

**Question for written answer E-005931/2012  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Marketing of goods coming from the laogai

For over sixty years in China millions of people – men, women and children – have been imprisoned in the laogai, condemned to forced labour under inhuman conditions, starvation or torture and slavery.

According to some associations these prisons, masked as factories, number more than a thousand and it is calculated that up to now at least 50 million individuals have been held there.

These structures hide the powerful economic interests of the Chinese government and the foreign multinationals which produce in China. Suffice it to say that, according to the 'Laogai Research Foundation', the cost of Chinese labour is only 5% of the cost of labour in the European Union.

In addition, given that these structures offer a huge work force at zero cost, the production carried out there is continuing to grow.

In the light of the above, can the Commission state:

1. whether it does not think it should assess this dramatic situation of forced labour and total violation of human rights before proceeding with negotiations for the simplification of customs controls with China;
2. what measures can be adopted by the European Union to combat this immoral business?