

**Question for written answer E-000605/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Jean Lambert (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Democracy and human rights in Eswatini

The Public Order Act and the Suppression of Terrorism Act (STA) in force in Eswatini are widely seen as severely limiting the rights of freedom of expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly. In 2016 the country's High Court ruled that sections of the STA were unconstitutional and violated freedom of expression and association, while the Public Order Act allow critics of the king or the government to be prosecuted and grants sweeping powers to the national commissioner of police to arbitrarily halt pro-democracy meetings and protests. Moreover, political parties continue to be banned from taking part in elections, while political activists and human rights defenders regularly endure harassment, threats and violence.

1. Does the EU believe that amendments to the Suppression of Terrorism Act and the Public Order Act in Eswatini bring these items of legislation into conformity with the country's obligations under international human rights law?
2. Which pro-democracy groups in Eswatini is the EU supporting, and is it helping these groups to work in a coordinated manner?