Question for oral answer O-000059/2017
to the Commission
Rule 128

Subject: Refoulement of Turkish nationals by the Greek authorities

On 6 June 2017, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) issued a statement denouncing the refoulement of Turkish nationals by the Greek authorities. According to the information available to the FIDH, a group of Turkish nationals wishing to apply for international protection in Greece in order to escape persecution in Turkey was handed over by the Greek police to a unit of armed and masked men on 2 June 2017 in Evros, in order to be sent back to Turkey.

The main element of asylum and refugee status is protection against return to a country where the concerned person has reasons to fear persecution. This protection is formalised in the principle of non-refoulement, defined in Article 33(1) of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (or the Geneva Convention) as follows: ‘No Contracting State shall expel or return (‘refouler’) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.’ This dimension also appears in Directive 2013/32/EU of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection. Greece is a party to the Geneva Convention and bound by the aforementioned directive.

Hence, several questions arise:

– Does the Commission intend to question the Greek authorities on this matter?

– If the facts are proven, what does the Commission intend to do?

– Can the Commission guarantee absolute respect for the principle of non-refoulement as defined by the Geneva Convention?

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