

Question for written answer E-003561/2016
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Javier Couso Permuy (GUE/NGL)

Subject: VP/HR - Killing of the human rights defender William Castillo in Colombia

The work of human rights defenders is crucial for democracy and for building lasting peace. Nevertheless, the latest report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) concluded that the number of murders of human rights defenders in 2015 exceeded the average figure for the past 20 years. The 'Somos Defensores' programme recorded 682 attacks on human rights defenders (including 63 murders).

The situation has been worsening further in 2016. Up to the middle of March, 28 people had been murdered, 13 of whom belonged to social movements. One of the leaders murdered in March, William Castillo from the Aheramigua association, had been protesting for months against the paramilitary presence in El Bagre (Antioquia, Colombia), and against forced disappearances and forced displacement, among other serious violations.

Has the European Union requested the results of the investigations and the sentencing of those materially and intellectually responsible, as well as results in terms of prevention and providing effective protection for human rights defenders?

In the context of financial support relating to the implementation of agreements, will the European Union launch a wide consultation of Colombian civil society to establish its needs and priorities? If so, what stages will this consultation involve and what mechanisms are planned?