

**Question for written answer E-005260/2014
to the Commission
Rule 117
Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)**

Subject: Restrictions on European citizens' right to reside freely within the Union

The right of EU citizens to move and reside freely within the European Union is the cornerstone of European citizenship. Today, the free movement of persons is chiefly governed by Directive 2004/38/EC on the right of EU citizens and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States.

The directive confers rights and responsibilities on EU citizens which vary depending on the period of residence. For periods longer than three months, the right of residence is subject to certain conditions: EU citizens and their family members must have sufficient resources and sickness insurance to ensure that they do not become a burden on the social services of the host Member State during their stay.

However, the directive also gives the Member States some room for manoeuvre. This leads to situations such as in Belgium, which, according to figures from the Government Immigration Office, expelled 4 812 EU citizens from the country in 2013. The Belgian Government claimed that the people in question placed an 'excessive burden' on the country's social services.

1. Has the Commission launched a study or taken steps with a view to preventing restrictive interpretations of the provisions of the directive that are causing problems? Specifically, under what circumstances is someone a burden on the social services?
2. Does it not agree that it is vital to safeguard people's right to move and reside freely within the European Union, particularly in view of the current crisis?