

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0523/03  
by Miet Smet (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Women's rights in Zambia

Cooperation between the EU and Zambia takes place on the basis of ACP-EU partnership. In the Cotonou Agreement, which outlines the general framework for ACP-EU relations for the next 20 years, respect for human rights and the equality of women and men are stressed repeatedly by both parties.

In spite of the fact that Zambia subscribes to these principles, the rights of women in Zambia are not always respected. According to a report of 28 January 2003 by Human Rights Watch, girls in Zambia are five times more likely to be infected with the HIV virus than boys, because they are the victims of widespread sexual abuse.

Has the EU yet reacted to these grave infringements of women's rights? If not, does it intend to do so?

Is there any provision for a mechanism to systematically monitor and enforce respect for women's rights in Zambia? Is there provision for the possibility of suspending cooperation between Zambia and the EU if women's rights, and human rights in general, are continually violated in Zambia? If not, will the EU make provision in future for such possibilities?

If there is provision for the monitoring and enforcement of respect for human rights and for the possible suspension of cooperation between Zambia and the EU, does this apply to all the countries which have signed the Cotonou Agreement?