

**Question for oral answer O-000138/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 115

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

Subject: EU citizenship for sale

On 12 November 2013 Malta's Parliament approved a bill allowing third country nationals to buy Maltese citizenship, and therefore to enjoy freedom of movement in the EU and access to the Schengen area, for EUR 650 000.

While decisions on issues of nationality and citizenship are exclusively a matter for the Member States, the Maltese decision is problematic as it entitles new citizens to travel around the EU and the rest of the Schengen area without other Member States and Schengen countries being consulted. It could therefore be interpreted as an abuse of the rights that the country concerned has acquired through its membership of the EU or Schengen area, and as a lack of respect for the other countries involved.

It also raises major concerns as regards possible discrimination, as only the richest third country nationals will be able to buy the citizenship.

Moreover, it is unclear whether Maltese citizens will benefit from this policy, for example through the collection of taxes. Citizenship not only involves rights, but responsibilities as well, although foreign investors will not be held to this.

Finally, the decision raises questions as to whether these arrangements for obtaining Maltese citizenship undermine the very concept of European citizenship.

Can the Commission state whether the Maltese Parliament's decision complies with the letter and the spirit of the Treaties and the Schengen Borders Code, and with EU non-discrimination rules?

At least five other Member States (Spain, Cyprus, Portugal, Latvia and Greece) have offered to sell residency rights in exchange for business investment, real estate or government bonds.

Can the Commission provide an overview of the situation in the Member States?

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Deadline for reply: 13.12.2013