

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2987/08
by Javier Moreno Sánchez (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Threats against individuals in Magdalena Medio and southern Bolívar (Colombia)

The EU is financing the Peace and Development Programme for Magdalena Medio (PDPMM) via the Laboratories of Peace initiative. Since 2002, the objective of that initiative has been to help move beyond the internal conflict in Colombia by focusing on the region's vulnerable and displaced people.

On 10 April 2008, members of the Fedeagromisbol and Sembrar organisations and the Programme for Development and Peace in Magdalena Medio, as well as the priests de Regidor and Tiquisio, received emails containing a threatening message issued by a paramilitary structure calling itself 'Black Eagles - Northern Bloc of Colombia'.

This threatening message stated that the people concerned had been declared military targets and that their names 'were on the national government's list of "undesirables" to be eliminated'. It also accused them of being supporters or members of guerrilla groups.

These facts appear even more disturbing if one views them as evidence of the emergence of new paramilitary groups, despite the demobilisation of the so-called 'United Self-Defence Groups of Colombia', which should have been completed in 2006.

Given the grave and preoccupying issues at stake, can the Commission state whether it has contacted any national and/or regional authority to express its concern at these developments and other attacks on human rights? Can it explain what measures it is taking to protect the members of human rights organisations working at grassroots level? Can it state what effects these threats are having on the running of the PDPMM?