

**Question for written answer E-006939/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Jørn Dohrmann (ECR)

Subject: An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic

The joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of 27 April 2016 on 'An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic' touches on important challenges facing Arctic transport, such as the lack of sufficient east/west land and air connections in the European High North. It also mentions several issues concerning maritime transport, such as the entry into force next year of the International Maritime Organisation's Polar Code. However, this new Arctic Communication, as opposed to the two previous Arctic Communications (in 2008 and 2012), does not refer to the internationally recognised maritime law principles of freedom of navigation and innocent passage. The defence of these principles is of great importance for the EU as a whole and for several EU Member States in particular (whether they have polar territories or not), such as Greece and Denmark. Furthermore, the two documents through which the higher EU institutions asked the Commission and the VP/HR for a new Arctic Communication (the European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2014 and the Council Conclusions of 12 May 2014) again drew attention to the maritime law principles of freedom of navigation and innocent passage.

Can the Commission explain whether this absence from the text represents a fundamental change in the EU Arctic policy concerning the maritime transport sector?