

Philippines: Speech on behalf of the HR/VP at the European Parli



Delivered by Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen on behalf of High Representative Vice/President Josep Borrell on the situation in the Philippines, including the case of Maria Ressa.

Check against delivery!

Thank you.

Madam President, Honourable Members of the European Parliament, thank you for your remarks.

The European Union has expressed its concerns about various human rights issues in the Philippines on numerous occasions: recently through the [EU27 statement at the Human Rights Council](#); also through the [February 2020 biennial Generalised Scheme of Preferences \(GSP\) report](#) discussed in the European Parliament; as well as directly to the authorities, such as during the [first Joint Committee of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement \(PCA\)](#) in January 2020.

More specifically on Maria Ressa's case, the [EEAS Spokesperson issued a statement](#) on 16 June 2020 underlining that her conviction "*raised serious doubts over the respect for freedom of expression as well as for the rule of law in the Philippines[...]* We expect the Philippines, like all countries, to uphold its international human rights obligations and protect and promote fundamental freedoms."

With regard to the monitoring of the Philippines' commitments under GSP+, the Trade Commissioner had clearly communicated our concerns to his counterpart in Manila and the Philippines' reply will be taken into account in assessing the compliance to the GSP+ conditionalities during our bilateral dialogue with the government.

The EU remains convinced that both the Philippines and the EU have most to

gain from constructive engagement. During our January [Joint Committee](#), we agreed on the establishment of a Subcommittee on Good Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights. This Subcommittee, expected to meet regularly, will be an important forum for directly addressing all human rights issues. The European External Action Service (EEAS) has proposed to hold a first meeting already this autumn, by the end of this year, even under a virtual format.

The European Commission and the EEAS will continue raising these matters with the Philippine government in a clear and constructive way.

Thank you.

Link to the video: <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-194737>