

**Priority question for written answer P-001455/2021/rev.1
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: EU plan for stabilising the Sahel region

The year 2020 was the deadliest of the Sahel crisis, which started eight years ago. People in the Sahel region are facing violence from both security forces and jihadist groups. The total number of displaced people has reached two million, according to the UN Refugee Agency (the UNHCR), and the number of internally displaced persons has quadrupled in just two years.

French President Emmanuel Macron is likely to reduce his country's military commitment in the coming months, which could result in the withdrawal of some of the 5 100 troops from the western Sahel. It is important to transfer the military focus of the war against jihadists to local forces, backed by France and the EU.

1. What action is the Commission taking to help stabilise this problematic African region and to provide support and capacity building in the Sahel, West Africa and Horn of Africa regions?
2. How will the Commission react to the potential withdrawal of French troops from the region?
3. Given that the development, security and stability of the African continent directly affects the EU and its external borders, has the Commission already drawn up an action plan to cooperate with African regions to address crises and challenges to peace, security and stability?