

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0635/02
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to the Commission

Subject: Benefits for frontier regions

The general public is now fully aware of the major difficulties affecting certain coastal regions of Europe (particularly in southern Italy) on account of the constant arrivals of illegal immigrants by boat.

This has many implications. The human aspect is certainly the most important, although social and economic ones are significant too, on account of the highly detrimental effect which they have on the inhabitants of coastal regions (who are called upon to display additional solidarity - which they do willingly) and on local economies, which are required to make an extraordinary effort on Europe's behalf.

Coastal regions in southern Italy and southern Europe are quite unable to escape the role assigned to them by geography as the EU's first outpost.

In view of these facts, does the Commission not think that it should declare Apulia, Calabria, Sicily and the other affected regions of Europe to be 'frontier regions' and grant them the benefits associated with such a status which will help relieve those regions' current difficulties, since their voluntary workers, economies, welfare services and reception centres are at the moment under an impossible burden?