

Question for written answer E-005065/2025

to the Commission

Rule 144

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Subject: Negotiations on a security and defence partnership with Australia

A recent article by *Intelligence Online* reported that a security and defence partnership with Australia is in its final stages, under the direct leadership of the President of the Commission and without prior consultation of the European External Action Service (EEAS)¹. However, Article 24(1) of the Treaty on European Union is very clear: the Commission, and, by extension, its President, has no power of initiative or negotiating mandate in the field of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which falls under the exclusive competence of the Council, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and the EEAS.

In view of the above, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Can the Commission explain the reason for this failure to respect institutional balance, the grounds on which these negotiations were launched despite France's initial veto and why these negotiations were not conducted by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaties?
2. In relation to the termination of a major arms contract between France and Australia in September 2021, a decision publicly condemned by Ursula von der Leyen herself², can the Commission confirm that no discussions are under way to include Australia in the SAFE instrument and that the loss of confidence on the part of a Member State by its very nature rules out any joint armament procurement agreements?
3. Does the Commission not consider the industrial integration, especially in the field of defence, of non-European countries to run counter to the objective of reinforcing the industrial and technological base of EU defence and European strategic autonomy?

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¹ <https://www.intelligenceonline.fr/asie-pacifique/2025/12/12/ursula-von-der-leyen-impose-un-partenariat-defense-avec-l-australie,110575714-art>.

² https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2021/09/16/l-australie-rompt-le-contrat-du-siecle-avec-la-france-sur-les-sous-marins-au-profit-de-technologies-americaines-et-britanniques_6094854_3210.html.