

Question for written answer E-002354/2024/rev.1

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

Rule 144

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Subject: Position of the Vice-President/High Representative on Madagascar's interference regarding the Scattered Islands of the Indian Ocean

An interview with Malagasy President Andry Rajoelina published in *Le Figaro* on 10 October 2024 makes clear that the Republic of Madagascar is now claiming that France should return the Scattered Islands of the Indian Ocean. This archipelago, which has been French since the Third Republic, is of major geostrategic importance given its important marine resources and its strategic position at the entrance to the Mozambique Channel.

The efforts being made by the Malagasy authorities to demand that France renounce its sovereignty over this archipelago of the French Southern and Antarctic Territories (TAAF), which is inhabited and protected from any exploitation, are paradoxical. The Scattered Islands were never part of Madagascar's territory before independence in 1960. These claims constitute a clear interference in the internal affairs of France, a founding Member State of the European Union, and affect stability in the Indo-Pacific.

This new position taken by the Republic of Madagascar clearly indicates that it is acting as a proxy and that China is manoeuvring to increase its geopolitical influence in the Indian Ocean.

Given the importance of these islands, what steps does the Vice-President/High Representative intend to take to express its support for France in the face of these illegitimate claims?

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