

1. Can the Commission verify whether this depiction of the situation is accurate and whether this absurd example might be one of the consequences of the Austrian Residence Act?
2. Does the Commission take the view that the new Residence Act could be implemented in the European Union and that it is compatible with its principles?

Answer given by Mr Vitorino on behalf of the Commission

(13 June 2002)

It is not the Commission's practice to comment on draft legislation in fields in which the Member States are not required to notify their plans to the Commission.

But it would observe that, from 1 June 2002, citizens of the European Union, as well as nationals of the European Economic Area (EEA) and the Swiss Confederation and members of their families, have the right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States, the EU, the EEA and Switzerland, without being subject to any conditions regarding their language ability.

(2002/C 277 E/156)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1048/02

by Chris Davies (ELDR) to the Commission

(17 April 2002)

Subject: Commission action on shark finning

On 14 March 2002 the European Parliament approved a resolution calling on the European Commission to propose the prohibition of shark finning by all vessels registered to EU Member States and the landing of severed shark fins at all EU ports, and the implementation of measures to comply with the UN International Plan of Action for Sharks (B5-0031/2002, included in report A5-0063/2002).

What action does the Commission intend to take?

Is it true that initiatives to prevent shark finning are being delayed by lengthy discussions in the Commission regarding which species should be included and the need to specify precise conversion rates from whole sharks to fins for every species taken?

Answer given by Mr Fischler on behalf of the Commission

(7 May 2002)

The Community supported actively the technical meetings that prepared the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) International Plan of Actions for Sharks, and its adoption at global level in 1999.

As follow up, the Commission already presented a Community draft plan of action to the FAO Committee on Fisheries (FAO-COFI) in February 2001. A further implementation and revision of the FAO international plan for sharks is scheduled for the next FAO-COFI meeting in 2003.

The Commission is at present working on a proposal to prohibit shark finning at Community level. It is untrue that such an initiative is being unduly delayed in the Commission by lengthy discussions on the concerned species or other related parameters.