

**Question for written answer E-002123/2024
to the Commission**

Rule 144

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Subject: Brutality of Croatian border police

In an article published on 10 October 2024¹, *The Guardian* again reported on the brutality of the Croatian border police: strip-searching and threatening asylum seekers, and burning their phones, passports and other belongings after pushing them back to Bosnia. Illegal pushbacks accompanied by violence, including sexualised violence as also described in this article, have been reported multiple times by the United Nations as well as non-governmental organisations. However, the burning of documents and phones, both needed to seek asylum and to record the presence of asylum seekers on EU territory, is a new, terrifying ‘practice’ of deterrence.

Croatia has been a member of the Schengen area since 1 January 2023, following the Commission’s positive evaluation of Croatia’s application of the Schengen *acquis*, including its fundamental rights obligations.

1. Has the Commission-supported and often criticised ‘independent human rights monitoring mechanism’ reported on this practice of burning phones and documents, and have steps been taken to investigate and remedy this illegal behaviour?
2. What does the Commission plan to do in the context of the reformed Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism and Schengen Borders Code, as well as the Schengen Council and Forum, to ensure the rule of law and effective access to asylum at the Croatian-Bosnian border?
3. What steps are being taken with the Croatian authorities to roll out the new fundamental rights monitoring mechanisms set out in the Screening Regulation?

Submitted: 16.10.2024

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/oct/10/photos-croatia-police-phones-passports-asylum-seekers>.