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E-002650/2025

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(1.9.2025)

The EU is concerned over restrictions to civic space, intimidation and recent detentions of human rights defenders in El Salvador. The EU expects the Salvadoran authorities to uphold the fundamental rights to freedom of expression and due process at all times, and to ensure the safety and physical integrity of those detained.

The EU regrets the Foreign Agents Law adopted by the Legislative Assembly on 20 May 2025 and has made this clear publicly¹ and directly with the Salvadoran authorities, in close coordination with Member States and other international partners. This legislation runs counter to El Salvador's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which it is a state party. Respect for the rule of law and human rights remains essential to the EU-El Salvador partnership, and is a regular focus of the bilateral dialogue with the government. Civil society in El Salvador is a relevant interlocutor for dialogue and cooperation.

While the EU remains committed to supporting inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in El Salvador, the new legislation on foreign agents and the shrinking space for civil society risks undermining development and could negatively impact cooperation.

The EU-Central America Association Agreement² provides in its political, cooperation and trade parts of the agreement, useful provisions for dialogue on human rights and commitments to respect them. Suspension should be a last resort. In addition, actions should be appropriate and proportionate, and any negative consequences should be considered. The population in El Salvador or in the wider region, and particularly vulnerable groups, should not be penalised.

¹ El Salvador: Statement by the Spokesperson on the Foreign Agents Law and recent developments, 7 June 2025, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/el-salvador-statement-spokesperson-foreign-agents-law-and-recent-developments_en.

² EU-Central America Association Agreement, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=legissum:4314902>.