

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0022/09  
pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Jan Andersson, on behalf of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs  
to the Council

Subject: Children of immigrants

The situation of children of EU migrants that are left on their own in the Member State of origin while their parents migrate for work to another Member State has raised considerable concern in some Member States in the last two years. While policies do exist with the aim of improving the living conditions and education of migrant children who moved with their parents working abroad, the phenomenon of children left at home on their own has received little attention. According to the study made by Unicef and Social Alternatives in Romania, almost 350 000 children in 2008 had at least one parent who was working abroad, and nearly 126 000 had both parents working abroad.

The children left behind are at risk of losing care and parental attention.

They are at risk of general lack in care as regards physical and mental health, mental-health related effects such as depression, losing free time to play and develop, lack of school participation and general participation in education and training, malnutrition and child abuse.

What steps have been and will be taken by the Member States and the Council to improve the situation of these children and to ensure their normal development?

Reports about these children's poor lifestyle and the lack of care in terms of education and also affection are very worrying. Does the Council have information about how these children and their parents cope with this situation?

What steps have been and will be taken by the Member States hosting workers who have left children in their country of origin, and at European level to ensure a normal development of the children concerned in terms of education and social contacts?

Reportedly, the phenomenon affects several Member States. In the Council, has there been an exchange of views or a discussion about best practice between Member States on how to improve the situation?

Have the Member States set up cooperation mechanisms to prevent the deteriorating effects on families, especially children, of living apart and of the distances they have to bridge?

Tabled: 13.02.2009

Forwarded: 16.02.2009

Deadline for reply: 09.03.2009