

ORAL QUESTION O-0013/02

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

by Pervenche Berès, Evelyne Gebhardt and Michael Cashman, on behalf of the PSE Group, Mary Banotti, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group
to the Council

Subject: Parental responsibility

At a time when Europe plays an increasingly important role in the daily lives of our fellow citizens, there is still one area where common rules are sadly lacking. When a bi-national couple separates, Europe can do nothing to prevent the discrepancies between national courts which make this ordeal all the more difficult for the families involved. There is one way of effectively filling this unacceptable legal vacuum swiftly, namely, the proposal for a Council regulation on the recognition and enforcement of judgments in matters of parental responsibility. However, this proposal is making little headway. While more and more families are being torn apart each week, time is wasted on discussions by experts without the necessary political mediation. The Council therefore needs to give a clear political signal. By the beginning of April the Commission will submit a new proposal incorporating the progress made in the negotiations within the Council, combining it with the French initiative on visiting rights and Regulation (EC) 1347/2000¹, known as Brussels II. In keeping with the conclusions of the Tampere European Council, legislation of this kind within the Union is both legitimate and urgent. Can the Council give assurances that it will give all the necessary attention to this issue and that appropriate solutions will be found which are not confined to existing legal instruments such as the 1996 Hague Convention?

Tabled: 19.02.2002

Forwarded: 20.02.2002

Deadline for reply: 13.03.2002

¹ OJ L 160, 30.6.2000, p. 19.