Priority question for written answer P-002103/2020

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

Rule 138

Anna Fotyga (ECR)

Subject: Strengthening the East Stratcom Task Force, extending its work and turning it into a fully-fledged permanent structure within the EEAS

MEPs and experts have repeatedly called for the East Stratcom Task Force to become a permanent unit within the EEAS set-up. That recommendation received Parliament’s backing through resolutions which I drafted [[1]](#footnote-0) .

It is no secret that in previous years the Task Force was not given appropriate political, financial and staffing support. However, even with such modest resources it has been able to achieve tangible results. I would go so far as to say that it has been among the best and most effective areas of spending in recent years. Unfortunately, the scale of actions undertaken by enemy actors means more resources are needed from our side. This is borne out by the current crisis associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. Our adversaries, spreading narratives full of half-truths and obvious lies, are undermining public confidence in Western institutions, and by falsifying their own picture are seeking to achieve their political objectives. Blaming democratic countries for neglect and inefficiency in crisis situations and conspiracy theories that condemn the West for provoking the pandemic are intended not only to deflect attention from their own authoritarian leaders’ responsibility, but also to undermine global trust in democracy.

I am pleased that the High Representative acknowledges this threat in his statements.

1. In line with Parliament’s recommendations, does the High Representative plan to convert the East Stratcom Task Force into a permanent structure under the EEAS?

2. Based on the clear evidence available, does the High Representative recognise the need to extend the work of the Task Force and set up a dedicated team to counter disinformation coming from Communist China?

1. European Parliament resolution of 23 November 2016 on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third parties (2016/2030(INI)); European Parliament recommendation of 13 February 2019 to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning taking stock of the follow‑up taken by the EEAS two years after the EP report on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third parties (2018/2115(INI)). [↑](#footnote-ref-0)