

**Question for written answer E-000556/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Preventive arrest of climate activists

A demonstration by the environmental movement Extinction Rebellion took place in The Hague on 28 January. The group publicly announced in advance that the demonstration would consist of an occupation of the A12 motorway in The Hague. In the run-up to this demonstration, the Dutch Public Prosecution Service decided to pre-emptively detain seven citizens owing to their calls on social media to join the demonstration. They have been charged as suspects of committing a serious offence (sedition).

1. Freedom of demonstration is enshrined in Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled on numerous occasions that a government must do its utmost to protect demonstrations because the right to peaceful assembly is a pillar of a democratic state governed by the rule of law. Furthermore, measures adopted against demonstrators should not have an inhibiting effect on demonstrations. How does the Commission reconcile preventive arrests with protecting the right to demonstrate?
2. What is the Commission's assessment of the visits paid to the homes of citizens in the presence of, among others, young children, at a point when these citizens had done nothing more than call on people to attend a peaceful demonstration?

Submitted: 22.2.2023