

**Question for written answer E-009098/2016
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 130

Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE), Mark Demesmaeker (ECR), Petras Auštrevičius (ALDE), Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE), Roberts Zīle (ECR), Ian Duncan (ECR), Urmas Paet (ALDE), Daniel Dalton (ECR), Fredrick Federley (ALDE), Josu Juaristi Abaunz (GUE/NGL), Merja Kyllönen (GUE/NGL), Bas Belder (ECR), Heidi Hautala (Verts/ALE), Ivan Jakovčić (ALDE), Ana Gomes (S&D), Tibor Szanyi (S&D), Josep-Maria Terricabras (Verts/ALE), Kaja Kallas (ALDE), Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE), Javi López (S&D) and Gesine Meissner (ALDE)

Subject: VP/HR - Spanish Government's consent to the use of Ceuta's port facilities by Moscow warships undermining EU sanctions and possible family links with Commissioner Arias Cañete

As stated in Written Question E-002298/2016: In 2011, Moscow started to regularly use the port facilities at Ceuta (owned by the public entity Puertos del Estado). Since then at least 57 Russian Navy ships have called into the Spanish port¹, including destroyers, frigates, amphibious assault ships, and even an attack submarine, thereby undermining EU policies on Russia.

In October 2016, another Russian army vessel intending to use the port at Ceuta while en route to intervene in the civil war in Syria would have done so only for an international outcry forced the vessel to bypass the port². New revelations have pointed out that the company doing the refuelling may be linked to Commissioner Arias Cañete, damaging the credibility of the Commission³.

Considering that the EU has applied 'restrictive measures' to Russia owing to its involvement in Ukraine's civil war and annexation of Crimea and is considering the same measures for Russia's involvement in the bombing of Aleppo, the answer to Written Question E-002298/2016 is unsatisfactory.

1. What is the Vice-President / High Representative's assessment of the use by Russian warships of Ceuta and EU ports en route to Syria or Ukraine while the EU is imposing sanctions on Russia?
2. Why has the Commission remained silent until now?
3. Is the Commission aware of Commissioner Arias Cañete's links to the company doing the refuelling?

¹ http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2015/pdf/RussianNavyCeutaVisits.pdf

² http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/as-aleppo-burns-spain-resupplies-the-russian-navy_us_5808b794e4b00483d3b5d06a

³ <http://www.vilaweb.cat/noticies/russian-warships-refuel-in-ceuta-with-an-oil-company-linked-to-spanish-eu-commissioner-miguel-arias-canete%E2%80%A8/>