

**Question for written answer P-010088/2012  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Struan Stevenson (ECR)**

Subject: Denial of work permits by Greece to European vets

Populations of stray animals in various EU Member States are rising rapidly, particularly in Greece, where the increasing stray population is a direct consequence of the financial crisis. Little is being done from within Greece to address the situation, but a substantial number of animal welfare NGOs from other Member States have offered to send volunteer vets to the country to perform 'catch-neuter-release' campaigns.

Directive 2005/36/EC provides for a special temporary mobility scheme and specifically refers to veterinary surgeons. Additionally, Greek law No 4039/2012 allows non-Greek vets to perform neutering operations on a voluntary basis. However, with few exceptions, all fully qualified vets with established surgeries in their country of origin who have applied for a temporary permit to work in Greece have been refused, on the basis of Greek Decree No 40/2006, which, according to the Geotechnical Chamber (the Greek body responsible for issuing such permits), includes no provision for authorising voluntary work and lays down knowledge of the Greek language as a requirement.

1. Is the Commission aware of the obstacles currently facing European volunteer vets seeking to work temporarily in Greece to help curb the numbers of strays?
2. Is the Commission currently taking any steps to address the deteriorating situation for stray animals across Europe, and what action will it take to ensure compliance with the criteria laid down in Directive 2005/36/EC?