The EU continues to follow closely and with great concern the continuously deteriorating situation in Nicaragua, and the case of Bishop Rolando Álvarez in particular. His house detention is deeply troubling, as is the detention in the El Chipote prison of his fellow clergymen.

The EU is in contact with the Holy See and is closely following the evolution of this case, through the EU Delegation in Managua.

The overall EU position on Nicaragua is set out in the Council Conclusions of 21 January 2019\(^1\) and 14 October 2019\(^2\), and statements of the High Representative/Vice-President of 4 May 2020\(^3\), 22 December 2020\(^4\), 10 June 2021\(^5\) and 8 November 2021\(^6\). Since the beginning of the crisis in 2018, the EU has continuously called for the liberation of all political prisoners and the full return to the rule of law; return of international human rights organisations in the country; and dialogue between the regime and the opposition, in particular to agree on electoral reforms.

As regards sanctions, the Council of the EU has adopted a number of targeted restrictive measures against persons and entities responsible for human rights violations in Nicaragua. On 10 January 2022\(^7\), the Council adopted a third such package of restrictive measures, bringing the total to 21 persons and 3 entities, including Vice-President Murillo and other members of the Ortega-Murillo family. The EU will continue to monitor the situation closely and may decide on further restrictive actions.

The EU remains ready to use all instruments at its disposal to engage in, and to support a democratic, peaceful and negotiated solution to the ongoing political crisis. This includes support to the strengthening of the rule of law, to civil society and to economic and social development for the most vulnerable.