

**Question for written answer E-001756/2019
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Martin Schirdewan (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Human rights violations and conservation enforcement in Africa and Asia

Following the recent BuzzFeed investigation¹ into widespread human rights violations linked to conservation enforcement in Africa and Asia, we would like to enquire about what measures the Commission has in place to ensure that EU overseas aid is not implicated in this scandal.

Specifically, we refer to a letter to Commissioner Mimica², dated 8 March 2019, in which the NGO Rainforest Foundation UK raises concerns that EU funding to the sum of at least EUR 258 million for protected areas in the Congo basin may have been implicated in serious human rights abuses and other negative impacts on local communities³.

In light of these claims:

What reports, if any, has the Commission received about human rights abuses linked to EU-supported protected areas, and how were any concerns raised addressed?

What due diligence requirements are there to ensure that organisations receiving EU money comply with human rights standards?

Given the recent announcement of an additional EUR 100 million being allocated through the ECOFAC 6 programme⁴, can the Commission make its financing agreements for specific protected areas available to the public? Can it also specify what contractual obligations are placed on recipients to uphold human rights standards and relevant EU policies?

¹ <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/katiejmbaker/wwf-report-human-rights-abuses-rangers>

² <https://www.rainforestfoundationuk.org/media.ashx/923fb104-7e4d-4cb8-8ef4-aa4a96621f27.pdf>

³ See media reports: <https://news.mongabay.com/2019/03/local-communities-feared-repression-from-wwf-investigation-finds/>, <https://actualite.cd/index.php/2019/03/09/bassin-du-congo-rainforest-appelle-la-commission-europeenne-evaluer-ses-financements>

⁴ <https://www.afrik21.africa/en/central-africa-e100-million-from-european-union-for-biodiversity-protection/>