

**Question for written answer E-008072/2013
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 117

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Subject: VP/HR - Detention of Bolivian President, Evo Morales, in Europe

The aviation authorities of France, Spain, Italy and Portugal closed their airspace to a plane carrying Bolivian President, Evo Morales. His jet was forced to land in Vienna, where it was grounded and, according to Austrian sources, searched. The presidential plane had left Moscow to return to Bolivia and was due to fly through French airspace before making a technical stop in Lisbon, but permission to continue was refused, allegedly because of suspicion that former US intelligence agent Edward Snowden was on board. Snowden had requested political asylum from a number of countries with no success.

The detention of President Morales and the search of his plane both constitute a clear violation of presidential immunity guaranteed under the United Nations Convention on Jurisdictional Immunity of States and their Property. Furthermore, the physical integrity of the President was put at risk.

The European countries listed above, and the EU in general, have once again given in to pressure from their preferred partner, the United States of America, which suspected that Mr Snowden was on board and questioned the word of the Bolivian President.

This latest incident, together with CIA flights and the PRISM surveillance scandal, show that EU Member States are prepared to violate fundamental rights and international law in order to please the USA, rather than cooperate in a legal, transparent and impartial manner.

What is the opinion of the Vice-President / High Representative with regard to this scandal? Does she believe that the case described above constitutes an infringement of the Vienna Convention? Were the decisions taken by France, Spain, Portugal and Italy a result of pressure exerted by the USA?

What impact will this incident have on bilateral relations with Bolivia and other Unasur members that have already expressed support for Evo Morales and condemned his detention? Will the Vice President / High Representative make a public apology to President Morales on behalf of the EU?