

Question for written answer E-004605/2016
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Charles Tannock (ECR)

Subject: VP/HR - Rising tensions in the South China Sea

Reports from the South China Sea suggest a rise in tensions following China's decision to proceed with asserting its claims regarding activities such as large-scale reclamation, the building of facilities and the militarisation of rocks and islands. At the same time, the US and Australia have stepped up patrols of military vessels and aircraft in the area, sparking an angry response from China. At the G7 meeting in Japan, countries including the US, Canada and the UK expressed their support for the legitimacy in terms of jurisdiction and process of the claims taken by the Philippines to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague with a view to the peaceful resolution of that country's disputes with China.

1. Does the EU support the dispute resolution initiative now before the Permanent Court of Arbitration as a model for the peaceful resolution of territorial disputes in the South China Sea that China needs to comply with?
2. What steps will the Vice-President / High Representative take to put pressure on China to respect the decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in this dispute?
3. Will the EU introduce initiatives to bring all parties to the South China territorial disputes together under a common dispute resolution process that is compliant with international law?