

WRITTEN QUESTION P-6516/08
by Sylwester Chruszcz (NI)
to the Commission

Subject: Discrimination against Poles in Lithuania

In the latest parliamentary elections in Lithuania representatives of the Polish minority in that country were among those to be elected to Parliament: Waldemar Tomaszewski, the leader of *Akcja Wyborcza Polaków na Litwie* (AWPL) ('Election Campaign for Poles in Lithuania'), and Michał Mackiewicz, the leader of *Związek Polaków na Litwie* ('Union of Poles in Lithuania'). The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania is currently examining whether these two Members of Parliament, who in June 2008 were issued with the so-called 'Polish Charter', a document confirming affiliation to the Polish nation, are loyal to the Lithuanian state, or whether they are legally connected to another country. Should the Constitutional Court rule that receiving the Polish Charter amounts to having obligations towards another country, the MPs concerned risk being disqualified from office. That would amount to an infringement of the EU's fundamental values and of one of the 1993 Copenhagen criteria, fulfilment of which was a condition for Lithuania's membership of the EU. Does the Commission not regard this as a clear case of infringement of the rights of a national minority in a Member State? Is the Commission aware of any similar cases of discrimination against representatives of national minorities in other Member States? What steps does the Commission intend to take to safeguard the rights of the Polish minority in Lithuania?