Question for written answer P-001364/2019
to the Commission
Rule 130
István Ujhelyi (S&D)

Subject: Transfer of headquarters of Russia's International Investment Bank to Budapest

Russia’s International Investment Bank (IIB) has announced that it is moving its headquarters to Budapest.

Under the government’s proposal, the IIB will be exempt from any financial investigations, registration with authorities, reporting standards, taxes, duties, export-import restrictions and all legal procedures carried out by the Hungarian judiciary. The authorities will only be able to enter its building with the bank’s explicit consent.

The bank’s staff will enjoy full diplomatic immunity, and IIB ‘guests’ will be able to enter the country without proper vetting.

Among security experts, there is a consensus that Russia will use the institution as a hub for Russian intelligence officials to enter the EU and operate under immunity - ostensibly as the bank’s employees. It is also important to note that Nikolay Kosov, the chair of the IIB Board, is the son of the former Budapest KGB Resident.

Is the Commission aware of the bank’s planned status in Budapest? If so, what assurances will it require from Budapest to ensure that the bank’s relocation will not pose a security threat to the EU?

Is the Commission aware of any other financial institution in the EU that enjoys similar privileges to those of the IIB in Budapest?

Will the Commission investigate this issue with special attention to the potential security aspects of the bank’s move to Budapest?