

**Question for written answer E-004272/2017  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Urmas Paet (ALDE)**

Subject: Security in the Arctic

The geopolitical importance of the Arctic region is constantly growing. The impact of climate change, growing competition for access to the Arctic and its natural resources and increasing economic activity have created both new opportunities and new dangers in the region, including, however, potential security problems. So far, it has been relatively clearly understood that it is important to try to avoid further militarisation of the Arctic. However, Russia is already proceeding with it at some speed. For example, in recent years Russia has stationed at least four new army brigades north of the Arctic Circle, built 16 deep-sea ports and 14 airbases, and acquired 40 icebreakers (a further 11 are still being built). Russia has also established an Arctic military district. In view of the spirit of cooperation that has so far prevailed in the Arctic, of course, one might rhetorically ask why Russia is investing so much in the Arctic militarily.

In its communication concerning the Arctic, the Commission has avoided saying anything about security, whereas in the ensuing discussions the subject has already received a good deal of attention.

Does the Commission have an overview of Russia's activities in the Arctic? What does the Commission believe has prompted Russia to behave in the way that it is doing, that is to say, increasing the militarisation of the Arctic, bearing in mind that it is a 'region free of tension'? In the light of recent developments, will the Commission nonetheless draw up an Arctic strategy for the EU, including a section on security in the region?