

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0381/04  
by Alexandros Alavanos (GUE/NGL)  
to the Commission

Subject: Operation of reception classes - second operational programme: 'education and initial training'

In the second operational programme 'Education and Initial Training' in Greece, and in sub-programme 1, measure 1, action (a), entitled 'support for the integration of children with special cultural and language characteristics into the educational system' there is provision for the improvement of the integration into the educational system of pupils from population groups which are at risk of educational inequality, with the aim of preventing their marginalisation.

The reception classes in compulsory education are funded by the above action and contribute to the problem-free integration of immigrant pupils into the education system. In the last school year, 2003-2004, the Ministry of Education and the Regional Education Administration did not take on the staff required for the operation of the reception classes and, in many cases where there were staff, suspended the operation of the reception classes to enable the teachers to cover for the vacant posts for teachers employed by the State teaching the normal classes. Thus, according to information supplied by the Ministry of Education to the Children's Advocate, of the 558 reception classes only 295 operated. At the same time, the Ministry of Home Affairs has issued an edict prohibiting the enrolment in primary school of the children of immigrants who do not have a residence permit. The results of these actions is that the children of immigrants are deprived of one of the basic rights of children, that of education.

1. What progress has been made in this action under the second operational programme, 'education and initial training'?
2. In view of Article II-14 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, what steps will the Commission take to protect the right of immigrants' children to education?