

**Question for written answer E-015543/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
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Subject: European space policy - Strategic partners

The European Space Agency is considering cooperating with Russia to build a permanent base on the moon, as a replacement for the International Space Station. There are also plans to embark upon a joint European and Russian mission to Mars. I am astonished by this: not just at the choice of Russia as a partner in strategic space projects, but also at the timing of these decisions. Following its annexation of Crimea and its aggression in eastern Ukraine, both of which are illegal under international law, the Russian Federation is an aggressor country, and this is reflected in the sanctions that still apply against the country. The aims behind Russia's space policy are best demonstrated by the man responsible for the space industry. Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin has in a way become an icon of the new Russian imperialism. The Russians have been unsuccessfully sending probes to planets all over the solar system since 1985. Cooperation on the Galileo programme also left much to be desired. In my view, planning strategic projects with an unreliable and politically unpredictable country is a major mistake, and events will take a similar turn to the situation as regards the building of Russia's Vostochny Cosmodrome, which is a venture that is largely being indirectly funded by the West under commercial contracts for the use of Soyuz-2 rockets.

In the light of the foregoing, does the Commission think that Roscosmos is a suitable partner for strategic cooperation?

What are the reasons for committing to projects in which NASA has refused to take part, some of which (involving the Mars mission and the building of a permanent base) are to a large extent in competition with the plans of the USA, which is a reliable, predictable partner?