

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1588/04  
by Willi Piecyk (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Approximation, mutual recognition and enforcement of criminal sanctions in the European Union

At present, the arrangements for the cross-border collection of fines imposed as a result of traffic offences in the EU seem to be inadequate. In some cases, this work is carried out by private collection firms, such as the London-based Euro Parking Collection (EPC), and individual Member States - for example Germany and Austria - have concluded bilateral agreements. It is impossible to punish traffic offences committed by third-country nationals.

The Green Paper on the Approximation, Mutual Recognition and Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions in the European Union (COM(2004)334) refers to a political agreement reached in the Council on 8 May 2003 on a framework decision on the implementation of the principle of mutual recognition ('preparation of an instrument enabling the State of residence to levy fines imposed by final decision on a natural or legal person by another Member State'). This prompts me to put the following questions to the Commission:

1. What stage has been reached in the preparation of the framework decision or has it already come into force?
2. Will an instrument to punish traffic offences be introduced at European level, on the basis of police and judicial cooperation, and what form is it likely to take?
3. Is the European Union considering bilateral agreements on the punishment of traffic offences with countries which are not EU Member States?