

**Question for written answer E-003710/2021
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Dominique Bilde (ID)

Subject: Visa racketeering and fraud in Pakistan

According to the website Schengen Visa Info, the Pakistani Minister of Foreign Affairs has said that around 1 000 visa stickers were stolen from the Italian Embassy in Islamabad in June 2021¹.

In 2012, the UK's High Commissioner to Islamabad, Adam Thomson, labelled Pakistan a 'global leader in visa forgery', claiming that 4 000 people had been caught the previous year trying to acquire passports using fake documents².

Moreover, last year, Milorad Dodik, the Serb member of Bosnia and Herzegovina's tripartite presidency, warned that a possible visa racket had been uncovered at the Bosnian Embassy in Pakistan following the issue of 3 000 suspicious visas³.

Schengen Visa Info reports that Pakistan had the 11th highest Schengen visa rejection rate in the world in 2020⁴. How does the Commission intend to clamp down on visa fraud in these countries and will it look into the allegations set out above?

¹ 'The Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs has reported the theft of around 1,000 visa stickers from the Italian Embassy in Islamabad.' <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/authorities-report-1000-schengen-visa-stickers-stolen-from-italian-embassy-in-pakistan/>

² 'About 4,000 people were caught last year while trying to acquire British passports using fake documents, the UK's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Adam Thomson, told reporters.' <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/pakistan-global-leader-in-visa-passport-forgery-british-envoy-494427>

³ <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/05/20/bosnia-probes-alleged-scam-over-visas-for-pakistan-citizens/>

⁴ 'Pakistan – 43.5 per cent.' <https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/news/14-million-fewer-schengen-visa-applications-filed-in-2020-amid-the-pandemic/>