

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5374/08

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to the Commission

Subject: Tackling illegal immigration

According to reports in the Greek press, over the weekend of 20-21 September 2008, 143 illegal immigrants, including 15 children, came ashore in Samos, Lesbos and Farmakonisi from Turkey. One day later, another 29 illegal immigrants were found in hiding on a truck transporting coal, the final destination of which was Italy.

As the number of illegal immigrants arriving at the southern external borders of the EU constantly increases - particularly during the summer months - the citizens of the Union are calling for effective measures.

- Are there comparative statistics on the volume of illegal immigrants entering the Union - by country of reception - and what is their trend over recent years?
- To what extent has the creation of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Frontex) helped strengthen the guarding of the Union's external borders? To what extent has the Poseidon operation (protection and patrols in the Aegean, the Greek-Albanian and Greek-Turkish borders) achieved the anticipated results and what is forecast for 2009?
- As regards the European Refugee Fund, to what extent have the Member States availed themselves of the facility it provides for burden-sharing, on a voluntary basis? If that facility is used to a limited extent only, what measures will the Commission take to tackle illegal immigration through the European Refugee Fund?