

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1263/01
by Eva Klamt (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Attempts by non-EU nationals to gain illegal entry to the UK

German haulage contractors report that illegal immigrants, with the aid of people smugglers, endeavour to board lorries bound for the UK at the borders of transit countries en route from Germany to the UK. The hauliers claim that the French, Belgian and Netherlands authorities are aware of this situation but that nothing is done. The UK authorities, on the other hand, search lorries specifically for illegal immigrants and fine the haulage firms £2000 for each illegal immigrant discovered. This fine is also payable even if the drivers or firms can prove that they have checked their vehicles. The persons apprehended have to be taken back across the border and released, only to make another attempt at illegal entry immediately, while the national border authorities look on.

Is the Commission aware of the situation described above and is it an accurate account? Do the fines which haulage firms are required to pay the UK in respect of illegal immigrants affect the operation of the internal market? What measures will the Commission take in response to the lack of cooperation in preventing illegal immigration on the part of the French, Belgian and Netherlands authorities, and to the fines imposed by the UK?