

**Question for written answer E-009823/2012  
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 117

**Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE), François Alfonsi (Verts/ALE) and Jill Evans (Verts/ALE)**

Subject: VP/HR - Situation of the 12 Palestinians evacuated from the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and transferred to the European Union in 2002

On 21 May 2002, the Council adopted a common position concerning the temporary reception by Member States of the European Union of 12 Palestinians who were evacuated from the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (2002/400/CFSP), in accordance with the terms of an understanding between the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel, and to help temper the crisis situation in the region at that time and to restore a dialogue between the parties. The common position included provisions for ensuring that the persons concerned received a comparable treatment in each of the receiving Member States and for evaluating the way in which the reception, which was supposed to have a maximum duration of 30 months, was being carried out in practice.

However, 10 years have now passed and the people concerned are still living in the European Union in very different individual and family circumstances and, due to the very inconsistent ways in which this common position was applied in the receiving Member States, in widely varying material living conditions. Furthermore, some of them would like to return to their own country, yet at least in Spain, where they are not allowed to work, they are not given any information or assistance which would allow them to rectify the situation and end their time there. According to Article 3 of the common position, the time limit for their stay has long been exceeded.

1. Has the application of the common position been evaluated as provided for in Article 8 thereof?
2. Are there any plans to make a decision to put an end to the situation in which these people are living, which, due to its exceptional nature, continues to place undue restrictions on the rights and freedoms of those whose human rights should be protected under international law?
3. Is there any intention of respecting these people's freedom to make their own decisions regarding their own lives and place of residence, thereby bringing an end to this situation?