

**Question for oral answer O-000049/2012  
to the Commission**

Rule 115

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**Marie-Christine Vergiat**

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**Tanja Fajon, Andres Perello Rodriguez, Vincent Peillon, Sylvie Guillaume, Vicente Miguel Garcés Ramón, Ana Gomes, Françoise Castex, Véronique De Keyser**

on behalf of the S&D Group

**Sonia Alfano, Ivo Vajgl, Nathalie Griesbeck, Marielle de Sarnez**

on behalf of the ALDE Group

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on behalf of the PPE Group

**Subject:** Facilitating the issuing of visas to students from countries in the EU's southern neighbourhood

The petition for a Euromed Erasmus programme has attracted over 4 600 signatures from citizens from twenty-four European countries and seven countries on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. Furthermore, Written Declaration No. 0015/2011 on the same topic was adopted by an overwhelming majority at the September 2011 part-session in Strasbourg.

Academic exchanges depend on the issuing of visas that are subject to strict and binding legislation which varies according to the host state.

While the Commission is aware of the problem of visas, no practical and sufficiently coherent solution has so far been proposed. One may legitimately wonder whether Member States do not consider the management of migration to be more important than the need for greater student mobility.

What practical proposals does the Commission have to facilitate the issuing of visas for students from the EU's southern neighbourhood? In particular, what plans does the Commission have for granting multiple-entry, long-term visas as a matter of priority to students from certain third countries, as provided for in the Visa Code (Art. 24)?

Is the Commission prepared to seek authorisation from the Council to address this issue in the negotiations for the conclusion of agreements on facilitating the issuing of visas with Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia (scheduled for April 2012) ? Is the Commission prepared to propose making the issuing of visas easier as part of the review of Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004 on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service (scheduled for December 2012)<sup>1</sup>?

Tabled: 5.3.2012

Forwarded: 7.3.2012

Deadline for reply: 14.3.2012

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 375 du 23.12.2004, p. 12.