

**Question for written answer E-006817/2013  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Andrew Henry William Brons (NI)**

Subject: European Agency for Fundamental Rights - simple definition

In my original written question (E-011371-12), I asked about two distinct words, which must refer to two distinct concepts: 'racism' and 'xenophobia'. Indeed, in your reply you refer to concepts in the plural. However, you only provide one definition:

'Violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin.'

Are you saying these two distinct words have the same definition? If so, why not employ a single word instead of two?

The word 'xenophobia' means, literally, fear of strangers, which is a state of mind. How can one legislate against a state of mind, which is presumably an involuntary condition? Legislation against states of mind was exactly what George Orwell was referring to when he coined the term 'thought crime'.

There are two quite distinct dictionary definitions of 'racism':

- political or social belief in hereditary differences between different ancestral groups,
- and abusive or aggressive words or behaviour towards people of a different ancestral group.

Would your proposed offence include only the latter or would it extend to the former?

When you use the terms 'violence' and 'hatred', I presume you mean incitement to violence and hatred. Violence is easily understood; hatred is less easy to define.

Literally, it means extreme dislike which would seem to go beyond mere generalisations that might or might not be flattering. Would you agree?

When one legislates on criminal offences punishable by imprisonment, definitions must be crystal-clear.