

Question for written answer E-008952/2016
to the Commission
Rule 130
Rachida Dati (PPE)

Subject: Setting up 'hotspots' in the EU's neighbourhood

Tragically, 2016 has set a new record for the number of deaths in the Mediterranean. This, combined with the low numbers of irregular migrants who have been returned to their countries of origin, shows that there is a need for close cooperation between the European Union and third countries.

In response to the migration crisis that has exploded in Europe, a number of 'hotspots' have been set up in Italy and Greece in order to swiftly identify and register migrants arriving in Europe, and to take their fingerprints. Thanks to these 'hotspots', it should be possible to distinguish refugees and asylum seekers from economic migrants who are not entitled to remain in the EU. However, if this action were to be taken in neighbouring non-EU countries as a first step, it could prevent people from setting out on extremely dangerous sea crossings organised by people-trafficking networks, and ease the pressure on Europe's asylum systems.

With the foregoing in mind, is the Commission planning to work with third countries to establish 'hotspots' in the EU's neighbourhood along the lines of those that have been set up in Europe?