

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3027/08
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to the Commission

Subject: Checks at internal borders within the Schengen Area - restrictions on the free movement of EU workers and citizens within the internal market

There has recently been a flurry of complaints from Czech citizens at the frequent checks to which they are being subjected at internal borders when travelling to Germany and Austria. Austria admittedly announced that special checks would be introduced at its borders on account of a major sports event taking place from 2 June to 1 July 2008, but it has already started carrying out those checks during the current month of May (as the Czech Republic's Ministry of the Interior has confirmed in response to repeated prompting from Czech citizens). Similar blanket checks are being carried out by Germany, although they were not announced in advance and they are not justified by exceptional circumstances. Irrespective of the fact that bilateral negotiations are already under way, the EU must keep an eye on such restrictions on the free movement of EU workers, entrepreneurs and citizens within the internal market. The question is whether, by virtue of their type, their systematic nature, their blanket coverage and their frequency, the checks carried out at internal borders disproportionately jeopardise the functioning of the internal market, which is what underpins the basic freedoms laid down in the Treaties. Just as ratification of the Lisbon Treaty is approaching, this state of affairs undermines Czech citizens' confidence that their rights as regards free movement within the EU will be upheld.

1. How does the Commission intend to ensure that there is genuine and non-discriminatory freedom of movement for EU workers and citizens within the internal market and across the Schengen Area's internal borders?
2. In view of the increasingly frequent problems being encountered at the EU's internal borders, what means are available to the Commission for remedying this state of affairs and what are the Commission's current monitoring procedures for objectively establishing whether or not the Member States are excessively impeding free movement? What - if any - additional remedial measures does the Commission intend to adopt in the future?