

**Question for written answer E-008939/2013/rev.1  
to the Commission  
Rule 117  
Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE)**

**Subject:** Detention of asylum seekers in Hungary

In the first half of 2013 there was a massive rise in the number of asylum applicants in Hungary: more than 10 000 new asylum applications were registered up to June 2013<sup>1</sup>. By way of comparison, the number of asylum seekers registered in 2012 was only 2 155.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, on 1 July 2013 amendments to the law entered into force in Hungary which, referring to the EU Reception Conditions Directive, provide *inter alia* for the detention of asylum seekers. The UNHCR and the Hungarian Helsinki Committee expressed clear concerns about the new Hungarian legislation, since the grounds for detention (as in the Reception Directive) are couched in such broad terms that it is to be feared that the detention of asylum seekers will (once again) become the rule rather than the exception in Hungary<sup>3</sup>. It is particularly worrying that the new law does not provide any individual legal remedy against detention. The only judicial review of the detention takes the form of an automatic review after 60 days.<sup>4</sup> In 2011 and 2012, detention was ended in only three cases out of a total of 5 000 which were the subject of rulings by the relevant local courts<sup>5</sup>. That being so, I have the following questions:

1. What projects have been subsidised in Hungary over the past five years from the European Refugee Fund and the European Return Fund? What were the objectives of these projects, what were the amounts granted to them, and who implemented them?
2. Does the Commission regard the (new) rules on the detention of asylum seekers in Hungary (particularly with regard to the legal remedies available to detainees) as compatible with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union? If so, why? If not, what does the Commission propose to do?
3. Does the Commission have any information on where the (new) asylum seekers are currently being housed? According to an article in the Hungarian press, in June 2013 only just over 2 500 persons were housed in Hungarian refugee accommodation.
4. What strategy is the Commission pursuing, given the rise in the number of asylum applications in Hungary, to eliminate 'systemic failings' in the asylum procedure and reception arrangements?

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hungarian Helsinki Committee: Brief Information Note on the Main Asylum-Related Legal Changes in Hungary as of 1 July, 2013, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Press release from Eurostat, 22 March 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ECRE Weekly Bulletin 14 - June 2013: Hungary passes legislation allowing widespread detention of asylum seekers.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Hungarian Helsinki Committee: Brief Information Note on the Main Asylum-Related Legal Changes in Hungary as of 1 July, 2013, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.kisalfold.hu/gyori\\_hirek/menekulttabor\\_-\\_ujabb\\_fejlesztes\\_maradna\\_el\\_vamosszabadin/2338124](http://www.kisalfold.hu/gyori_hirek/menekulttabor_-_ujabb_fejlesztes_maradna_el_vamosszabadin/2338124).