

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0906/02  
by Karla Peijs (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Discrimination against foreigners in the Belgian system of traffic fines

Last year I asked the Commission about discrimination against foreigners in relation to speeding fines in Belgium (E-0830/01)<sup>1</sup>. In its answer, the Commission said it would have to analyse the Belgian legislation in detail before taking a position. A year later, the situation is still the same, if not worse.

The Belgian government has increased the amount for the out-of-court settlement of speeding offences significantly (€200 fine for every 10 km in excess of the speed limit). This is for foreigners. The corresponding amount for Belgians is still expressed in Belgian francs and cannot therefore be collected at all as francs are no longer legal tender. This situation is unacceptable. Last year the Belgian government announced that this matter was not one of its priorities. Following the recent reform, I am forced to conclude that it is only traffic offences committed by foreigners that are a priority and this constitutes a new form of discrimination. With a view to the White Paper on transport, in which the Commission aims to harmonise penalties and checks, one wonders whether it is not time to call the Belgian government to account. Things are going too far. I anticipate that the Commission's analysis of Belgian legislation will support my complaint and I would ask the Commission now to take action.

It has since come to my attention that there has been a judgment (C-224/00) in a similar case in Italy, to which the Commission referred in its answer. Under this judgment, the Italian government may no longer discriminate against people with foreign number plates. Is it not time for the European Commission to draw up an inventory of legislation on fines in the various Member States and examine whether there is also discrimination against foreigners in other countries? This matter causes citizens a great deal of annoyance and inconvenience and casts doubt on the effectiveness of the Union.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 318 E, 13.11.2001, p. 129.