

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000745/26
to the Commission
Anthony Smith (The Left), Emma Fourreau (The Left)
(23 February 2026)**

Subject: Follow-up to Question E-004768/2025 on Veolia's actions in Colombia

On 6 February 2026, the Commission answered our Written Question E-004768/2025 ⁽¹⁾ on industrial pollution and human and environmental rights violations by Veolia in Colombia. The question specifically discusses untreated pollutants and heavy metals being discharged into protected wetlands in Barrancabermeja.

This poisoning of the ecosystem is causing cancer, kidney and brain damage, and congenital malformations in infants. There has been wholesale disappearance of wildlife and it is now impossible to fish. Whistleblowers are being threatened by paramilitary groups, potentially in connection with this kind of European multinational seeking to defend its economic interests in Colombia.

In order to obtain more details on the Commission's capacity to act in the future, we would like to know:

When the Commission is informed about potential human rights and environmental violations committed by multinationals subject to the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, will it be able to visit sites — including through EU institutions present in third countries — to meet the parties concerned, observe the situation and demonstrate that it genuinely upholds human and environmental rights by taking concrete action?

Submitted: 23.2.2026

**Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(23 April 2026)**

The directive (EU) 2024/1760 will only enter into application in July 2029. Under the directive, the Commission is not designated as a supervisory authority.

Rather, it is for the Member States to designate independent national supervisory authorities (Article 24). These authorities will have investigative and enforcement powers (e.g. the imposition of penalties).

They will be able to conduct investigations and inspections on their own initiative or based on complaints raising substantiated concerns, including in relation to conduct in third countries, in line with applicable national law and while respecting the limits of their jurisdiction.

Under Article 29, Member States must also ensure that companies can be held liable for damage caused by a failure to comply with due diligence obligations.

The Commission's role is to support consistent application of the directive, in particular through the European Network of Supervisory Authorities and guidance. These functions are complementary to, but distinct from, the supervisory and investigatory powers of national authorities.

This does not, however, preclude the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS), within wider external action, from engaging with countries and stakeholders, including through the institutional framework of the Multiparty Trade Agreement, the Trade Committee and the Trade and Sustainable Development Sub-committee.

These might be additional ways to support supervisory authorities in their tasks after the directive enters into application. In addition, the Commission may also build on existing EU tools, projects and other actions to help with the due diligence implementation in the EU and in third countries.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-004768_EN.html