

Question for written answer E-004305/2016
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Mariya Gabriel (PPE)

Subject: VP/HR - Electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 11 May 2016, the Constitutional Court of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) published a decision allowing the President Joseph Kabila to stay in power beyond the end of his mandate if elections are not held as scheduled. This decision cannot be appealed. In September 2014, the EU electoral follow-up mission already expressed concerns about the independence and autonomy of the Court. This decision comes in addition to a number of elements, including the closure of democratic space, which will likely lead to the postponement of the elections. Unfortunately, this situation is very similar in nature to the Burundian crisis although, given its size and population, the DRC has an even greater destabilisation potential for the entire Great Lakes region.

Does the VP/HR and the EEAS anticipate an escalation in tensions and violence in the country if the presidential elections are not announced on September 19 2016?

Is there coordination taking place with the United States about the possible implementation of targeted sanctions in the event of a violation of the constitutional deadline for the elections?

What means are available to the European Union today to help prevent a drastic outcome which seems more and more likely despite early warnings?