

**Question for oral answer O-000113/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 115

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Subject: Swiss quotas on the number of residence permits granted to nationals of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary

The Swiss authorities decided on 18 April 2012 to introduce quotas on the number of category-B residence permits granted to citizens of eight EU countries by recalling the safeguard clause enshrined in Article 10 of the 1999 'Agreement on the free movement of persons (FMP)', and relating to it the provisions of the 2004 Protocol thereto.

Does the Commission consider the transitional measures for the application of Article 10 of the 1999 Agreement to the eight countries concerned, as foreseen in the 2004 Protocol thereto, still applicable? If not, does the Commission consider that the Swiss authorities have the right to use the 2004 Protocol as the legal basis for introducing the special measure?

Furthermore, given that the provisions of Article 10 of the 1999 Agreement refer to 'employed and self-employed persons of the European Community', does the Commission consider that the Swiss authorities have the right to introduce any national differentiation between EU-25 Member States through: a) establishing national ceilings that could trigger application of the safeguard clause; and b), in consequence of a), introducing quotas on the number of residence permits granted that are targeted at specific nationalities? If not, what steps does the Commission consider that the Union should undertake in reaction to the measures introduced by the Swiss authorities?

In the light of the above, and the clearly different interpretation of the Swiss authorities' decision of 18 April 2012 as expressed by High Representative Ashton, does the Commission consider the current agreement on the FMP as a sufficient and effective tool?

In that context and recalling the Parliament's resolution P7_TA(2010)0300 of 7 September 2010 on 'EEA-Switzerland: Obstacles with regard to the full implementation of the internal market' and the number of requests that have been made related to internal market matters in general and to freedom to provide services in particular, what progress has been made by the Commission on these points and what is the state of play of the negotiations on the future relations between the European Union and Switzerland?

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Deadline for reply: 23.5.2012