

Question for written answer E-002130/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
Marina Mesure (The Left)

Subject: Infringement of the EU-Central America free trade agreement in Panama

For several weeks, the Government of Panama has been cracking down on, and infringing the rights of, trade unionists in Panama, in the midst of extensive protests against Law 462 reforming the social security system. After the SUNTRACS union had its bank accounts frozen and received heavy administrative fines, a number of its leaders were arrested and imprisoned. The detention of these protestors is a serious violation of international fundamental freedoms, and the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association has urged the government to reopen SUNTRACS's accounts and protect trade unionists. Panama's Ombudsman has also recognised that these actions constitute human rights infringements.

The European Union is tied to Panama through the Association Agreement with Central America. The agreement's trade provisions are conditional upon respect for fundamental rights, including freedom of association, in accordance with the chapter on trade and sustainable development.

In view of the clear infringement of these conditions:

1. Will the Commission demand the immediate release of the imprisoned trade unionists, on the basis of the agreement signed between the EU and Panama?
2. Will it reassess the validity of this trade agreement given the climate of intimidation Panama's Government has created against the trade union movement?

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