

ORAL QUESTION H-0530/02
for Question Time at the part-session in September I 2002
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure
by Carlos Lage
to the Council

Subject: Free movement of persons in the Schengen zone

On 22 June a group of 500 Portuguese citizens travelling to Spain to take part in an authorised demonstration to be held in Seville during the European Council meeting was prevented – in a violent manner – from entering Spanish territory by members of the Spanish police forces. Nothing can justify this kind of behaviour and action, totally unacceptable in a Union which considers respect for fundamental freedoms and rights as one of its founding principles. It seems unlikely that the Portuguese citizens represented a particular danger, or indeed any danger, to the Spanish State. And, even if they had, the forceful and heavy-handed behaviour which, unfortunately, characterised the reaction of the Spanish police authorities, would have been quite unacceptable.

Can the Council therefore say what measures it will take vis-à-vis the Spanish Government to clarify the facts? Does it not consider that a clear definition and common agreement should be sought concerning the circumstances and conditions which may lead to the suspension of the rules governing Schengen?

Tabled: 25.06.2002
pt