

WRITTEN QUESTION P-4173/08
by Péter Olajos (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Illegal employment of young people

In the course of recent labour inspections in Hungary, a number of instances of companies illegally employing young people were uncovered. These included several cases of children no older than 13 or 14 being employed in motorway construction and agriculture.

This is not, unfortunately, the first time such things have occurred in Hungary recently, even though the practice is strictly prohibited by labour regulations.

In spite of being fined substantial sums (in some cases totalling millions of forints), some companies do not baulk at the idea of illegally employing young people under 16, since the low wages paid to the latter constitute a considerable saving for their employers. The current high tax burden means that many companies are illegally employing young people, even if they risk being found out. The number of cases uncovered is, of course, well below the true figure. This problem affects not just Hungary but also numerous Member States and candidate countries.

In the light of the above, my question to the Commission is this:

What specific steps is it taking to prevent the illegal employment of young people?