

**Question for written answer E-001769/2023
to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs
and Security Policy**

Rule 138

Gabriel Mato (PPE)

Subject: Margaritis Schinas diplomatically censured by Morocco for his statements about the Spanishness of Ceuta and Melilla

On 17 May 2023, Morocco's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a diplomatic dispatch censuring European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas following his statements that the cities of Ceuta and Melilla are borders of Spain and the EU. The verbal note of protest by Morocco asserted that Ceuta and Melilla are Moroccan cities.

In this context, it is useful to recall the statement made by the Spanish Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, at the Twelfth High-Level Meeting, where he emphasised that Spain and Morocco had committed to 'avoiding everything that we know offends the other party, especially with regard to our respective areas of sovereignty'. Even though the document that was signed mentions Moroccan sovereignty over Sahara, unfortunately Prime Minister Sánchez failed to call for Ceuta and Melilla to be mentioned.

1. What view does the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) take of the statement by an EU partner country that seeks to disregard the territorial integrity of an EU Member State?
2. Does the VP/HR plan to issue a statement to or contact this EU partner country in order to clarify, without a shadow of a doubt, the principle of respecting the territorial integrity of EU Member States, especially in the face of the pretensions of third country partners in the Southern Neighbourhood?

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