

**Question for oral answer O-000008/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 128

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Subject: Reasonable grounds for suspicion of irregularities on the part of the Norwegian child protection authority ('Barnevernet')

The Norwegian child protection authority ('Barnevernet') has taken action restricting the right of a number of EU citizens to contact with their own children and even separating children completely from their families as an emergency measure, thereby causing them great distress and possibly affecting their subsequent development.

There have been reported cases of child protection authorities taking such measures on the strength of testimony given by teachers or children without confirming whether these statements were taken in the presence of a psychologist or indicating what procedures were followed, and without a lawyer or representative of the parents being able to ensure adherence to the correct procedures for the questioning of minors.

The actions of the child protection authorities constitute a threat to family life for many of the over 150 000 EU nationals currently resident in Norway, that is to say around 3.5 % of the total population, who are integrated and gainfully employed members of the community making an active contribution to Norwegian society.

In view of this:

Can the Commission request clarification regarding the procedures being followed by the Norwegian child protection authorities?

Will it consider extending the scope of bilateral arrangements with third countries so as to protect the rights of families of which at least one member is an EU citizen?

What action can the Commission take if it finds that the procedures being followed are likely to create psychological or emotional distress to children or their parents?

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Forwarded: 25.1.2016

Deadline for reply: 1.2.2016