

**Priority question for written answer P-002348/2023  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Viola von Cramon-Taubadel** (Verts/ALE)

**Subject:** The Commission's position on Russian and Belarusian athletes competing in international sporting events

On 18 June 2023, Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas was asked in Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education about the Commission's position on Parliament's repeated calls, most recently in the own-initiative report on Belarus of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to exclude Russian and Belarusian athletes from international sporting events. The Commissioner used the autonomy of sport as an argument against taking a position, but mentioned his discussions with Ukrainian officials and the International Olympic Committee on the topic. Giving the foregoing:

1. Does the Commission believe that the autonomy of sport is important enough to override the solidarity pledged with the victims of a war of aggression in breach of international law and their rights, and what legal basis prevents the Commission from making recommendations or carrying out an assessment in the way that EU sports ministers, the Council of Europe and many others have done repeatedly<sup>1234</sup>?
2. Can the Commission explain what role it plays in discussions on this issue, whether it acts as a mediator and what its arguments are for or against the exclusion of Russian or Belarusian athletes in these exchanges?
3. What measures would the Commission consider effective enough to avoid sportswashing and guarantee that athletes allowed to compete as neutrals would not be misused by the Russian and Belarusian Governments for propaganda purposes?

Submitted: 25.7.2023

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statement-on-russias-war-on-ukraine-and-international-sport/statement-on-russias-war-on-ukraine-and-international-sport>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://okm.fi/documents/1410845/3547387/Letter+of+EU+Sports+Ministers+to+IOC.pdf/8a28b670-7d58-0e36-c936-316d5435c56f/Letter+of+EU+Sports+Ministers+to+IOC.pdf?t=1667301232732>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/deputy-secretary-general/-/russian-and-belarusian-athletes-should-be-banned-from-the-olympic-and-paralympic-games->.

<sup>4</sup> <https://pace.coe.int/pdf/3369ead32f0679a2377f8b4c2a760f29bc0935fcdc7216f7355b5a37df318d40/res.%202507.pdf>.