

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1417/04
by Philip Claeys (NI)
to the Council

Subject: Muslim women exempted from having a photograph included on their identity cards

The United Kingdom intends to introduce identity cards, which already exist in most other Member States. According to The Observer of 25 April, the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, has stated that Muslim women will be exempted from the requirement to have their photograph included on their identity card. Muslims hope that this will prevent them from being victimised as part of the war against terrorism. On the other hand, fingerprints and iris recognition data will be included for everyone. However, it is possible that terrorist organisations and other organisations pursuing unlawful ends might use precisely this category of women to carry out illegal actions, as there will not be any rapid way of checking their identity.

To what extent can this measure be reconciled with the efficient communication of data as part of the war on international crime and terrorism?

Are there currently any other Member States where particular sections of the population do not have to have their photographs on identity cards? If so, which?