

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0002/09

pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure

by Csaba Sándor Tabajdi, Hannes Swoboda, Jan Marinus Wiersma, Véronique De Keyser, Katrin Saks and Claude Moraes, on behalf of the PSE Group
to the Commission

Subject: Protection of traditional national, ethnic and immigrant minorities in Europe.

Protecting traditional national and ethnic minorities, addressing inter-ethnic relations, and integrating immigrant minorities are crucially important challenges for the European Union, for its stability, security, prosperity, good neighbourhood relations, internal and external legitimacy and credibility.

Are the Copenhagen criteria for respecting minority rights valid only for the new Member States and candidate countries or are they also binding on all Member States?

When and to which extent is a minority rights violation a domestic matter for the Member States?

Which demands made by national minorities are considered legitimate from the perspective of the political 'norms' of the European Union?

Should the EU elaborate a legally binding system of traditional national minority protection norms and control mechanisms on the basis of the Lisbon Treaty?

Does the Commission plan to elaborate a common set of standards regarding the integration of the new, migrant minorities in the framework of the common EU immigration policy currently under development?

Does the Commission agree that all Member States of the EU should ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages?

Does the Commission consider multilingualism to include regional or minority languages?

Does the Commission agree that various forms of autonomy/self-governance on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity are the best solutions for the protection of minority communities?

Does the Commission agree that monitoring the level of protection of minorities in the Member States and accession countries should be given priority in the work of the Fundamental Rights Agency?

Tabled: 13.01.2009

Forwarded: 15.01.2009

Deadline for reply: 22.01.2009