

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0154/09
by Corina Crețu (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Prolongation of the internal labour market restrictions for Romanians after 1 January 2009

The majority of the older EU Member States have announced their intention to extend the internal labour market restrictions for Romanians after 1 January 2009. The decisions of the western European governments in this sense have been made despite the recommendations issued by the Commission in mid-November 2008.

In the report by the Commissioner responsible for employment, social affairs and equal opportunities, it is stated that the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU on 1 January 2007 has not had a major effect on the labour market in the Member States, despite the fears that had been expressed. In addition, the Commission states that labour mobility from eastern Europe has not affected Community wage levels: rather, it has proved a stimulus to growth and has reduced inflationary pressure. However, the Commission's recommendation is not binding, and most western Member States have already announced the extension up to 31 December 2011 of the restrictive arrangements under which Romanians and Bulgarians may only be employed on the basis of a work permit, to be granted only in a certain number of sectors and in line with the labour needs of the Member State concerned.

Once again, we are dealing with an exaggerated response to the possible consequences of a flow of workers from Romania. These occupationally based measures amount to a discriminatory limitation on the free movement of labour within the EU. It is not acceptable to continue to practice, within the Union's borders, differential treatment that perpetuates the distinction between first- and second-class European citizens.

What measures will the Commission propose for eliminating labour market barriers within the Union?