

**Question for written answer E-002874/2017
to the Commission
Rule 130
Josef Weidenholzer (S&D)**

Subject: Sexual exploitation of refugee minors in Greece

The problem of the sexual exploitation of unaccompanied refugee minors in Greece calls for immediate action. A recent study by Dr Vasileia Digidiki and Professor Jacqueline Bhabha of the University of Harvard has confirmed that the situation on the ground is rapidly deteriorating. The research, which was completed late last year, was carried out in four Greek refugee camps, in Athens, in Thessaloniki and on the islands of Lesbos and Chios.

Unaccompanied refugee minors in particular are often unable to come up with the money demanded by smugglers. Some are forced to sell their bodies in order to pay for their journey or the next stage in it. According to the study, it is rare for them to receive more than EUR 15 for sexual services. The majority of unaccompanied minors are males from Afghanistan, Syria and Pakistan.

Unaccompanied refugee minors are a particularly vulnerable group and require greater protection and a shorter processing period for their asylum applications. Forced prostitution of child refugees is happening on a daily basis in the EU and must be stopped. Steps must be taken to protect these children and speed up the resettlement process.

What practical steps does the Commission plan to take in this regard?