Priority question for written answer P-004017/2019
to the Commission
Rule 138
Konstantinos Arvanitis

Subject: 28 asylum applications rejected due to lack of interpretation

On 15-20 November, the Lesbos Regional Asylum Office unexpectedly rejected the applications of 28 asylum seekers from sub-Saharan Africa, even though they had not been interviewed by the competent authorities, as the law requires, because of a lack of interpretation.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. Is this practice compatible with Directive 2013/33/EU (Articles 12-17) which provides that asylum seekers must undergo a personal and substantive interview?

2. Given that the Asylum Office is required to provide appropriate interpretation services and the interview can be dispensed with only in cases where a positive decision is imminent or for health reasons, how does it assess the administration's justification that 'the applicant did not attend a personal interview because repeated attempts to find interpretation services in his language of communication failed'?

3. Is it legal under Community law to issue rejection decisions in languages which the applicants do not understand and to set the date for the discussion about an appeal against the decision at first instance within the space of a few days, without providing them with legal aid at any stage?

4. What measures will the Commission take to fully safeguard the right of asylum seekers to international protection?