

Question for written answer E-000728/2019
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Francisco Assis (S&D)

Subject: VP/HR - clampdown on freedom of expression in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

The Human Rights Watch report entitled 'Dashed Hopes: the criminalisation of peaceful expression in Myanmar' expresses great concern at the erosion of freedom of expression in the country formerly known as Burma under the leadership of State Counsellor Aung Sang Suu Kyi, despite the fact that she was legitimately brought to power by the first democratic elections held in that country. Journalists investigating corruption or violence by the military against the Rohingya minority are themselves being persecuted and are living in constant fear. According to the report, 43 journalists have been arrested since the 2015 elections, while defamation charges have been brought against around 140 journalists and activists under the Telecom Law, which has also been used to prosecute those posting social media content hostile to the current political leaders.

How will the worrying conclusions of this report be reflected in the actions of the VP/HR as a privileged partner of Myanmar during its transition to democracy, EUR 688 million having been channelled into the 2014-2020 Multiannual Indicative Programme for that country and accompanied by the rule of law consolidation strategy launched by the EU in 2016?