

**Question for written answer P-003262/2019
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Jeroen Lenaers (PPE)

Subject: Turkish offensive in Northern Syria and the risk of jihadist fighters returning in greater numbers

With the Turkish offensive in Northern Syria, a possible return of jihadist fighters has once more become a focal issue. On 13 October, it was reported that 795 people with suspected links to Islamic State had fled the Ain Issa displacement camp.¹ It is also known that there are many Europeans affiliated to ISIL in various prisons in northern Syria and Iraq. Were they to escape, the risk of their return to Europe would be all the greater.

1. Is the Committee aware of the ISIL prisoner escapes and what measures will it take to step up the vigilance of European border guards to any attempts to return?
2. Given the real chance of certain ISIL activists holding EU passports, will the Commission step up its efforts to ensure that all persons enjoying free movement under Union law are subjected to the mandatory structural controls² ? Does it oppose time limits for the reintroduction of targeted border controls, given the increasing risk of combatants returning?
3. Is the Commission constantly ensuring that Member States enter timely, comprehensive and accurate information on European and international databases, since this is what will determine the success or failure of European security policy?

¹ <https://nos.nl/artikel/2305917-zeker-785-is-ers-ontsnapt-uit-kamp-in-syrisch-grensgebied.html>

² Article 1 of Regulation (EU) 2017/458 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 amending Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) 2016/399 as regards the reinforcement of external border checks by consulting the relevant databases.

