

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2660/04  
by Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL)  
to the Commission

Subject: Adjustments to the rules in force at the border between the Czech and Slovak Republics

The treaty between the Czech and Slovak Republics which was signed in Bratislava on 27 January 2004 is currently being examined within the Czech Parliament. Its purpose is to amend the 29 October 1992 treaty on adjustments to the rules in force at, and cooperation along, the Czech-Slovak border, as amended by a further treaty of 18 August 1997.

The main aim of the treaty is to make it easier for citizens from the other EU Member States and citizens of third countries who are not subject to visa requirements in either of the two countries signatory to the treaty or in any other EU Member State to cross the Czech-Slovak border at places other than border-crossing points. This would remove discrimination against citizens from the other EU Member States.

However, the current wording of the treaty greatly complicates the lives of all those who live in the vicinity of the Czech-Slovak border, since it does not take into account the realities of life in that area and it significantly restricts such people's freedom of movement across the border.

The Czech Government justifies easing the formalities for Czech and Slovak citizens at the border between the two countries on the grounds that the border is (according to the Schengen criteria) a 'temporary external border' and that the rules applied at that border must therefore be adjusted (checks on persons to be carried out when the border is crossed at places other than border-crossing points).

Will the Commission provide a precise definition of the term 'external border'? Is the border between the Czech and Slovak Republics really an 'external border', and is the action taken by the Czech Government necessary in the EU's eyes?