

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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ORAL QUESTION (0-76/81)

with debate pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure by Mr ROGALLA, Mr SEEFELD, Mr SEELER, Mr SIEGLERSCHMIDT, Mr SCHINZEL, Mr SCHMID, Mr WALTER, Mr WIECZOREK-ZEUL and Mrs HOFF to the Commission of the European Communities

Subject : Abolition of personal checks at internal Community frontiers

Under the first sentence of the preamble to the EEC Treaty, the Community is obliged 'to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe'.

Article 2 of the EEC Treaty provides for the 'establishment of a common market'.

Under Article 3(c) the Community has an obligation to abolish 'obstacles to freedom of movement for persons' between the Member States.

After years of fruitless effort in particular by Members of the European Parliament and the Commission to achieve a genuine elimination of personal checks at internal Community frontiers, the President of the Commission, Mr Thorn, addressed Parliament as follows on 8 July 1981 :

'We are greatly shocked to see the continuation, and even the strengthening of frontier formalities

and identity controls. How can one expect the citizens of Europe to be delighted or enthusiastic about the prospect of new passports in fine bordeaux livery if, when they travel inside the Community, they have to go through increasingly draconian controls?

The first step will be for the Governments to undertake to reduce passport formalities at frontiers to the level of those applied to the least-controlled means of transport. And I don't want any muttering about policing efficiency or any other technical problems! We have got to change the mentalities and habits of our civil services. We have to show the political determination to give the citizens of Europe an awareness of their continent, by which I mean an awareness of the existence and the significance of our Community'.

We therefore ask the Commission

1. What concrete measures does it intend to propose to the European Council to ensure that by the end of 1982 personal checks at internal Community frontiers will really have been abolished?
2. What role does it consider the Community institutions should play in this context?
3. What practical, administrative and legal objections and difficulties currently stand in the way of abolishing personal checks on travellers between the Member States?
4. To what extent does the Commission regard the objections raised by some Member States to the abolition of frontier checks on travellers to be well-founded?
5. What steps has the Commission already taken to consider in detail such objections relating to internal security, drug offences or combatting crime and where necessary, by means of coordination, cooperation between Member States and other measures to eliminate them so that border checks will be abolished by the end of 1982?
6. What proposals has the Commission drawn up on the coordination of the visa requirements of the Member States? Can the Commission facilitate the approximation of the Member States' visa policies by arranging regular, comprehensive, reciprocal exchanges of information in advance between the Member States, in particular on changes envisaged in visa requirements for non-member countries.
7. In what stages is the abolition of personal checks on travellers between the Member States to be achieved?