

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3339/08

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to the Council

Subject: Caste-based discrimination

Caste-based discrimination affects more than 260 million people globally. It is a serious violation of the right to security, dignity and equality and leads to physical and social segregation, gross injustice before the law and limited access to land, employment, education and health care for the affected communities. The majority of those affected live in South Asia, with 167 million in India alone, and communities in Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are also suffering this severe form of discrimination and marginalisation.

In resolution P6\_TA(2007)0016 on the situation of the Dalits in India, the European Parliament urges the Council and the Commission to address the gross violations of human rights caused by systemic discrimination on the basis of caste.

To what extent has the Council raised the issue of caste-based discrimination in its dialogue with the Indian Government on human rights, trade and development cooperation?

Has the Joint Action Council taken steps to develop a dialogue on the issue of caste-based discrimination within the framework of its discussions on democracy and human rights, social and employment policy and development cooperation?

What steps has the Council taken to support and promote the draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the elimination of discrimination on the basis of work and descent prepared by two Special Rapporteurs of the former UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, and to ensure promotion and adoption of those principles at the UN Human Rights Council?