

**Question for written answer E-012138/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Emerging systematic threat to the rule of law in Spain

Since 2012 the Spanish Government has been introducing a number of reforms that could weaken the rule of law in Spain and be detrimental to the proper functioning of the European Union. The proposed reform to the *Ley de Asistencia Jurídica Gratuita* on free legal aid limits the right of access to justice. The *Ley de Tasas Judiciales* on court fees discriminates against small and medium-sized enterprises and favours big companies. The reform of the *Ley del Consejo General del Poder Judicial* on the General Council of the Judiciary, associated with episodes of political interference, threatens judicial independence, which is already undermined by the lack of resources allocated to the judicial system. A number of articles of the *Ley de Protección de la Seguridad Ciudadana* on the protection of public safety and the reform of the penal code grant too broad a discretion to the authorities and have led to an arbitrary application of sanctions. These laws pose a serious threat to the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful association, and to the principles of the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights.

Does the Commission intend to activate the first stage of the EU framework to strengthen the rule of law and to therefore immediately initiate an in-depth monitoring process on the situation of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights in Spain?