

Question for written answer E-005602/2021

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

Rule 138

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Subject: The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the obligations set out therein and regional arms races

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFAP) parties Croatia and Serbia are armed with major weapons systems. Article I, Annex 1B of the GFAP describes arms control as 'essential to creating a stable peace in the region', 'building transparency and confidence and achieving balanced and stable defence force levels at the lowest numbers' and says that the parties are required to 'avoid an arms race in the region'. Article V, Annex 1B prescribes a regional arms control agreement for 'regional balance', including 'regular inspections'. Between 2015 and 2021, Serbia's military spending grew by 70 % (mainly owing to purchases from Belarus, Russia and China). Serbia's military spending exceeds that of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and North Macedonia combined, as well as that of NATO member Croatia.

1. How is the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) assessing the political impact of the regional arms race and the potential undermining of the GFAP by EU Member States and candidate countries?
2. Regarding increasing levels of force that violate the GFAP, how and when did Croatia ensure full compliance with Article 2(2) of Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/1340 in line with Article 24(3) of the Treaty on European Union?
3. How does the VP/HR ensure compliance between stability and association agreements (SAA) and the GFAP across the region, in particular with regard to Article 5 of the SAA with Serbia and Annex III of the Council conclusions of 29 and 30 April 1997?