

**Question for written answer E-009273/2015
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Takis Hadjigeorgiou (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Human rights violations in Saudi Arabia

On June 7, 2015, the Saudi Supreme Court upheld the sentence of 10 years imprisonment and 1 000 lashes imposed on Saudi blogger Raif (or Raef) Badawi in November 2014 after his conviction for insulting Islam (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33039815>), having reviewed the case in response to a worldwide outcry.

Raif Badawi was accused of challenging the national authorities through the now banned 'Liberal Saudi Network' which he himself set up. He received the first 50 lashes in public on 9 January 2015, a further 50 lashes per week to be administered over the next 19 weeks.

The Treaty on European Union makes it clear that human rights and democracy are the guiding principles behind all its acts. Under the Treaty of Maastricht (1992), human rights became a cornerstone of the CFSP and EU development cooperation.

In view of this:

Can the Commission say what steps it has taken to incorporate human rights and democracy in its bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia, given that it has so far failed to make any representations to the Saudi authorities regarding not only the case referred to above but also frequent infringements of other democratic rights and guarantees (transparency, accountability and freedom of the press)?