

Question for written answer E-000730/2017
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL)

Subject: VP/HR - Restrictive measures towards Belarus

In February last year the Council lifted most of the restrictive measures in relation to Belarus. This step had an important positive impact on the process of normalising relations between the Union and Belarus. The Council's decision also triggered positive developments in Belarus in the field of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, although of course much still remains to be done.

However, an arms embargo continues to be in place against Belarus. While claiming to ban the export of military goods, which could be used for internal repression, this measure in reality prevents Belarus from importing non-military material, in particular European-manufactured biathlon rifles and rounds used in training and competitions.

1. Could the VP/HR explain to what extent the arms embargo, including the ban on sporting arms, contributes to the objectives that the Union is promoting in Belarus?
2. Does the VP/HR believe that disadvantaging Belarusian athletes in international competitions helps to bring more Europe to Belarus and create a better image of the EU in this country?
3. What steps do the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) plan to take to bolster the positive momentum in Belarus and bring it closer to European values?