

It should be added that it is not for the Council to comment on audiovisual media management appointments in a Member State, on Government education policy in a Member State, on the rulings of a Member State's court or indeed on statements made by a Commissioner in a personal capacity.

(98/C 196/170)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0203/98
by Gerhard Hager (NI) to the Council
(11 February 1998)

Subject: Schengen task force

Recently there have been reports of a 'task force' which will be concerned with measures to improve the Schengen external frontiers. Accordingly, I should like to ask the Council the following questions:

1. What prompted the European Union to set up this task force?
2. Where does the Council feel there are shortcomings in existing checks at external borders?
3. What improvements does the Council expect the new task force to bring about?
4. Does the Council believe that setting up a task force can ensure foolproof checks at land and sea borders?
5. Is the Council of the opinion that the current difficulties are caused solely by problems in national transposition or by shortcomings in the Schengen rules?
6. Does the Council regard the practice of some Member States (detecting illegal immigrants but not ensuring that they subsequently leave the territory of the Union) as running counter to the Union's acquis?

Answer

(7 April 1998)

The working party referred to by the Honourable Member (the 'Schengen Task Force') is not a European Union but a Schengen working party. The Council is not competent to reply to the question posed.

(98/C 196/171)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0267/98
by Yiannis Roubatis (PSE) to the Council
(17 February 1998)

Subject: Tragic consequences of the sanctions policy for the population of Iraq

The sanctions policy imposed on the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq has had tragic consequences for the population of the country, and particularly children who suffer from malnutrition and a lack of drugs.

Given that it is questionable how much the sanctions policy has produced the desired results and the plight of the population is unbearable for any civilized state:

Will the Council say:

1. What is its position on this matter?
2. Does it intend to take any measures to relieve the plight of the population and particularly the children suffering from malnutrition and a lack of drugs?