

(98/C 323/39)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0333/98
by Thomas Megahy (PSE) to the Council
(17 February 1998)

Subject: Violation by the United States authorities of rights guaranteed by the Vienna Convention on consular relations

Between 60 and 100 foreign nationals have been condemned to death in the United States of America and are currently awaiting execution. At least 8 of these are citizens of Member States of the European Union. Under Article 36 of the Vienna Convention on consular relations, to which the United States is a signatory, every foreign national should in such circumstances be given access to his or her consul. Few of the condemned prisoners have been given such access.

Could the Council state what action either it or any of its constituent Member State authorities intends to take, or intends to request the Commission to take, in relation to this clear violation of both human rights and civilised behaviour?

Answer
(13/14 July 1998)

The Council regrets that in some cases, whether at state or federal level, the authorities concerned do not notify consular officials as they should.

As a party to the Vienna Convention on consular relations, the United States is required to apply its provisions, including those concerning consular officials' access to individuals in prison. It is for the Member States of the European Union to protect the interests of their nationals in the United States and, where appropriate, to intervene with the competent United States authorities to resolve any problems that their consular representations may encounter. If there is no diplomatic or consular representation of the Member State of the citizen concerned, then, in accordance with Article 8C of the Treaty establishing the European Community, he or she will be entitled to protection by the diplomatic or consular authorities of any Member State represented, on the same conditions as the nationals of that State.

(98/C 323/40)

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0356/98
by Mirja Ryyänen (ELDR) to the Commission
(6 February 1998)

Subject: Legal protection of EU citizens in Russia

Road traffic from the EU Member States to Russia has grown rapidly with the opening up of Russia and its increased trade with the West. There is a particularly high level of traffic from Finland, the only EU country to have a border with Russia.

There have recently been numerous road accidents in Russia, as a result of which Finnish nationals involved have been imprisoned for long periods of time awaiting court decisions, even though the accident was not the result of the driver's actions. Among other things, the prisoners have not been allowed to contact their families.

How does the Commission propose to take to ensure that Russia does not discriminate in its own legislation against the EU Member States and their nationals?

What pressure will the Commission bring to bear on the Russian authorities to guarantee the legal protection of EU nationals working in Russia?

Answer given by Mr Van den Broek on behalf of the Commission
(27 February 1998)

The Commission shares the concerns of the Honourable Member concerning the legal protection of Community citizens in Russia.