

WRITTEN QUESTION E-6153/07

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to the Commission

Subject: Interpol warrant against Mr Beslagic

In June 2007 a Serbian court issued an Interpol warrant for three citizens of Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), with the accusation of 'war crimes' regarding the 'Brcanska Malta' case (Tuzla, 15 May 2002). According to the accusation, 200 unarmed Yugoslav National Army soldiers were killed. According to other reliable sources, instead, 49 armed YNA soldiers and four Tuzla citizens were killed. Selim Beslagic, who was then Mayor of Tuzla, is among the accused. Ilija Jurisic, then President of the Tuzla Municipal Council, was arrested in Belgrade in May 2007 in relation to the same case. Already in 1993 Milosevic's judicial power had started this accusation initiative, based on a request from the military corps then commanded by Karadzic and Mladic. The case was treated by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which concluded that the accusations were inconsistent and passed the case to the judicial authorities of BiH. According to the 1996 'Rome Agreed Measures' (expired in 2004 and renewed solely by Serbia and Croatia), warrants for violations of international humanitarian law were only valid after having been deemed consistent with international legal standards by the ICTY. The June 2007 warrant contradicts the ICTY judgement. Following this warrant, Mr Beslagic has appeared before the Court in Sarajevo, giving up his parliamentary immunity right to, and has been released due to the inconsistency of the accusation. However, if he left Bosnia, he could be arrested and handed over to the Serbian authorities. Beslagic is internationally known, also to the European Parliament, for his commitment in favour of his town's good interethnic relations, even during the war.

Is the Commission aware of these serious violations of personal freedom? Does the Commission intend to clarify that if Serbia intends to have the Stabilisation and Association Agreement approved, it needs to avoid taking actions which contribute to exacerbating ethnic hatred? Does the Commission intend to ask the Serbian Government for explanations regarding actions which clearly aim to counterbalance its duty of cooperation with the ICTY?