

**Question for written answer E-002387/2017
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**
Rule 130
Urmas Paet (ALDE)

Subject: VP/HR - Position of the EU on the issue of Syria

On 30 March 2017, the US ambassador to the UN announced that the US is no longer focused on removing the Syrian president Bashar-al Assad from the presidential position, instead focusing on defeating ISIS. The same message was forwarded by Rex Tillerson, who spoke in Turkey the same day, saying that the longer-term status of Assad will be decided by the Syrian people. Such a shift in US politics is significant and supports the Russian approach to the Syrian conflict. Reputedly, Assad has been accused of committing several war crimes against its people. Up to now, the EU has insisted on removing Assad from power. How does the possible shift in focus by the US influence the approach of the EU to the Syrian crisis and its support to Assad remaining the president?