

31 October 2011

In the answer to question E-004539/2011 of 10 May 2011 (by Pino Arlacchi) about the protection of witnesses and judges in Kosovo, the Vice-President/High Representative stated: 'EULEX has developed a highly professional witness security unit, able to offer protection to witnesses and where appropriate seek relocation out of Kosovo. Experience has shown that the mission is capable of handling high-level and sensitive cases involving protected witnesses'.

Agim Zogaj, a key witness in the war crimes trial against Fatmir Limaj, a top former commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (now one of the most powerful politicians in the country), was found dead last week in the German city of Duisburg.

Fatmir Limaj has been under house arrest since last September, awaiting trial on charges of killing and torturing Serbian and Albanian prisoners during the Kosovo war. Mr Zogaj was under witness protection from the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX).

The inability of EULEX to protect Mr Zogaj is an appalling failure that has cast strong doubts over international efforts to establish the rule of law in the region.

EULEX has declined to comment on the death and issued only a short statement saying that 'witness protection and security are extremely sensitive issues and we will not confirm nor deny any operational details'.

1. Does the Vice-President/High Representative agree that the case of Mr Zogaj dealt a significant blow to the already weak confidence in EULEX's overall performance and to the witness protection programme?

2. Could the Vice-President/High Representative give more details about the case of Mr Zogaj?

3. Could the Vice-President/High Representative explain the current degree of implementation of the witness protection programme within the Kosovo Police?

E-010256/2011

*Question for written answer
to the Commission*

Rule 117

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[source: www.europarl.europa.eu]