

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0025/08

pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure

by Martin Schulz, Hannes Swoboda, Jan Marinus Wiersma, Helmut Kuhne, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Justas Vincas Paleckis, Józef Pinior and Libor Rouček, on behalf of the PSE Group to the Commission

Subject: Proposed hearing of the Commission on 'crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed by totalitarian regimes'

On 19 April 2007, EU Justice Ministers reached agreement on a Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia (11522/07 DROIPEN 68), dealing with such crimes as incitement to hatred and violence and publicly condoning, denying or grossly trivialising crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes as defined in the Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Tribunal of Nuremberg. Crimes committed on other grounds, e.g. by totalitarian regimes, are explicitly not covered. The Commission, after a first hearing in 2007 on the latter aspect is now continuing activities in this field.

This initiative coincides with tendencies aimed at reassessing European history by voluntaristic, partly political interpretation rather than on the basis of scientific research. Furthermore, it is not based on an objective assessment of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes responsible for crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes in the 20th century.

In the light of these developments as well as in the run-up to the conference of experts scheduled for 8 April and the forthcoming 40th anniversary of the Prague Spring:

- Which further activity does the Commission plan in order to foster a scientific approach to the systematics of European totalitarianism and authoritarian regimes?
- How does it intend to enhance the debate on crimes committed by totalitarian and authoritarian regimes in Europe's history of the 20th century, including both the Nazi and Stalinist regimes as well as ultranationalist, authoritarian and antidemocratic pre- and post-war regimes responsible (albeit on a different scale) for suppression, murder and crimes against humanity?
- How will the Commission ensure that the debate focuses on scientific criteria and will not fall victim to political exploitation in the context of increasing nationalism and populism?

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Forwarded: 10.03.2008

Deadline for reply: 17.03.2008