

**Question for written answer E-006971/2017  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Bronis Ropé (Verts/ALE)**

Subject: On the rights of EU citizens to travel to third countries

Defending the rights of citizens and protecting their interests, including in third countries, is one of the EU's objectives. Despite the EU's efforts to implement a common foreign and security policy, not all third countries treat the citizens of different EU countries equally. Ordinary citizens directly experience the painful consequences of unequal treatment when travelling in, or preparing to travel to, countries outside the EU. There are many cases in which a third country has allowed citizens from some EU countries to enter their territory without a visa, while requesting that citizens from other EU countries acquire a visa or even submit a large number of documents. For example, South Africa requires Lithuanian citizens wishing to visit the country to produce certificates from their employer, wage slips, etc. However, citizens from other EU countries are allowed to enter the Republic of South Africa without a visa. It should be noted that this is quite a widespread practice.

In this connection, would the Commission say whether she or the Service she heads is aware of the problem of EU citizens being treated unequally? What actions have been taken by the European External Action Service over the last five years to create better opportunities for EU citizens to travel to third countries, and has the issue of crossing borders been raised in negotiations on trade agreements, development aid, etc.?