



0055/2016

25.5.2016

## WRITTEN DECLARATION

submitted under Rule 136 of the Rules of Procedure

on promoting religious freedom in Pakistan and condemning the unjustified detention of Ms Asia Bibi

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Lapse date: 25.8.2016

**Written declaration, under Rule 136 of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, on promoting religious freedom in Pakistan and condemning the unjustified detention of Ms Asia Bibi<sup>1</sup>**

1. The promotion of democracy and respect for human rights are fundamental principles enshrined in the European Treaties, and the European Union has repeatedly expressed its commitment to freedom of religion by calling on Member States to guarantee this freedom within the European Union and beyond.
2. Blasphemy laws are a clear example of religious intolerance.
3. There is growing concern about the increase in the persecution of religious communities, in particular Christian minorities, in Pakistan, and any discrimination and violence in this regard should be strongly condemned.
4. The recent protest by Islamist groups calling on the Pakistani Government to execute Ms Asia Bibi, a Christian woman unjustifiably detained for blasphemy since 2010, should be denounced.
5. The High Representative of the Union is called upon to take all necessary political and diplomatic action to secure the release of Ms Asia Bibi.
6. The High Representative of the Union is also called upon to consider inserting a binding clause on respect for freedom of religion in agreements with third countries and to actively oppose strict blasphemy laws.
7. This declaration, together with the names of the signatories, is forwarded to the Commission and the High Representative of the Union.

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<sup>1</sup> Under Rule 136(4) and (5) of Parliament's Rules of Procedure, where a declaration is signed by a majority of Parliament's component Members, it is published in the minutes with the names of its signatories and forwarded to the addressees, without however binding Parliament.