

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1071/09
by Catherine Boursier (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Systematic early recognition of torture victims

We are daily made aware, thanks to the work of civil society representatives, that victims of torture from countries outside the EU are not treated as they should be when they request asylum in Europe, mainly because they are not identified as 'victims of torture' and are very often processed using accelerated procedures, even though Article 17 of Directive 2003/9/EC¹ provides for an individual evaluation of their situation.

Article 24 of the directive also provides that 'Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that authorities and other organisations implementing this directive have received the necessary basic training with respect to the needs of both male and female applicants'.

Can the Commission give details of how it ensures that people who have been tortured - vulnerable people, who are far less likely to disclose their afflictions than other people - are received in an appropriate manner by people trained in this field, as the directive requires?

Does the Commission check to ensure that this reception service by trained staff is sufficiently well funded?

In view of the fact that accelerated procedures are being resorted to more and more when examining requests for asylum, notably for people held in detention centres, what plans does the Commission have for following up the (regularly reported) failures by Member States to meet their obligations concerning the reception of torture victims? These people should be granted international protection but in reality this does not happen, due to their not being identified by the official bodies responsible for examining their asylum request.

Would it not be a good idea to set up a specific EU training programme on identifying torture symptoms, for official bodies at all levels with responsibility for examining asylum requests?

¹ OJ L 31, 6.2.2003, p. 18.