

**Question for written answer E-000713/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Roberta Angelilli (PPE)

Subject: Assessment of joint custody at European level

Children are the most vulnerable ones in situations of family tension and conflict.

Under Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, every child has 'the right to maintain on a regular basis a personal relationship and direct contact with both of his or her parents.'

In practice, in the event of separation or divorce, this should mean a balanced and continuing relationship for the child with both parents.

From the information available on the website of the European Judicial Network, many Member States have made provision for joint custody, which, if rigorously applied, can be extremely beneficial for the children. However, quite apart from international child abduction, there are very many cases of children born to parents of the same nationality, who, following a separation, no longer have regular contact with one parent.

This is a hidden issue that results in thousands of children losing contact not only with one of the two parents, but also with their relatives on that side of the family.

In terms of safeguarding the child's best interests, both parents have the same right/duty to raise, educate and support their offspring, with equal status and rights.

Can the Commission answer the following:

- Is there any data at Member State level on the percentages of children in the custody of the father and of the mother, as well as the percentage of children in joint custody?
- Are there any studies into the effective implementation of joint custody? If so, do these studies show – as the questioner has heard from various sources – major disparities in the implementation of this system for children from different Member States?
- Are there any studies that identify best practices for safeguarding co-parenting?
- Is it aware of any organisations, or networks of organisations, that safeguard parent-child relations in the event of a separation?