

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0061/06  
pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Martin Schulz and Martine Roure, on behalf of the PSE Group  
to the Commission

Subject: European Union immigration policy

Estimates made by the International Organisation for Migration suggest that there are 3 million illegal immigrants in Europe (some NGOs calculate that there are 5 million or more). Illegal immigration to Europe is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that affects the whole of the European Union economically and socially. As such, it needs to be addressed by the European institutions from a strategic point of view ranging from development cooperation with countries of origin and trade policy to border control measures, via policy on negotiating readmission agreements, the orderly management of migration flows and social reception measures, the integration of legal immigrants and the expulsion of illegal immigrants, whilst ensuring the strictest respect for human rights.

The PSE Group's question to the Commission must therefore comprise various strands:

Development cooperation and trade: Can the Commission report on the progress made towards achieving the objectives set in the Strategy for Africa, specifically with regard to strengthening the links between migration and development and promoting codevelopment, return emigration, reintegration in the countries of origin and transfers of capital and technology by migrants? What measures is it taking to ensure that African governments are able to use trade as an instrument for combating poverty and preventing emigration? What incentives is the Commission using to foster the creation of integrated regional markets in the various sub-Saharan regions, and what proposals is it making within the WTO with a view to improving the export capacity of developing countries and boosting South-South trade?

Legal immigration and the fight against illegal immigration: What programmes has the Commission drawn up to combat illegal immigration and what funds is it allocating to those programmes? Is it favouring those countries which are cooperating with EU Member States on drawing up readmission agreements by providing aid to foster the management of their migration flows? Are there any plans for a European policy to promote migration for work purposes, principally through bilateral and multilateral agreements with countries of origin? How does it intend to implement the legal immigration plan envisaged in the Hague Programme, which it submitted in December 2005? What measures are being taken to combat people trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation?

Border management: What specific measures has the European Agency for External Borders taken to boost technical assistance for Member States whose circumstances require it?

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