

**Question for written answer E-000470/2022  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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**Subject:** SLAPP lawsuits against environmental and climate defenders in connection with the European Parliament resolution of 11 November 2021

In December 2021, a lawyer acting for the City of Vienna threatened to bring an action for damages against some 50 people who were peacefully demonstrating against a road project which they considered to be environmentally damaging. The group included underage activists, traffic experts, academics, civil society organisations and ordinary citizens, including people who did not participate directly and whom the city describes as 'lunatic supporters'. Several NGOs, including Amnesty International Austria, have described the threats as constituting SLAPPs.

In the light of the European Parliament resolution of 11 November 2021 and the announcement of the Commission's initiative entitled 'EU action to protect journalists and human rights defenders against abusive trials (SLAPPs)', I would like to ask the following:

1. Does the Commission agree that the letters of attorney from the City of Vienna constitute the threat of a SLAPP, as set out in the resolution?
2. Will the initiative envisaged by the Commission also take into account SLAPPs as used against environmental and climate defenders (including young people) who are engaged in civil-society and non-violent efforts to achieve Europe's climate goals?
3. Will the Commission's initiative specifically propose how financial and professional legal assistance can be provided to people affected by legal action or the threat of such?