

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2581/08
by Titus Corlăţean (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Discrimination against Romanians with genetic chromatic deficiencies

Some 40 m of the EU's citizens - approximately 8% of men and 0.4% of women - suffer from genetic chromatic deficiencies, manifested in a sensibility different from the norm in terms of shades of colour.

In Romania, genetic chromatic deficiencies affect some 900 000 people. Generically, they are known as colour-blind. Although, following Decree No 350 (12/04/2003) of the Ministry for Health and the Family, colour-blindness is no longer included among the medical conditions disqualifying someone from driving, it is still the case, thanks to the ignorance and inertia of the medical system, that the ophthalmological examination which is a compulsory part of the driving test includes an Ishihara test. Those who fail this test (i.e. the colour-blind) are declared unfit for driving. This practice occurs in Romania despite having no legal basis: the Romanian authorities, and notably the Ophthalmology Commission of the Ministry for Health, refuse, out of ignorance, to take action to stop it.

This Ishihara test is discriminatory and anti-European, since in Member States such as France, the Netherlands, Germany and others - but not Romania - the colour-blind can obtain a driving license. This practice puts Romania in breach of Article 21 of the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights, as being a form of discrimination on genetic grounds.

Will the Commission intervene with the Romanian medical authorities with a view to an end to this discriminatory practice which has no basis in law and affects persons with genetic chromatic deficiencies with regard to obtaining a driving license?