

Question for written answer E-001383/2016
to the Council
Rule 130
Bodil Valero (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Criminalising civil society's humanitarian assistance to refugees

In the wake of the refugee crisis and the failure of politicians to take appropriate action, civil society stepped up to the mark. For months NGOs, local communities and volunteers have been assisting and helping refugees and migrants arriving in the EU. According to a Statewatch article, the draft Council conclusions on migrant smuggling, dated 26 January 2016, allude to the criminalisation of NGOs, individuals and volunteers working to assist refugees.

1. Does the Council intend to equate the concept of migrant 'smuggling' with migrant 'trafficking'?
2. Does the Council intend to take action in order to criminalise the smuggling of refugees carried out by civil society on humanitarian grounds?
3. Does the Council intend to use these conclusions as guidance for Member States on how to interpret and use the 2004 Facilitation Directive?