

ORAL QUESTION H-0294/07
for Question Time at the part-session in May 2007
pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure
by Marie Anne Isler Béguin
to the Council

Subject: Agreement on facilitation of the visa system for nationals of the Russian Federation

The European Union recently facilitated the visa system for nationals of the Russian Federation on the basis of the agreement reached at the St. Petersburg summit in 2003.

This means that residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two secessionist regions of Georgia not recognised by the international community, will be able to benefit from this new visa system since they all hold Russian passports.

No such agreement exists with Georgia, making Russian nationality appear more advantageous for people in those two separatist regions and further distancing them from the other parts of Georgia.

Given that the European Union is pursuing a peaceful settlement to the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and working for their rapprochement with Georgia, what will it do to remedy this situation? Are there any plans to enter into negotiations in the near future on a similar agreement with Georgia in order to grant the peoples of the Southern Caucasus the same rights?

Tabled: 11.04.2007
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