

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4515/07

by Cristiana Muscardini (UEN) and Sergio Berlato (UEN)
to the Commission

Subject: Arrest of the MEP Mario Borghezio in Brussels

In the course of an unauthorised demonstration against the Islamisation of Europe which took place today in Brussels, Mr Mario Borghezio and other MEPs were maltreated and arrested by the Belgian police. The seriousness of what has occurred should outrage all those members of an EU institution who strive each day to uphold fundamental freedoms such as freedom of speech. The right to free speech is guaranteed by the Treaty, enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and confirmed by the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

On the day commemorating the victims of the 11 September 2001 tragedy and one day after the broadcast of Osama bin Laden's latest video, imposing a ban on the above mentioned-demonstration not only goes against the European Parliament's principles, it was also an act of major insensitivity on the part of the Belgian authorities.

1. Is the Commission aware of the serious events described above?
2. Does the Commission not intend to condemn what has happened and to make representations to the Belgian authorities?
3. Does the Commission not consider that it should take steps to ensure that the Belgian Government apologises to all the institutions (in particular the European Parliament, which represents all the people of Europe) and that an investigation is launched in order to establish who was responsible for such a serious occurrence?
4. Does the Commission not think that Belgium's refusal to authorise a demonstration solely on account of its opposition to the purpose thereof reveals a serious democratic deficit on the part of a Member State which applies differing standards according to the political hue of the individuals wishing to organise a demonstration?