Question for written answer E-004783/2021 to the Commission
Rule 138

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Subject: Chinese hypersonic missile test in space

It has been reported¹ that in August 2021 China successfully tested a nuclear-capable hypersonic glide vehicle in space. The test raises questions about China’s adherence to its international obligations regarding arms control, given it is a signatory to and has ratified the international Outer Space Treaty. The treaty aims to put a stop to arms races in outer space by prohibiting the testing of any type of weapons in orbit. Article 4 of the treaty requires that the parties thereto undertake ‘not to place in orbit around the earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction’. This matter is of direct concern to international and European security, and possible violations should be addressed.

In this context:

1. Is the Commission aware of the test that took place and does it have any more information to share with Parliament?

2. Does the Commission believe that China has violated Article 4 of the Outer Space Treaty, and if so, how does it plan to follow up with China on the consequences?

3. How does the Commission plan to respond to (potential) violations in the future?

¹ https://www.ft.com/content/ba0a3cde-719b-4040-93cb-a486e1f843fb