

ORAL QUESTION H-0549/04
for Question Time at the part-session in January 2005
pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure
by Barbara Kudrycka
to the Commission

Subject: Reciprocity in visa policy - transatlantic relations

In July 2004, the Commission proposed a change to the current solidarity mechanism in the common visa policy (COM(2004)0437/final). The proposal envisages the Commission entering into negotiations with those third countries which do not apply the principles of reciprocity to specific EU Member States.

Relations with the United States are, in this respect, of particular concern, as they have visa requirements for 10 of the EU Member States.

In the light of the above proposal, what view should be taken of the skill and credibility of the Commission in negotiations with the United States? Have talks to date brought about any results?

Is it not essential for Commissioner Franco Frattini, who very recently declared the need for good transatlantic relations, to solve this thorny problem, particularly as it appears so trivial against a background of such vital issues in relations with the USA as the fight against terrorism?

Can we expect from the Commission a plan of action with clear deadlines for the removal of visas by the USA, using as a point of reference the process of assessing the preparedness of the new Member States for membership of the Schengen Area (a process which should be set in motion at the beginning of 2006)?

Tabled: 16.12.2004
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