

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2760/02
by Frank Vanhecke (NI)
to the Commission

Subject: The Union's asylum policy

On Friday, 13 September 2002, the Union's Ministers for Home Affairs, meeting in Copenhagen, agreed to draw up in the near future a uniform Community programme for the voluntary or compulsory repatriation of illegal refugees or asylum-seekers who had exhausted all the relevant legal procedures. According to a report in the French newspaper 'Le Figaro' on Saturday, 14 September 2002, both amount to the introduction of 'European charters'. The creation of a Community fund to pay for such charters was also proposed. According to the European Commissioner with special responsibility for justice and home affairs, Antonio Vitorino, the aim was to create added value in the organisation of Community repatriation programmes.

Can the Commission give a minimum and maximum estimate of the number of illegal immigrants currently on the territory of the Union, broken down by Member State?

How many illegal immigrants were repatriated from the Union during the last four years?

Does the Commission have available a list of what are known as 'safe countries' from which no applications for political asylum may be made?

What is the Commission's opinion of the setting up of a Community fund to finance the repatriation of illegal refugees, and against which budget line could it be entered?

In the Commission's view, what policy may be pursued vis-à-vis third countries in order to facilitate cooperation in matters of repatriation?

Is the Commission considering other Community schemes to combat illegal immigration into countries of the European Union?