

**Question for written answer E-003230/2020/rev.1
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Julie Lechanteux (ID)

Subject: Turkish influence in the Balkans

While the European Union gave the green light to the accession of Albania and North Macedonia, Turkey took advantage of the COVID-19 crisis to appear more effective and united vis-à-vis the countries of the Balkans, with a 'medical aid diplomacy' intended to improve its image in the former territories of the Ottoman Empire, and to increase its influence in the region.

For example, Turkey has supplied medical equipment to Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Kosovo.

This operation is consonant with a political strategy devised by Ahmet Davutoğlu, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and former Prime Minister, who guided Turkish foreign policy under the various Erdoğan governments.

His doctrine of 'zero problems with neighbours' rapidly gave way to 'zero neighbours without problems' because of an interventionist policy on several fronts, in the Balkans, the Middle East and Central Asia, which openly clashes with European interests.

Given that Turkey is still officially an EU candidate country, what is the Commission's position with regard to Turkish influence in the Balkans?