

ORAL QUESTION H-0785/03
for Question Time at the part-session in December 2003
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure
by Efstratios Korakas
to the Council

Subject: Basic human rights in the Baltic countries

In his reply to a question I had tabled, the President of the Commission stated that he fully endorsed the statement by Commissioner Verheugen in support of the unacceptable approach to Russian speakers taken by the Latvian and Estonian governments and considered that under no circumstances had the prohibition of a Communist Party in a candidate country given rise to particular problems or censure in respect of political criteria.

In view of the fact that freedom of expression and the free and unhindered functioning of political parties are basic rights of citizens enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights (which the EU claims to have adopted as its basic principles) and that the expression of views such as those referred to above encourages the perpetuation of antidemocratic practices in the enlargement countries, will the Council say whether it agrees with the above views of Mr Prodi and Mr Verheugen on the prohibition of Communist Parties and the events in the Baltic countries? If not, what initiatives does it intend to take to allow the free expression of all political views and all political parties to operate legally even in the enlargement countries and to stop citizens of these countries being persecuted and deprived of their civil rights for political and ethnic reasons?

Tabled: 04.12.2003
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