

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0556/02
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to the Council

Subject: Visas for non-Community citizens residing in Switzerland

Several hundred thousand immigrants, mainly from the Balkan States and Turkey, are living in Switzerland with valid long-term residence permits. Whenever they need to cross EU borders (Italy, Austria, Germany and, to a lesser extent, France) they have to apply for a visa. The FIM (Forum for the Integration of Migrants set up recently in Switzerland) suggests that instead of the visa requirement, they should have to present their passports and a valid residence permit.

Does the Council support this proposal? If so, what action will it take to put it into practice? If not, what alternatives does it suggest to avoid confusion in the consulates of the EU countries concerned?

Does the Council think that a solution to this serious problem might be found in the final decisions ratifying the agreement between the European Union and Switzerland?