

**Question for written answer E-002622/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Cecilia Wikström (ALDE), Sophia in 't Veld (ALDE), Sonia Alfano (ALDE), Nadja Hirsch (ALDE), Stanimir Ilchev (ALDE), Louis Michel (ALDE), Baroness Sarah Ludford (ALDE), Jens Rohde (ALDE), Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE) and Frédérique Ries (ALDE)

Subject: The situation of the Greek asylum system

The concerns about the asylum situation in Greece are longstanding. The country is made up of islands with borders that are difficult to control, attracting a lot of migrants and asylum seekers; it lacks a functioning asylum reception and processing system (in January 2011, the European Court of Human Rights found Greece guilty of hosting asylum seekers and irregular migrants in degrading conditions); and it is currently facing economic problems.

At the end of 2010, the Greek authorities committed themselves to implement a vast reform of their asylum and migration policies, adopting a National Plan on Asylum and Migration Management. According to the first quarterly report from the Commission Task Force for Greece (17 November 2011), some progress has been achieved under the plan, which includes the creation of a support unit for asylum requests, an increased number of favourable answers to asylum requests, and the setting in place of an authority responsible for the oversight of migrants when they arrive.

But more is needed. The humanitarian situation in detention centres in Evros, at the border with Turkey, is still very bad according to NGOs like Médecins Sans Frontières and Human Rights Watch, and according to the Commission. Migrants and asylum seekers continue to be detained in substandard conditions, and there is little or no assistance to unaccompanied migrant children. This state of play is not likely to improve as Greece now sees the arrival of around 400 people every day, many of them without any identification document, making the situation even more complicated.

While the Commission has made funding available for Athens, the construction of centres for migrants, for example, is behind schedule and takes longer than expected. The Greek authorities seem to have problems in absorbing the European funds earmarked for improving their asylum system.

What does the Commission intend to do to ensure that the Greek authorities use the resources that have been made available to them, spend the resources appropriately and rapidly remedy to the humanitarian situation in detention centres in Evros?