

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4142/07
by Lydie Polfer (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Conditions for the release of the five Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian doctor

The five Bulgarian nurses and the doctor of Palestinian origin have just been released from prison in Libya after an ordeal lasting more than eight years and have been transferred to Bulgaria. One cannot help but be relieved about this 'happy ending' and congratulate those responsible at European level for their unfailing commitment over the years. However, there is still a lack of clarity regarding the conditions under which they were released and the negotiations leading up to their release, in particular the agreement reached with the Libyan authorities. The Commission was represented during the negotiations by Mrs Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy.

In this context can the Commission state:

1. the exact nature of the agreement concluded with the Libyan authorities in order to obtain the prisoners' release and who negotiated the agreement;
2. what commitments were entered into vis-à-vis Libya;
3. whether financial compensation was offered in exchange for the release and, if so, how much it was and who contributed to it;
4. whether it can confirm reports that it undertook to pay back into the Libyan Economic and Social Development Fund the sums collected in the context of the funding agreement of 15 July 2007, which amount to 598 million Libyan dinars, equivalent to US\$ 461 million?