

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0328/04

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to the Commission

Subject: Chinese New Year parade in Paris

On the occasion of the Chinese New Year parade in Paris, held on 24 January 2004, the mayor of the city and its police bureau refused to allow the French Falun Gong Association to take part in the parade.

The French Falun Gong Association asked to take part in the parade with performances of the Lion Dance, Chinese drummers, traditional dancing and decorated floats. Less than a week before the event, the City Hall refused the application due to bureaucratic problems linked to the registration date. The truth is that the documents were sent on time, back in October. Moreover, the French Falun Gong Association was not given authorisations for other activities during the festivity it had applied for, such as performing traditional Falun Gong exercises, and handing out information.

It seems that the Chinese Embassy threatened to cancel all of the festivities if the City of Paris allowed Falun Gong to participate. Other non-official voices, which the Chinese authorities have repressed, have also met with similar obstacles.

Is the Commission aware of the facts of what happened in Paris last week?

What does the Commission intend to do in order to avoid similar cases occurring again on EU territory?

Does the Commission intend to speak to the French Government, the City Hall of Paris and the Chinese Ambassadors to France and the EU, in order to remind them that freedom of expression and demonstration are basic human rights clearly protected by Art. 6 of the TEU?