

**Question for written answer E-002952/2013
to the Council**

Rule 117

Andrew Henry William Brons (NI)

Subject: European Agency for Fundamental Rights - simple definition

I refer to your reply of 25 February 2013 to my Written Question E-011371/2012.

You have not provided a clear definition for each of the words 'racism' and 'xenophobia', as I requested.

You state that 'the framework decision defines offences concerning racism and xenophobia and thus ensures that such behaviour constitutes an offence throughout the EU Member States'.

Your answer refers only to offences that relate to 'racism and xenophobia'.

These terms are referred to often but are meaningless without a definition.

Xenophobia means fear of strangers – a state of mind. How can you make a state of mind a criminal offence? Racism is sometimes used to mean hatred or incitement to hatred. However, it is often used to refer to words that neither express hatred nor incite it in others. What do you mean by it?

These words also feature prominently in Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law.

Will you please provide an all-embracing definition of both these terms, so that my constituents will know exactly what is meant whenever the Council refers to these words in its documents?

If the Council cannot define what it means when it employs these terms, how can the public do so, and how can they constitute criminal offences?

Are these words deliberately undefined in order to frighten the public and politicians away from discussing immigration or ethnicity?