

ORAL QUESTION H-0651/03  
for Question Time at the part-session in November 2003  
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Lennart Sacrédeus  
to the Commission

Subject: Policing the EU's external borders

According to the Swedish Government proposal 'Framtidens Tullverk' (customs service of the future), 430 customs staff are to lose their jobs in Sweden. Customs operations are being completely discontinued at, inter alia, Idre (Dalarna) close to the border with Norway and at the ports of Västerås and Köping at Lake Mälaren west of Stockholm. Those two ports handle considerable traffic from and to the Schengen Area. For some time now, there have been effectively no customs operations at the Nynäshamn ferry terminal south of Stockholm. As a result of so sweeping a scaling down of Swedish policing of the EU's external borders, there is a greater risk of more drugs and arms trafficking plus illegal immigration into the EU as a whole.

Does the Commission believe that, despite these restrictions, Sweden is meeting its obligations to uphold the Schengen Agreement and police the Union's external borders? Is the Swedish Government's scaling down of customs operations in line with what the Commission wants other Member States with responsibility for the Union's external borders to do, and is it a model for them?

Tabled: 23.10.2003  
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