

**Question for written answer P-002097/2019  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Sofia Ribeiro (PPE)**

Subject: Infringement of the labour rights of Portuguese workers at the Lajes Air Base

The US military presence at the Lajes Air Base is governed by the 1995 Portugal-US Cooperation and Defence Agreement, allowing the US (and NATO) to maintain privileged access in the Atlantic. The labour rights of the Portuguese personnel working for the US-forces at that facility (FEUSAÇORES) are laid down in the 'labour' component of the agreement, which, though referring to labour legislation applying in Portugal, contains many rules falling short of Portuguese standards; these workers cannot avail themselves of national laws, even those transposing EU regulations. This affects access to employment tribunals; occupational medicine and workplace health and safety; parental benefits; 'student worker' status; representation in elective offices; and the right to strike. The workers are paid a minimum wage below the Portuguese level, although they pay taxes in Portugal. The disregard for national and EU rules is clear. When replying to questions from workers' representatives, the regional government has taken the view that the enforcement of national legislation cannot be prevented, but the Portuguese State has proved incapable of making FEUSAÇORES obey the law.

Does the Commission think that EU directives can be breached within the EU in the way described?  
What does it propose to do?

What means does the EU afford to safeguard the interests of the workers concerned?