

ECHO will monitor the implementation of the project through its Technical Assistant in charge of Laos, Indonesia and East Timor, who is based in Bangkok but will undertake several field monitoring visits during project implementation. A mission of the Desk Officer in charge in Brussels is also foreseen for the first quarter of 2004.

The allocation of ECHO funds is based on existing humanitarian needs. Should urgent humanitarian needs persist at the end of the implementation of the ongoing projects, ECHO could consider increasing the aid allocated to East Timor. However, this is unlikely at this stage.

(2004/C 78 E/0644)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3608/03**

**by Marco Pannella (NI), Maurizio Turco (NI),  
Marco Cappato (NI), Gianfranco Dell'Alba (NI),  
Benedetto Della Vedova (NI)  
and Olivier Dupuis (NI) to the Commission**

(5 December 2003)

*Subject:* Violation of the rights of the Çam minority

In June 1944, 44 000 Albanians of Muslim origin were forcibly driven out of Çameria after being accused of collaborating with the Nazi occupying forces. This was the final stage in a process of genocide against these people, whose movable and immovable property was also confiscated (land, houses, livestock and household equipment).

The Çam population belonging to the Orthodox faith who remained in Çameria do not enjoy the rights recognised by the European Union, in particular the rights of ethnic and linguistic minorities and the right to learn Albanian in Albanian schools, which are banned by the Greek government.

Only if these two minorities are granted political and legal equality in Greece and Albania can relations of sincere and stable friendship be established between the different peoples and countries.

Can the Commission say what steps it will take to ensure that the Albanian population of Muslim origin forcibly removed from Çameria may return to their land of origin and be entitled to reacquire their property and be compensated for damage to their assets?

And can it say what steps it will take to ensure that the Albanian population belonging to the Orthodox faith remaining in Çameria are allowed to use the Albanian language in official transactions and to enjoy full civil rights in Greece, in the same way as the Greek minority in Albania?

**Answer given by Mr Patten on behalf of the Commission**

(3 February 2004)

The Commission is aware of the claims of a part of Albanian population that their rights are not fully respected in Greece, notably as regards the properties confiscated at the end of World War II.

The Commission considers that this issue is mainly a bilateral issue between Albania and Greece. Nonetheless, the Commission would like to point out that some positive developments have been observed during 2003. High level meetings (i.e. between Prime Minister Nano and Prime Minister Simitis) have taken place with the objective, amongst others, of addressing issues such as the validity of the so-called 'Law of War' (established by Greece and allegedly applied to Albanians), the access of the Albania population to Greek Courts to claim their rights, and the response of these Courts. The Commission noted that Mr Nano, during a session of the Albanian Parliament (15/05/03), has stated that the Albanian government considers that the 'State of War' does not exist anymore since the two countries have signed on 21 March 1996 a Friendship and Co-operation Agreement. The 'State of War' belongs to the past, concluded Mr Nano. At the same time the Chief of the Democratic Party, Mr Sali Berisha (main opposition Party) has also declared that actually there is no 'State of War' between Greece and Albania. While the matter of confiscated properties remains controversial, this can be considered progress in the right direction.

The Commission will continue to monitor the situation and to encourage further dialogue between Athens and Tirana with the aim of achieving a fair resolution of pending issues ...

(2004/C 78 E/0645)

**WRITTEN QUESTION E-3611/03**

**by Camilo Nogueira Román (Verts/ALE) to the Commission**

(5 December 2003)

*Subject:* Legalising immigration

The Commission for Justice and Home Affairs recently stated that legislation on legalising immigration — an area in which there has only been progress on the issues of family reunion and long-term resident status — always runs into ‘major problems in Council’.

Can the Commission state which issues cause these major problems, and which Member States are responsible for the delays in so serious and crucial an area, at a time when dozens and dozens of immigrants continue to drown on the Union’s southern shores?

**Answer given by Mr Vitorino on behalf of the Commission**

(28 January 2004)

In order to implement the Treaty of Amsterdam and the mandate given in Tampere, the Commission has tabled several proposals for directives concerning the admission and the conditions of stay of third-country nationals.

These proposals must be adopted by unanimity, whereas current national legislation in relation to particular third countries differs widely. These factors have to be taken into account.

However, the European Council meetings in Seville on 21/22 June 2002, in Thessaloniki on 19/20 June 2003 and in Brussels on 12 December 2003 emphasised the need to speed up the legislative work in order to implement the programme approved at Tampere, in particular as concerns the development of a common European policy on asylum and migration.

In this regard certain progress has already been achieved:

- As far as legislation in the field of legal migration is concerned, the Council adopted on 22 September 2003 Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification <sup>(1)</sup> and on 25 November 2003 the Directive on the status of third-country nationals who are long term residents <sup>(2)</sup>.
- A proposal for a Directive concerning the admission of students and volunteers was presented on 7 October 2002 <sup>(3)</sup> and it is hoped that this will be adopted in the first half of 2004. A proposal concerning the admission of researchers will be put forward by the Commission in January 2004.
- The Commission regrets that in spite of the above mentioned statements of the European Council, its proposal for a Directive on the admission of economic migrants has not yet been adopted by the Council, and the Commission will be launching a wide debate on this issue during 2004.
- Concerning the present migratory pressure on the southern external borders of the Union, the Commission refers to its reply to the written question E-2347/03 by Mr Nogueira Roman <sup>(4)</sup>. Furthermore, it should be noted that in September 2003, the Commission presented the final report on the feasibility study on the control of the Union’s maritime borders. The Council on 27/28 November 2003 adopted a programme of measures to combat illegal immigration across the maritime borders of the Member States.