

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001299/26
to the Commission
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(27 March 2026)**

Subject: The content of the new European security strategy and related competences

The Commission President has announced a new European security strategy (ESS) — expected in the first semester of 2026 — an initiative not included in the current Commission work programme.

Despite little public discussion on its content, media reports show a process led by the Commission, with the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) playing a limited coordination role, which includes ‘consulting’ with Member States. This raises a question about competence: under the Treaties, foreign policy and security and defence are Member State competences and the VP/HR has the political initiative in this area.

Moreover, recent VP/HR public statements about the ESS mention a ‘broad approach to security’ but omit the promotion of democracy and human rights. Besides being enshrined in the Treaties as a guiding principle of EU external action, promoting democracy and human rights is intimately linked with our security, since democracies act in a predictable and safer manner on the international stage.

In this regard:

1. What is the Commission legal service’s assessment of the legal basis of the ESS?
2. How does the Commission ensure that competences in the ESS are divided between it and the VP/HR?
3. Can the Commission confirm if promoting human rights and democracy is a structural element of the ESS?

Submitted: 27.3.2026

**Answer given by President von der Leyen on behalf of the European Commission
(28 July 2026)**

1. and 2. The European Security Strategy (ESS) will be a policy document presented jointly by the Commission and the High Representative/Vice-President and will fully respect the roles and competences of the EU and its Member States.

This Strategy will be the first to adopt a comprehensive approach to security, addressing both its internal and external dimensions to respond to today’s rapidly deteriorating global security environment.

3. Safeguarding democracy, the rule of law and human rights, as enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, and their promotion internationally, are core founding values of the EU which underpin all its initiatives including the future ESS.
