

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001346/25
to the Commission**

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(2 April 2025)

Subject: Operation of Russian military helicopters in some EU Member States

In the light of the ongoing sanctions against the Russian Federation and the EU's broader efforts to reduce dependence on Russian military technology, the continued use of Russian military helicopters in 13 Member States raises significant concerns. These concerns are particularly pressing given the geopolitical situation, the need to uphold the integrity of the sanctions regime, and the EU's commitment to ensuring the security and resilience of its defence systems. Dependence on Russian military equipment not only poses potential risks to the safety and security of EU citizens but may also undermine collective efforts to reduce strategic vulnerabilities within the Union.

1. How does the Commission assess the risks associated with the continued operation of these helicopters, particularly regarding the safety of EU citizens and compliance with the sanctions regime?
2. Does the Commission plan to take concrete steps to expedite their replacement with equipment that is not reliant on Russia?
3. What support or guidance can the Commission provide to Member States to facilitate this transition in a timely and coordinated manner?

Submitted: 2.4.2025

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(11 June 2025)

The Commission identified replacing post-Soviet legacy equipment as one of the most pressing challenges in the Joint Communication on the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward published on 18 May 2022 ⁽¹⁾ and initiated immediate actions to address it commonly in the spirit of solidarity proposing a regulation on establishing an instrument for the reinforcement of the European defence industry through common procurement ⁽²⁾.

The programme proved to be successful and the Commission has proposed its follow-up through the European Defence Industry Programme ⁽³⁾, currently under consideration by the co-legislators.

Moreover, the Commission proposed on 19 March 2025 a new regulation establishing the Security Action for Europe ⁽⁴⁾ that would be instrumental in addressing the replacement of Member States' legacy equipment. It will provide Member States with loans up to EUR 150 billion to pursue their rearmament plans.

To address the issue of replacing post-Soviet equipment in a longer-term perspective, the Commission supports research and development actions through the European Defence Fund ⁽⁵⁾.

It supports the European Defence industry to provide Member States with new state of the art, innovative defence products and technologies.

Decisions on the replacement of Russian helicopters and measures to ensure safety and security of their deployment are the responsibility of Member States, which remain obliged to comply with all the relevant restrictive measures (sanctions) in Council Decision (CFSP) 2014/512 ⁽⁶⁾ and Council Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 ⁽⁷⁾.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52022JC0024>.

⁽²⁾ ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/2418/oj>.

⁽³⁾ https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/edip-proposal-regulation_en.

⁽⁴⁾ https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/6d6f889c-e58d-4caa-8f3b-8b93154fe206_en?filename=SAFE%20Regulation.pdf.

⁽⁵⁾ https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/european-defence-fund-edf-official-webpage-european-commission_en.

⁽⁶⁾ ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2014/512/2025-02-25>.

⁽⁷⁾ ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/833/2025-02-25>.