



Member of the European Parliament

Dear Commissioner Timmermans, Commissioner Jourová and Commissioner Avramopoulos,

As you have probably been informed, documents have recently been published concerning the routine surveillance of lawyers by the British secret services. This revelation was part of the court case against the British government by Abdel Hakim Belhaj and Amnesty International. We strongly condemn these unbelievable practices. The Rule of Law is a dead letter if government services, secret or otherwise, have the right to undermine the essential role lawyers play.

Time and again 'national security' is used as an excuse to justify these overextended surveillance practices. It needs to be recalled that intelligence service activities are intended to defend our democracy, the rule of law and the fundamental rights. The confidentiality of the communication between lawyers and their clients is being violated with a vague and false claim of national security interests.

In this light, we ask you, as European Commissioners responsible for the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, for Justice and for Home Affairs, to condemn the routine surveillance of lawyers. Also, we call on you to investigate the possibility of infringement procedures against the United Kingdom, including the option to trigger the Rule of Law mechanism.

Furthermore, we would ask that you start an assessment of possible similar situations in other Member States. Is the United Kingdom unique in the way they have unleashed the surveillance state, or is there reason to suspect surveillance organizations elsewhere behave in similar ways? We remind you that the European Parliament has already adopted the conclusions of its own inquiry, known as the Moraes report, which includes in paragraph 23 a call to the British government to rein in mass surveillance.

Yours sincerely,

Judith Sargentini

Jan Albrecht

Jean Lambert

Eva Joly

cc. MEP Claude Moraes, Chair LIBE committee, rapporteur of European parliament resolution of 12 March 2014 and.