

**Question for written answer E-004035/2017
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**
Rule 130
Barbara Matera (PPE)

Subject: VP/HR - Human Rights Defenders in Colombia

In 1999, the international community adopted the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

The Declaration urges States to recognise the important role that these defenders play and to protect them as they carry out their activities.

However, human rights defenders continue to be subjected to threats, torture and arbitrary detentions, and are often murdered.

In 2016, according to Front Line Defenders, 282 activists around the world were killed, including 87 in Colombia.

Indigenous and peasant defenders are those most frequently affected, in a country where drug traffickers, agro-industry and the mining industry appropriate land at the expense of rural populations.

In light of the above, how can the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in collaboration with the UN, put pressure on the Colombian Government to establish national protection mechanisms for human rights defenders who are at risk?

How can the EU work together with local NGOs to create a safe environment for these activists so that they can live without fear of punishments, reprisals, or intimidation?