

Question for written answer E-013574/2013
to the Commission
Rule 117
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Subject: Free movement of goods and persons

The free movement of persons is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed to citizens of the European Union by the Treaties, manifest in the area of freedom, security and justice with no internal borders.

It is true that every individual must register their private vehicle in the Member State in which they normally reside, 'normal residence' being defined under Article 7 of Directive 83/182/EEC and Article 6 of Directive 2009/55/EC.

However, it turns out that some Member States, such as Belgium, are being unreasonable in applying the principle that a Belgian resident must drive with a Belgian registration plate or else face severe penalties. Here are two specific examples:

- A Belgian student was recently stopped while driving his Luxembourgish girlfriend's car, which was legally registered in Luxembourg. He was forced to pay a heavy fine to release the vehicle.
 - A Belgian resident of Hungarian nationality had borrowed her father's van to transport family furniture from Hungary to Brussels. Arriving in the city that purports to be the capital of Europe, the Belgian resident of Hungarian nationality committed an offence by parking in front of a driveway. The van, registered in Hungary, was taken and impounded. In addition to the fines for bad parking and the offence of driving with a vehicle registered in another Member State, as well as the fees for towing away the vehicle, the Hungarian mother of a young infant was forced to find a Belgian non-resident to release her father's vehicle.
1. Is this unreasonable application of the principle that every Belgian resident must drive a car registered in Belgium consistent with European Treaties, which guarantee the fundamental rights of EU citizens?
 2. Do the penalties imposed by the Belgian authorities, to the tune of several hundred euros, respect the principle of proportionality?
 3. What legal measures does the Commission intend to take to address the aforementioned obstacles to the free movement of goods and persons?
 4. What would happen if I, an MEP residing in Luxembourg, asked one of my assistants, residing in Belgium, to use my car registered in Luxembourg to run an errand in Brussels? Would they be breaking the law?