

Question for written answer E-004068/2021

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 138

Jordi Cañas (Renew)

Subject: Intelligence reports of links between figures close to Carles Puigdemont MEP and Russia's strategy to destabilise the EU

The *New York Times* has reported¹ the existence of European intelligence reports alleging meetings between Carles Puigdemont, MEP and former president of the regional government of Catalonia, his head of office Josep Lluís Alay and Russian officials and former senior FSB intelligence officers involved in the Kremlin's hybrid warfare strategy, with a view gaining Russian's help in ensuring Catalan independence.

Following these meetings, a new organisation, 'Tsunami Democràtic' emerged which orchestrated violent demonstrations in the wake of the court ruling convicting the Catalan separatist leaders who held an illegal referendum in October 2017 and unilaterally declared Catalonia's independence.

Links between Russia and Catalan separatists would appear to fit with President Putin's strategy of destabilising and weakening the European Union by means of disinformation campaigns and support for separatist, divisive or far-right political movements.

1. Is the Vice-President / High Representative aware of, or does he have, these European intelligence reports uncovered by the *New York Times*?
2. Will the EEAS initiate an East StratCom Task Force investigation into these new reports of Russian interference in European politics?

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/03/world/europe/spain-catalonia-russia.html>