

**Question for written answer E-012580/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Occupied Territories

The Commission frequently uses the term 'Occupied Territories' to describe the West Bank areas of Judea and Samaria, which are partly under the administration of the Palestinian Authority. We understand that in law, the term 'Occupied Territory' applies to an area which forms part of one state but is forcibly controlled and administered by another.

The legal status of the West Bank is disputed and is by no means clear, as historically Palestine has never been an independent state. However, it certainly does not form all or part of any internationally recognised sovereign nation. Why, therefore, does the Commission use the term 'Occupied Territories'? Would 'Disputed Territories' not be more appropriate?

We understand that High Representative Catherine Ashton has said that the EU is obliged to apply sanctions (which currently include or are proposed to include import controls on products made in the West Bank and denial of EU funding to projects with operations in the West Bank), as EU rules require her to do so. If this is the case, could the Commission explain how it justifies its assistance in the Western Sahara, occupied by Morocco, or in Northern Cyprus, occupied by Turkey?