

**Question for written answer E-001439/2017
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 130

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Subject: VP/HR - Decriminalisation of domestic violence in Russia - Domestic Abuse Law

President Putin has enacted the Domestic Abuse Law – a law that decriminalises domestic violence in Russia.

Regardless of the legal arguments put forward by Russian lawmakers on the equalisation of penalties, it is our belief in this case that a downgrading approach to equalisation conveys a message of permissiveness that reinforces a tolerant attitude towards the abuse of and violence against women and children.

About 14 000 women die every year at the hands of their partners in Russia and the number of domestic violence crimes has not stopped increasing in recent years.

In February 2017, the President of the Council of Europe wrote to his counterparts in the Duma and the Council of the Russian Federation to convey his concerns about this legislative change and emphasising the fact that domestic abuse or mistreatment is a crime. He affirmed that the decriminalisation of domestic abuse undermines global efforts to eradicate it and recalled that Russia is currently one of four states that have neither signed nor ratified the Istanbul Convention.

Has the Commission made any official statements to Russia in this regard? Will the Commission take any action?

How does the Commission consider that the violation of human rights should affect bilateral relations?