



12th May 2008

EP sets ball rolling for law on illegal work

The European Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee this week started discussing the detailed provisions of a new EU law intended to stamp out illegal employment of immigrants.

MEP Simon Busuttil is the main negotiator of the EPP-ED group on this law.

During the Committee meeting most MEPs from different political groups, together with the Council and the Commission, manifested widespread agreement on a number of key issues.

Dr Busuttil said that there is a general agreement that this law is necessary since it will send out a clear message to employers that illegal employment can no longer be tolerated and equally that abusing vulnerable migrants is not an option. The law should also send an unequivocal message to would-be illegal immigrants that Europe is not a free-for-all. Risking your life to cross to Europe and then end up in modern-day slavery is just not worth it.

The law would establish common sanctions for employers who employ immigrants illegally, including tough fines, disqualification from public tenders and the recovery of EU funds and state subsidies. In the most serious cases the law would also provide for criminal penalties. Among others, criminal sanctions would apply in cases of repeated offences, in cases of the employment of a large number of illegal immigrants and in cases where conditions are particularly exploitative.

Illegal work is often concentrated in the construction, agriculture, cleaning and the hotel and catering sectors.

Dr Busuttil said that following consultations with stakeholders at a local and European level, ranging from businesses, traders' unions, organizations, government entities and immigrants themselves, he was now in a position to take up many of their suggestions and experiences in order to start hammering out the text of the new legislation.

.....

Office of Simon Busuttil MEP

Kevin Mizzi in Valletta: (356) 21228585