

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001005/26
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Irene Montero (The Left), Fernando Barrena Arza (The Left), Jaume Asens Llodrà (Verts/ALE)
(11 March 2026)

Subject: EU participation in the Colombia's national safeguard process for human rights defenders

Colombia's national safeguard process is a forum for dialogue between the state and civil society intended to ensure those working to defend human rights are protected. We welcome the resumption of discussions in the National Round Table and regional round tables under the current government. We also applaud the participation of the EU and its Member States as observers.

Much, however, still needs to be done to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of these initiatives. We were told of such drawbacks as the participation of public officials without decision-making powers, the lack of guarantees for the inclusion of the most vulnerable actors or the faltering political will of the local authorities responsible for implementation.

Can the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy therefore say:

1. What specific measures the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative plans to take for the continued support of the National Guarantee Process in the coming years?
2. How the EU intends to play a more prominent role, stressing the need for the participation of public officials with decision-making powers and the establishment of a clear mechanism for monitoring the commitments made, thereby making the forum more effective?
3. Whether the EU is considering participating in regional round tables other than the National Round Table?

Submitted: 11.3.2026

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(10 June 2026)

The EU Delegation in Colombia has been engaged in the National Round Table since its inception, including at Ambassador level, and intends to maintain this engagement.

Through its participation and ongoing dialogue with authorities, both bilaterally and in fora like the annual EU-Colombia Human Rights Dialogue, the EU continues to stress the importance of preserving this forum as a channel for dialogue between civil society and public institutions, with a view to improving protection for human rights defenders.

In this context, the EU highlights the need for the involvement of representatives with decision-making authority and for robust follow-up to ensure that commitments lead to concrete results at the local level.

Looking ahead, the EU will continue to support the National Guarantee Process. Its cooperation programmes in the field of human rights in Colombia (for example, Right to Defend Rights: Alliances for Protection and the Demand for Guarantees ⁽¹⁾) include measures aimed at protecting and empowering human rights defenders as well as at reinforcing the capacity of civil society actors to participate effectively in both national and regional round tables.

With regard to regional round tables, the EU Delegation remains open to participating where appropriate and upon invitation. It has already contributed to the establishment of the Caquetá Territorial Round Table on Guarantees in 2024.

In parallel, the Delegation maintains regular exchanges with relevant counterparts, including the Human Rights Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ombudsman's office and civil society organisations involved in the process, in order to stay informed and to encourage follow-up on the commitments undertaken at both national and regional levels.

⁽¹⁾ One of its main actions is to develop advocacy strategies and proposals to strengthen guarantees for the human rights movement and promote them within national and territorial decision-making spaces, such as the National Guarantees Roundtable and the Territorial Guarantees Roundtables.