

**Question for written answer P-012942/2015/rev.1  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**Mark Demesmaeker (ECR)**

Subject: Commission's position on the possible independence of Catalonia

Margaritis Schina, spokesman for the Commission, has made a remarkable statement on the independence process in Catalonia. He said that a Member State region which becomes independent automatically becomes a 'third country' which has to make an application for EU membership. The Commission thus stands by the position set out by Romano Prodi in 2004 – in spite of the massive support for independence in Catalonia – and upheld in the public debate on the recent independence referendum in Scotland. I also refer to the statement made by former Commissioner De Gucht, the day after the Scottish referendum: 'We could hardly have refused EU membership to an independent Scotland' (in the Flemish weekly *Knack*, 19 September 2014).

1. On what grounds in law and in the Treaties is the Commission spokesman's statement based?
2. On what legal basis does the Commission propose to draw a distinction between EU citizens in Catalonia and EU citizens in the rest of Spain?
3. Can the Commission explain how its support for peoples striving for autonomy and independence, in such places as South Sudan, Kosovo and East Timor, relates to its unchanged attitude to similar processes within the EU?