

**Question for written answer E-5622/2010
to the Council**
Rule 117
Emilio Menéndez del Valle (S&D)

Subject: Institutional weakness in Guatemala

Guatemala is a country with high levels of both institutional weakness and crime.

A few years ago, in an exercise in realism, the Guatemalan Government voluntarily agreed to establish, together with the UN, the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) under the leadership of Carlos Castresana, a renowned Spanish legal expert whose excellent work I have been able to witness at first hand.

His difficult task consisted in uncovering wrongdoing 'where angels fear to tread': investigating supposedly untouchable figures ranging from heads of organised crime to the former president, Alfonso Portillo, recently arrested on charges of embezzling over USD 70 million.

However, the sections of society under investigation reacted by launching a vicious personal smear campaign against Dr Castresana, and he resigned in June stating that he could do no more for Guatemala and he did not wish the personal attacks against him to end up damaging the CICIG's work.

The EU recently signed an Association Agreement with the countries of Central America, including Guatemala, which is underpinned by political dialogue. As part of that dialogue, could the Council take an active interest in the events outlined above? Could the EU do more to help Guatemala?