

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1261/09

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to the Commission

Subject: Illegal trafficking in children's organs

The European Union has already launched an organ donation and transplantation programme with a view to improving cooperation between the Member States, on the one hand, and establishing uniform quality and safety standards for donors and recipients, on the other. According to WHO estimates, around 10% of kidneys transplanted worldwide have been obtained through illicit trafficking.

During the UNICEF meeting in Rome at the end of January, Mr Roberto Maroni, Italian Minister of the Interior, provoked a strong reaction by suggesting that there was a connection between clandestine trafficking in organs taken from under-age donors and the disappearance of 400 children from the immigration facility on Lampedusa.

Can the Commission confirm that children have in fact disappeared from the Lampedusa immigration facility? What measures does it intend to take to prevent a similar situation occurring in future?

Are inquiries being carried out into illegal organ transplants in general and the transplant of organs taken from children within the European Union in particular and are any statistics available?

Have any complaints been registered with the European institutions? Are investigations under way in any of the Member States or applicant countries?

Are measures being taken to encourage the conclusion of agreements between the European Union and third countries with a view to improving the traceability of transplanted organs and end clandestine trafficking therein?

As part of its efforts to protect children and prevent illegal trafficking in human beings, what measures does the Commission intend to take to shield minors more effectively against illegal organ trafficking? Have plans been made to launch a European public information and awareness campaign regarding this matter?