

ORAL QUESTION H-0452/07

for Question Time at the part-session in July 2007  
pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou  
to the Commission

Subject: Protection of children's rights in the context of the EU's foreign relations

The Commission communication of 4 July 2006 'Towards a European strategy on the rights of the child' estimates, under the heading 'Global situation', that some 300 000 children are fighting as child soldiers in more than 30 armed conflicts around the world. Although it might be thought that the problem of child soldiers had been dealt with and the extreme violations of their rights reduced, there are frequent reports in the international press regarding the recruitment of child soldiers, with specific examples involving the countries of Africa and Asia.

What view does the Commission take of the use of children in military operations, in the context of its external relations? What specific measures will it take to put efforts to combat the recruitment of child soldiers at the top of its political agenda in its relations with countries which force children to take part in military operations? What will it do to promote the application of the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, so that states comply with the requirement that young people must be aged 18 in order to take part in military training or operations?

Tabled: 05.06.2007  
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