

**Question for written answer E-001040/2022/rev.1  
to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs  
and Security Policy**

Rule 138

**Saskia Bricmont** (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Energy transition in Vietnam and environmental rights defenders in jail

The European Green Deal communication underlines that ‘citizens are and should remain a driving force of the transition’.

In February 2022, Commissioner Timmermans visited Vietnam and lauded<sup>1</sup> the country’s ‘resolve’ to tackle the climate crisis.

In January 2022, Mai Phan Lợi and Đặng Đình Bách were sentenced to several years in prison. Both are members of the VNGO-EVFTA funded by the EU as part of a project coordinated by the Centre for Sustainable Rural Development. Nguyễn Thị Khanh, recipient of the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2018, was also arrested two weeks before Commissioner Timmermans’ mission.

Like many others, they are accused of ‘tax evasion’, despite the fact that CSOs are exempt from corporate tax in Vietnam. They had vocally urged Vietnam to adopt cleaner energy policies, advocacy that exposes them to harsh prison sentences under vaguely worded national security clauses in Vietnam’s Criminal Code.

1. Can the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission say whether Commissioner Timmermans has already raised their cases?
2. How will the EU support them while appealing against their sentences or awaiting their trials, and provide them with legal assistance?

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH\\_22\\_1283](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_22_1283)