

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0039/07
by Cem Özdemir (Verts/ALE)
to the Commission

Subject: Bulgarian visa regulations towards Turkey

With the entry on 1 January 2007 of Bulgaria into the EU, the Bulgarian Government lifted its former transit visa regulations. From now on, Turkish citizens wishing to pass over the Turkish land borders with Bulgaria will have to get a visa from the Bulgarian consulates located in their region. The Edirne-based Bulgarian consulate will only be issuing transit and normal visas to Turkish citizens living in the Edirne, Tekirdag, and Kırklareli regions of Turkey. Other Turkish citizens will be required to apply for their Bulgarian visas through the consulates located nearest them. This is a change from the past implementation. With this swift change in implementation, there are currently many large transportation trucks filled with goods headed for Western Europe from Turkey, which have been stopped at the Turkey-Bulgaria border.

Secondly, Bulgaria is continuing to require visas for Turks in the European Union. All other EU countries have abolished visa applications for Turks who are residing in the EU with legal residence status.

What view does the Commission take of the concerns of Turkish citizens about the economic and physical constraints due to the new Bulgarian visa regulation concerning Turkish citizens?