

*(English version)*

**Priority question for written answer P-001503/24**

**to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy  
Sandro Ruotolo (S&D), Marco Tarquinio (S&D), Cecilia Strada (S&D), Pina Picierno (S&D), Alessandro Zan (S&D)  
(8 August 2024)**

*Subject:* Human rights violations in the ‘death zone’ between Poland and Belarus

Last July, the Polish Parliament passed a law allowing border police to use firearms against migrants attempting to cross the border in the so-called ‘death zone’ — a buffer area at the Poland-Belarus border to which humanitarian groups, human rights monitors and the media do not have access.

The situation appears to be exacerbated by internal political propaganda pitching migrants as a threat to national security and decriminalising and justifying violent and disproportionate behaviour.

The Polish law has been heavily criticised by humanitarian and international organisations, including the Council of Europe, which warned that this could lead to repeated human rights violations and accused Poland of inhumanely managing the migration crisis.

Invoking national security does not give countries a carte blanche to adopt measures that are incompatible with the minimum standards of international humanitarian and EU law. Can the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy therefore say what immediate measures and actions he will take to ensure that no serious, clear human rights violations against migrants take place on European soil?

Submitted: 8.8.2024

**Answer given by Ms Johansson on behalf of the European Commission**

*(10 October 2024)*

The Commission condemns Belarus’ hybrid attack on the EU’s external borders and stands in full solidarity with the Member States affected by these actions.

Member States have a duty to protect the external borders, in line with their obligations under EU law, including the respect of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the right to asylum in the application of EU law. National security remains the sole responsibility of each Member State.

The Commission is in close contact with the Polish authorities to ensure that the protection of the EU’s external borders against the instrumentalisation of migration for political purposes is done in a manner which is compliant with fundamental rights, in particular by guaranteeing effective access to the asylum procedure and respecting the principle of non-refoulement.

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