

ORAL QUESTION H-0098/04
for Question Time at the part-session in March I 2004
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure
by Olle Schmidt
to the Council

Subject: Freedom of movement in the EU and risk of misuse of welfare systems

1 May 2004 will be a historic day on which western and eastern Europe reunite on peaceful terms. At the same time as welcoming that event, account should be taken of developments that may arise in connection with freedom of movement. In the light of the different levels of prosperity within the Union following enlargement, it is a possibility that individuals will try to move to another Member State to avail themselves of the new country's social security system. The Court of Justice has ruled that the minimum amount of work which may be defined as employment is ten hours per week but that the remuneration need not cover the worker's own upkeep. At the present time, ten hours a week of employment gives entitlement to a residence permit, which opens the door to the Member States' welfare systems. By changing the definition of employee/self-employed person so that the work should cover the individual's upkeep, the discriminatory transitional rules would be avoided.

Does the Council intend to take the initiative to redefine the terms employee/self-employed person in order to prevent the misuse of Member States' welfare systems and avoid discriminatory transitional rules for the new Member States?

Tabled: 12.02.2004
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