

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2092/07
by Lilli Gruber (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Expulsion of Afghan citizens from Belgium

On 5 March 2007 16 Afghan nationals started a hunger strike in protest against the expulsion procedure launched against them by the competent Belgian authorities. Since Directive 2004/83/EC¹ was adopted the qualification of persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need protection has become a Community issue.

Since the Directive is regularly - and justly - applied to citizens of other countries in similar circumstances, e.g. Iraqis, it is hard to understand the reason for this difference in treatment, which is moreover in conflict with the practice traditionally followed until 2003. Since they cannot be repatriated under the present conditions there is a risk that a sizeable number of people in need of protection, in this case in Belgium, are being kept in a state of limbo without rights or obligations. In view of the responsibilities the European Union has taken on in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, the case outlined above inevitably takes on great political significance for our countries' credibility in the field of human rights and our action in the region, which is geopolitically so important.

Is the Commission already aware of the case described above and any other similar ones?

Does the Commission consider that it could and/or should prevail upon the Belgian authorities to guarantee the Afghan nationals the rights to which they are clearly entitled?

¹ OJ L 304, 30.9.2004, p.2.