

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002818/26
to the Commission
Martin Günther (The Left)
(8 July 2026)**

Subject: Application of the ‘continuous, systematic and grave human rights violations’ standard under the EU-Colombia-Ecuador-Peru Trade Agreement

In its reply to Written Question E-003764/2025 ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾, the Commission stated that the suspension of the EU-Colombia-Ecuador-Peru Trade Agreement could be considered in cases of ‘continuous, systematic and grave human rights violations’, while concluding that this threshold had not been met in Ecuador.

Since then, reports from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have documented serious concerns, including prolonged states of emergency, increased militarisation of internal security operations and allegations of enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, excessive use of force and extrajudicial killings.

The UN has raised concerns regarding the conduct of security operations. The IACHR has issued precautionary measures concerning alleged enforced disappearances during military operations under states of emergency. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have reported patterns of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and excessive use of force linked to the security strategy.

In this context:

1. What criteria does the Commission use to assess whether violations are ‘continuous, systematic and grave’, and what weight does the Commission attach to findings from UN bodies and the IACHR?
2. On what factual basis does the Commission maintain that the threshold has not been met in Ecuador?
3. What factual circumstances would lead the Commission to conclude that the threshold is met and to initiate consultations or consider suspension under the essential elements clause?

Submitted: 8.7.2026

**Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(21 August 2026)**

Respect for democratic principles, human rights, and the rule of law constitutes an essential element of the Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia, Peru and Ecuador ⁽³⁾.

Violations of the Agreement’s essential elements clause, including the respect of human rights, can trigger the right of the parties to take ‘appropriate measures’, including the possible suspension in whole or in part of the agreement.

As stated in the reply to Written Question E-003764/2025 ⁽⁴⁾, the suspension of the Agreement is a last-resort measure. Before taking such a step, the EU typically looks at other measures that can be applied in a proportionate manner, calibrating its actions in a way that is seen as the most conducive to respond to the situation in a specific country.

The EU’s preference is to maintain engagement and dialogue as long as possible, since suspension in part or in full of an agreement may have significant detrimental effects on the population of the partner country, notably the most vulnerable.

It is important to note that the EU raises these matters directly with the authorities on a regular basis, both on concrete cases and in a generic manner.

In its monitoring of the situation, the Commission uses the findings, reports, and rulings of independent international and regional human rights mechanisms such as UN bodies and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Because these bodies provide rigorous analysis, their findings frequently trigger EU diplomatic demarches, inform Council conclusions, and serve as components in determining EU policy shifts or restrictive measures toward partner countries.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003764-ASW_EN.html.

⁽²⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003764_EN.html.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/eu-trade-agreement-with-colombia-peru-and-ecuador.html>.

⁽⁴⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2025-003764_EN.html.