

**Question for written answer P-001366/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 130
David Casa (PPE)

Subject: Application of Schengen rules by the Maltese authorities

Following a request by the Maltese Parliament's Public Accounts Committee, the Maltese Auditor-General's office (NAO or National Audit Office) has published a report on allegations of irregularities surrounding the issuance of Schengen visas by Malta's consulate in Algeria.

The report indicates that during the period between March 2014 and September 2015, arrivals from Algeria to Malta and departures from Malta to Algeria amounted to 5 083 and 2 664 respectively. Of these, 3 696 arrivals and 882 departures respectively were of persons travelling on the basis of a visa issued by the consulate.

The NAO established that for every four arrivals presenting a visa issued by the consulate, there was one departure. Almost 2 846 of the 3 696 arrivals did not have a corresponding departure. Of the 882 departures, in 32 instances no corresponding arrival was identified within the audit period. This raises serious questions that could have an impact on the security of other Schengen member countries.

In light of the above, could the Commission indicate whether Malta has acted in full compliance with its obligations as a Schengen member country to ensure accountability, transparency and seriousness when applying the Schengen rules?