

Question for written answer E-007293/2012

to the Commission

Rule 117

Michael Cashman (S&D), Karima Delli (Verts/ALE), Leonidas Donskis (ALDE), Claude Moraes (S&D) and Peter van Dalen (ECR)

Subject: Caste discrimination and EU development policy

A central value of EU development cooperation is preventing social exclusion and combating discrimination against all groups, and the EU has reinforced its obligations to promote and defend human rights, as an essential element of its partnerships with third countries and in order to ensure anti-discrimination policies and the equal distribution of Commission development assistance.

Parliament's resolution of 18 April 2012 on the 2010 Annual Report on human rights in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter includes a recommendation that 'EU legislation [should] ensure that attention is paid in EU human rights policy and cooperation instruments to eliminating caste discrimination, and action in caste-affected countries, including Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Yemen'.

Thus far the EU has, in its human rights communications including the Human Rights Package and the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2010, ignored the plight of more than 260 million people, whose rights are being grossly violated, and their access to development severely restricted, owing to caste-based discrimination.

1. What methods and strategies have the Commission applied to date to ensure that bilateral EU development aid to caste-affected countries addresses discrimination based on caste and effectively reduces poverty among groups affected by this form of discrimination?
2. Will the Commission acknowledge caste discrimination as a cross-cutting human rights and development concern, and take steps in cooperation with the EEAS to develop strategies at all levels for its elimination; enhancing analyses and implementation through a rights-based approach?
3. What measures will the Commission take in the planning, implementation and evaluation of future development aid to caste-affected countries to ensure that aid contributes to the elimination of caste-based discrimination and alleviates its negative consequences?