

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2781/03

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to the Commission

Subject: Violation of religious freedom in China - the Falun Gong

According to the Chinese national press agency Xin-Hua the government in Beijing intends to continue its campaign against the Falun Gong Movement, an organisation it calls 'an evil cult', which is 'anti-social' and 'anti-scientific'. The communiqué says 'we are aware that the battle will be long, arduous and complex. We must therefore be vigilant and spare no efforts in this undertaking'.

The results of this 'undertaking' - made by the Beijing government and reiterated in this way - are as follows: 1 600 members of the Falun Gong movement tortured and beaten to death; 500 sentenced to more than twenty years' imprisonment, 1 000 interned in psychiatric institutions, 25 thousand undergoing 'reeducation' in labour camps and 100 000 detained without trial.

Can the Commission say:

- whether it knows about these declarations of intent on the part of the Beijing government;
- whether it knows that members of the Falun Gong movement in a Union country - Belgium - have brought before the courts charges of "genocide, torture and crimes against humanity" against the former Chinese President Jang Zemin, now head of the army, and two of his close collaborators;
- whether it intends to take any official steps vis-à-vis the Beijing government, and if so, of what kind, not least in the light of the request contained in the report adopted on 5 September 2003 by the European Parliament, which calls on "the Council, the Commission and the Member States (...) to provide for the imposition, in response to violations of religious freedom, of similar penalties and sanctions to those prescribed since 1998 by the United States International Religious Freedom Act (Public Law 105-292, 105th Congress)"?