

**Question for oral answer O-000102/2017
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 128

Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Barbara Matera, Dubravka Šuica, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut

on behalf of the PPE Group

Iratxe García Pérez, Soraya Post

on behalf of the S&D Group

Arne Gericke

on behalf of the ECR Group

Malin Björk

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

Terry Reintke, Ernest Urtasun Domènech

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Angelika Mlinar, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Hilde Vautmans

on behalf of the ALDE Group

Subject: VP/HR - Situation of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) and their support by the EU

Support for human rights defenders (HRDs) is a long-established component and a major priority of the EU's external human rights policy. The European Parliament has been a long-time advocate of a comprehensive EU policy on HRDs and has actively contributed to the shaping thereof in many of its resolutions, most recently in its Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World for 2016. Today, EU support is all the more important as the environment in which HRDs operate is increasingly restrictive, political and civil society space is shrinking in many countries and HRDs have been facing a growing number of threats.

Women human rights defenders (WHRDs) face unique gender-based obstacles and threats in their work. This may start with resistance from their family or community to their leadership role due to stereotypes about women's work and place in society, and can lead to unequal access to resources, networks and economic and social systems for their protection and in support of their work. In addition, WHRDs often endure the types of attacks traditionally perpetrated against women such as rape, sexualised defamation campaigns and acid attacks, as well as threats or harm to their children or family and aggression from their partners or communities. In every region of the world, women's participation in the political and social spheres is threatened by this discrimination and violence, and even more so in the case of WHRDs. As HRDs are at the nexus of efforts to attain sustainable development and societal resilience, it is crucial that strategies be implemented to provide gender-sensitive support to WHRDs. Accordingly, the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders recognise that support for HRDs requires a gender perspective.

What mechanisms and best practices has the VP/HR put in place to ensure and verify that all EU Delegations fully implement the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, including gender-specific elements aimed at WHRDs' needs in terms of visibility, family support, possibility of relocation and help for their physical and psycho-social wellbeing?

How many WHRDs has the EEAS directly supported with ad hoc grants managed by the Delegations since the adoption of the EU Strategy and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, and in which countries? What were the gender-specific elements of support?

Tabled: 21.12.2017

Forwarded: 8.1.2018

Deadline for reply: 15.1.2018