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Answer given by High Representative/Vice President Ashton
on behalf of the Commission
(11.4.2014)

The European Commission fully respects the Swiss tradition of direct democracy. It can however, not overlook the discrimination against one of its Member States. The Swiss government has indicated not to be in a position to sign and conclude the protocol extending the EU-Swiss agreement on the free movement of persons to Croatia and to guarantee the benefit of free movement to Switzerland to Croatian citizens. The Council made the conclusion of negotiations on Swiss association and participation in Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ dependent on the conclusion of this protocol. The European Commission has consequently put negotiations of these agreements on hold until Switzerland signs the the Protocol.

As to the Honourable Member's second question, Switzerland is not part of the European Union and as a sovereign country it is free to decide on the international obligations it wishes to enter into, to revise or to terminate. These decisions, however have consequences for its participation into the internal market and more generally for EU-Swiss relations, as has been the case for the protocol.