

(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-004394/25
to the Commission
Liudas Mažylis (PPE)
(6 November 2025)

Subject: Use of balloons and drones against Member States' civil aviation infrastructure

In recent months, there have been increasing reports of weather balloons of unknown origin flying into Lithuanian territory from Belarus. Similar hybrid attacks using unmanned aerial vehicles or other devices have also been recorded in other European countries. In Denmark, coordinated drone flights over Copenhagen, Aalborg and other airports were detected, resulting in the temporary suspension of air traffic. Airspace violations linked to reconnaissance or destabilisation activities have also been recorded in Poland, Romania, Germany and Belgium. These incidents show that hybrid measures are being used to destabilise European aviation, disrupt civil flights, threaten the security of airport infrastructure and cause public panic. Such attacks directly undermine the integrity of European airspace and, by extension, the Schengen area, the fundamental principle of free movement of persons, and may have significant consequences for the security and economy of the Community. Civil aviation safety, the resilience of critical infrastructure and the coordinated assessment of hybrid threats unequivocally fall within the Community's competences.

Could the Commission answer the following questions:

1. Does the Commission collect and systematise information on the increasingly frequent flights of weather balloons and unmanned aerial vehicles over Lithuania and other Member States?
2. When does the Commission plan to develop a response mechanism for such hybrid provocations directed against the airspace of the Member States?
3. What specific legal and technical measures does the Commission plan to propose to help Member States more effectively identify, neutralise and disable these aerial vehicles so that they cannot be used for destabilisation purposes?

Submitted: 6.11.2025

Answer given by Mr Kūbilius on behalf of the European Commission
(29 January 2026)

Recent airspace violations over several Member States are being monitored in close cooperation with the European External Action Service (EEAS) and within the Council Horizontal Working Party on Enhancing Resilience and Countering Hybrid Threats.

Primary legal responsibility for countering hybrid threats rests with individual Member States. The Commission and the EEAS support Member States in their efforts.

The EU legal framework for critical energy infrastructure consists of the Critical Entities Resilience Directive ⁽¹⁾ and the Network and Information Systems Directive 2 (NIS 2) ⁽²⁾, with the Commission developing guidelines for their implementation.

Regarding drone incursions into the airspace, the Commission proposed a European Drone Defence Initiative, as well as the European Air Shield, European Space Shield and Eastern Flank Watch initiatives ⁽³⁾. Member States' endorsement will enable the Commission to proceed with their implementation.

The European Defence Drone Initiative, in conjunction with Member States' capability coalition on drones and counter-drones, could significantly enhance Europe's collective response.

The Commission also plans to present soon an Action Plan on drone and counter-drone security covering areas such as security, aviation, research, critical infrastructure protection and civil-defence synergies.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022L2557&qid=1767776918378>.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022L2555&qid=1767777141903>.

⁽³⁾ https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/9db42c04-15c2-42e1-8364-60afb0073e68_en?filename=Joint-Communication%20_Defence-Readiness-Roadmap-2030.pdf..

Furthermore, the ProtectEU Strategy tackles internal security threats, including hybrid threats. The EU supports Lithuanian efforts to develop and test, jointly with other European authorities and innovators, systems to detect, identify and mitigate unauthorised aerial threats used for smuggling, and/or hybrid threats ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽⁴⁾ See projects FOLDOUT: Through-foliage detection, including in the outermost regions of the EU, <https://foldout.eu/>; NESTOR: aN Enhanced pre-frontier intelligence picture to Safeguard The EurOpean boRders, <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101021851>; BorderForce: Flexible system extending automated border surveillance by increased situational awareness adaptable to uncertain times with unforeseen events, <https://borderforce-horizon.eu/>; and CROSSMARE: Advanced Cross-Border And Multi Domain Interoperability Framework For Improved Collaborative Operational Efficiency For Secure Maritime Borders, <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101225981>; EU-HYBNET (Empowering a Pan-European Network to Counter Hybrid Threats, <https://euhybnet.eu/>).