Question for written answer E-002585/2026
to the Commission
Rule 144
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Subject: The number of illegal immigrants in France, according to the Government and Eurostat: a methodological error or wilful blindness?

On 12 May 2026, a post on the Eurostat website stated that 719 395 people were illegally present in the European Union in 2025, including 159 460 in France[1]. In October 2025, Laurent Nunez, the French Minister for the Interior, estimated that there were 700 000 illegal immigrants in France, a figure very similar to that reported by Eurostat for the European Union as a whole. As early as 2021, Gérald Darmanin, then Minister for the Interior, announced that there were between 600 000 and 700 000 illegal immigrants on French soil.

While discrepancies arising from a different calculation method are understandable, the one observed here appears to be particularly significant. If we assume that the differences are of the same magnitude across the whole of the Union, this would suggest that the number of undocumented foreign nationals in the Union could exceed three million.

The significant discrepancies between these figures contribute to confusion regarding the actual number of people residing in the Union illegally.

For the sake of clarity, could the Commission:

1. explain the 1:4 discrepancy between the figures provided by the French Minister for the Interior and those from Eurostat for France?

2. consider using a different statistical category or method in order to better reflect the estimates produced by the national authorities of the Member States?

Supporters[2]

Submitted: 23.6.2026

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Enforcement_of_immigration_legislation_statistics#Third-country_nationals_found_to_be_illegally_present.

[2] This question is supported by Members other than the authors: Catherine Griset (PfE), Jean-Paul Garraud (PfE).