

Question for written answer E-003864/2025/rev.1

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 144

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Subject: Violence in Timor-Leste: how can the European Union help restore the rule of law and good governance amid clashes between students and police?

The EU has long been a key development partner for Timor-Leste, one of the world's youngest countries (it has been independent since 2002), investing approximately EUR 134 million as of September 2025 in sectors such as good governance, institutional strengthening and development. While substantial funding continues to support institutional reforms, recent priorities have shifted towards a progressive agenda, with over EUR 260 million earmarked for 'sustainable infrastructure' and EUR 22 million allocated to 'civil society programmes', which address issues less central to the country's immediate realities. This change coincides with rising tensions in Timor-Leste, exemplified by recent clashes between students and law enforcement authorities, about the misuse of public funds, which raises questions about the EU's evolving focus.

1. Given recent clashes between students and police, why have the priorities for EU cooperation in Timor-Leste shifted away from the rule of law and governance towards an ideologically and socially driven agenda, despite previous investments of hundreds of millions of euros in judicial and institutional strengthening?
2. How might the EU's increasing financial focus on 'sustainable infrastructure' (a planned expenditure of EUR 260 million) and 'social programmes' (EUR 22 million assigned to civil society and NGOs) influence the long-term stability and governance of Timor-Leste?
3. How can the EU restore and strengthen its focus on the rule of law and good governance in Timor-Leste?

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