

**Question for written answer E-005312/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Pushbacks at the Belarusian-Polish/Latvian/Lithuanian borders

On 13 July and 10 August 2021 the Lithuanian Parliament made legislative changes that allowed Lithuania to refuse to accept asylum applications in exceptional circumstances at the Belarusian-Lithuanian border.

On 10 August 2021 Latvia declared a state of emergency at the border region with Belarus for three months, which has already been prolonged once. While the state of emergency is in place, applications for asylum are not accepted in the Belarusian border regions in Latvia.

On 14 October 2021 the Polish Parliament passed a law that allows border guards to refuse application for asylum, without individual examination of the case.

These are clear violations of Article 33 of the UN's 1951 Refugee Convention and Article 18 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and thus breach international and EU law.

Even if a country declares a state of emergency, it must respect our commonly agreed legal basis of international and EU law. Acting within the framework of 'national sovereignty' does not mean that countries can unlawfully restrict access to asylum procedures and violate the principle of non-refoulement. All these legal changes introduced de facto pushback practices without individual assessments of the situation.

When will the Commission start infringement procedures against Latvia, Lithuania and Poland and take further action against these countries?