

Subject: Police conduct and the rule of law during protests in Albania

Question for written answer to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Demonstrations in Albania over corruption, education costs, and socio-economic grievances have escalated and have raised serious concerns about police conduct.

Reports indicate that rubber pellets fired by police injured protesters and journalists, while Albania's Ombudsperson is investigating the necessity and proportionality of police force. There are also concerns about inadequate safeguards for detained minors.

The Commission's 18 October statement rightly condemned violence and urged proportionality, but insufficiently addressed accountability. Fundamental rights and accountability for alleged abuses must remain central to Albania's EU accession.

What action will the High Representative, through the European External Action Service, take to:

1. Raise these allegations directly with the Albanian authorities and press for independent, impartial and effective investigations into police use of force, obstruction of journalists and violations of detainees' rights, including the responsibility of commanding officers, with findings published and appropriate judicial or disciplinary action follow-up?
2. Seek assurances, in cooperation with Albania's Ombudsperson and through independent monitoring, that all detainees, particularly minors, receive the legal safeguards required under Albanian Law and international human rights standards?
3. Ensure that commitments under Cluster 1 - Fundamentals, particularly on police accountability and fundamental rights, are followed up clearly where shortcomings persist, with measurable commitments to prevent further abuses?