

**Question for written answer E-003535/2013/rev.1  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Thailand: the case of Andy Hall

The EU has recently concluded a partnership and cooperation agreement with Thailand and is currently negotiating an EU-Thailand free trade agreement.

While these negotiations have been underway, serious violations of fundamental human and labour rights have been reported in Thailand's key export industries, such as shrimp, tuna and pineapple processing.

Thai officials' responses to such well-documented misdoings have been inadequate. In fact, the legitimate activities and freedom of expression of the human rights defenders who have brought these violations to light are in many ways restricted by Thai legislation and the policies applied by public officials.

A case in point is a recent report by Finnwatch, a Finnish non-profit research organisation, which provides well-documented worker testimonies pointing to the use of forced labour and practices which may amount to human trafficking by a Thai company with strong ties to the European market. The migration and human rights expert who conducted the research, a British citizen named Andy Hall, has now been sued by the company for defamation and may face several years' imprisonment.

In the context of the ongoing bilateral negotiations, what does the EU plan to do to improve the human rights situation in Thailand's export industries and to encourage Thailand to protect the freedom of expression of human rights defenders?