting of the Organisation for Economic cooperation and Development (OECD) at Porto and again on 9 December 2002 to Mr Vladimir Chizov, the deputy foreign minister, when it called on the Russian authorities not to close other camps for displaced persons. The Troika of EU Ambassadors in Moscow were to meet the Russian federal minister, Mr Stanislav Ilyasov, who is in charge of reconstruction in Chechnya, on 16 December and inform him of the EU’s deep concern.

The appropriate solution for the terrible situation in Chechnya is, in the Commission’s opinion, an immediate halt to human rights violations and pursuit of all those responsible for such violations. The EU has also invited the Russian authorities at the highest level to work towards a political solution that would lay the foundations for lasting peace, stability and reconstruction in Chechnya. The EU will remain extremely attentive to the issue of human rights in Chechnya and will raise the problem in all appropriate forums of the bilateral political dialogue with the Russian Federation. It will also take an active part in the discussions and initiatives concerning Chechnya within the Council of Europe and the OECD.
Apart from these political initiatives, the Commission remains the biggest humanitarian aid donor in the North Caucasus, which, since the onset of the second conflict, has received over EUR 90 million in aid for the victims of the fighting. The Commission will also continue to raise the question of access and the multiple obstacles the Russian authorities put in the path of humanitarian organisations on the ground, an issue which is at the centre of discussions between the EU and Russia.

(2003/C 137 E/268) WRITTEN QUESTION E-3672/02
by Antonio Di Pietro (ELDR) to the Commission
(18 December 2002)

Subject: The practice of stomatology

In Italy, access for doctors to the practice of stomatology is subject to inclusion on the register of dental practitioners, who are not physicians, for the simple reason that the professional associations want to regulate medical practice in the field of stomatology via the ‘dentist directives’, thereby obliging doctors who want to practice stomatology to be included on a professional register alien to their actual profession, in blatant contravention of Community Directive 93/16/EEC (1).

This misguided requirement has been causing serious prejudice, not least in the legal sphere, to those doctors who have relied on the provisions of Directive 93/16 in order to treat mouths and teeth in their role as doctors on the medical register, a right recognised by Directive 93/16 for holders of a degree in medicine.

This attitude, which has already been censured twice in infringement proceedings brought against Italy (cases C-40/93 and C-202/99), both of which resulted in a guilty verdict on the grounds that Italy had treated as identical two different professions regulated by different directives which treat them separately (cf. the Commission’s answers to written questions E-1522/96 (2), E-1649/97 (3), E-2698/98, E-2699/98 and E-2700/98 (4)).

Can the Commission say whether the degree in medicine and surgery awarded in Italy to people who started their medical training in the 1980/81 academic year or later have the minimum training requirements allowing them to practice medicine in Italy in the field of odontostomatology or whether the exercise of this activity is subject to possession of a specialised qualification or inclusion on the register of dental practitioners, who are not physicians?


Answer given by Mr Bolkestein on behalf of the Commission
(20 January 2003)

Except where provided for by specific derogations, the Member States have been prohibited from authorising non-specialist doctors to practice dentistry or odontostomatology since the entry into force of Council Directives 78/686/EEC and 78/687/EEC of 25 July 1978 (1) concerning the mutual recognition of dental practitioners’ diplomas and the coordination of their professional training. This situation was confirmed by the Court of Justice in its judgment of 1 June 1995 in Case C-40/93 (Commission v Italian Republic (2)), which stated that Member States may not, under any circumstances, create categories of dental practitioners that are not provided for by the aforementioned Directives.

The only derogation affecting Italy appears in Article 19 of Directive 78/686/EEC, which expressly allows Italian doctors who began their university and medical training before 28 January 1980 to continue to practice dentistry in Italy and to move to any other Member State for that purpose. Because there was no specific dental training and profession which were separate from those open to medical practitioners in Italy at the time of the adoption of Directives 78/686/EEC and 78/687/EEC, the rights of the doctors in question had to be preserved whilst the new profession was being established.