

**Question for written answer E-000492/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó (NI)

Subject: A possible conflict of interest with VP/HR Borrell acting as a Spanish emissary

On 25 January 2022, Spain's Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Albares said, in the lower chamber's Foreign Affairs Committee, that 'the high representative ... is a Spaniard chosen by this Government' and that 'it is impossible to have more diplomatic weight in Europe than with the high representative'.

Mr Albares considers that Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) Josep Borrell represents the highest diplomatic rank that Spain can aspire to; that is, he considers him to be a political actor as a Spanish diplomat. In his answers to Parliament when taking office in 2019, VP/HR Borrell emphasised that he would 'promote the European Union's priorities'¹.

The fact that more than 44 % of Team Borrell are Spaniards² is relevant, as it indicates that there is a clear and exaggerated imbalance in the nationalities represented: in contrast, 28 % of the President's cabinet staff are German³, approximately 17 % of First Vice-President Timmermans's staff are Dutch⁴ and around 20 % of Executive Vice-President Vestager's team are Danes⁵.

1. Does the Commission agree with Minister Albares regarding his statement that the VP/HR is a Spanish diplomat rather than an EU diplomat?
2. What decisions does it plan to take to ensure that, contrary to what the Spanish Minister has asserted, the VP/HR will not act as the highest representative of Spanish diplomacy?

¹ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/media/20190927RES62426/20190927RES62426.pdf>

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/borrell-fontelles/team_en

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/president/team_en

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/timmermans/team_en

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/vestager/team_en