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Answer given by First Vice-President Timmermans
on behalf of the European Commission
(12.10.2018)

The Commission is not in a position to comment on the alleged individual case mentioned in the parliamentary question of the Honourable Member.

For the Commission, civil society organisations play an indispensable role in democratic societies, fostering pluralism and articulating citizens' concerns. It is of utmost importance that they should be allowed to do their valuable work, free of any political interference. This requires, at national level, a robust legal framework compliant with international standards that safeguards public freedoms and effective access to justice and a political environment conducive to civil society work.

As a general rule the use of clandestine recordings done without awareness and agreement of persons recorded, is not an acceptable practice in an open political debate in a democratic country.