

**Question for written answer E-004616/2020**  
**to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Virginie Joron (ID)**

**Subject:** Defending 'European sovereignty' while relinquishing control of Photonis, the jewel in the crown of the French military sector

On 17 August 2020, Thierry Breton declared that 'Europe must in future take its strategic interests in hand in order to safeguard its sovereignty' <sup>1</sup>. 'In the field of security and defence, bolstering technological autonomy is now essential.' He highlighted in particular the role of microelectronics (processors, chips, sensors) and digital sovereignty. 'Europe, through the European Defence Fund, has just taken a ground-breaking and decisive step which will allow European cooperation to be organised in key technological projects such as drones, combat aircraft, the European tank, space capabilities, cybersecurity.'

However, two jewels in the crown of the French defence industry have just been snatched by non-European actors:

On 31 July 2020, the Élysée Palace gave the green light for the American undertaking Teledyne to buy Photonis, the world leader in night vision <sup>2</sup>. Photonis has a factory in Brive and one in Grenoble and its products are used by CERN <sup>3</sup>, the Hubble telescope and French special forces. As for Manurhin, the gravity of the takeover of this munitions manufacturer by an Emirati group in the summer of 2018 is beginning to raise questions in Mulhouse <sup>4</sup>.

Will the Commission prevent the acquisition of Photonis or re-issue a declaration on sovereignty?

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<sup>1</sup> *Les Échos*, 17 August 2020.

<sup>2</sup> *La Montagne*, 12 August 2020.

<sup>3</sup> European Organization for Nuclear Research

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.lalsace.fr/economie/2020/06/25/vous-avez-vraiment-dit-independance-economique>