

**Question for written answer E-000671/2015/rev.1  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Josep-Maria Terricabras (Verts/ALE)**

Subject: Attack on the freedom of expression of Judge Santiago Vidal

Santiago Vidal, a judge in Barcelona, is facing tough penalties for having helped draw up a draft constitution for Catalonia. This much is clear from the list of charges notified to him by the Catalan High Court.

Possible penalties mentioned on the list include a three-year suspension from his job without pay, expulsion from Catalonia, or being permanently struck off as a judge.

Santiago Vidal publicly acknowledged that he was working on the text with other lawyers and professionals, but made it clear that it was always in his free time, on his own initiative and not in response to an official request from any quarter.

On 18 December 2014 the European Parliament adopted a resolution<sup>1</sup> condemning political persecution in Venezuela. The text stated in no uncertain terms that 'freedom of expression and the right to take part in peaceful demonstrations are cornerstones of democracy and are recognised in the Venezuelan Constitution'.

Freedom of expression is enshrined in Article 20 of the Spanish Constitution.

Is the Commission monitoring the protection of the freedom of expression in the EU, and in Spain in particular?

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament resolution of 18 December 2014 on the persecution of the democratic opposition in Venezuela (2014/2998(RSP)), Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2014)0106.