

**Question for written answer E-002816/2018  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Matt Carthy (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: Freedom of speech in the Spanish state

The rapper Valtònc (Jose Miguel Arenas Beltrán) is one of many artists, musicians, social media users and political representatives to have been accused of terrorism charges in the Spanish state under the so-called gag law. Valtònc is reportedly in exile after being sentenced to more than three years in jail for his song lyrics.

In March 2018, Amnesty International released a report condemning the use of the gag law, focusing on the dozens of sentences and trials over allegations of 'glorifying terrorism' on social media, concluding that 'in Spain, freedom of expression is under attack'. The human rights NGO condemns Article 578 of the Penal Code, which allows jail terms of three years for political expression.

Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union states that the EU 'is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights'. All Member States are legally required to uphold these principles.

What action is the Commission taking to respond to the grievous breach of freedom, democracy and respect for human rights that is unfolding in the Spanish state?

Has the Commission contacted the Spanish Government regarding its use of Article 578?