

**Question for written answer E-013231/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Yemen: a long-lasting struggle against early marriages

Despite the global reduction in the percentage of early marriages, the situation in Yemen is of great concern. Forced marriages of young girls under the age of 18 constitute one of the most serious human rights violations in Yemen, particularly in light of the figures provided by NGOs, which estimate that 14 % of girls are forced into early marriages at the age of 15 and 52 % of girls are forced into early marriages whilst under the age of 18.

Even worse, in September 2010, a 12-year-old Yemeni child-bride died after struggling for three days to give birth, and in September 2013, an 8-year-old girl died in Yemen of internal bleeding during her wedding night after being forced to marry a 40-year-old man.

Poverty is clearly the reason behind this phenomenon, as Yemen is the poorest country on the Arabian Peninsula. Some 47 % of its inhabitants live on less than two euros per day. In addition, according to a survey published by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, a large proportion of the female population remain uneducated: 53 % of girls complete primary school, compared with 73 % of boys.

In 2009, a draft law setting 17 as the legal age for marriage was put to the vote, but the final version of the law was not adopted. Recently, Yemen's Rights and Freedoms Committee unanimously adopted a recommendation proposing to set the legal age for marriage at 18 years.

1. Does the Commission intend to take new steps to help eliminate the practice of early marriage? Is there any collaboration between the Commission and the government or local authorities regarding these issues?
2. Does the Commission envisage specific measures to strengthen civil society by informing and educating the population about their rights and the system of law in their country?
3. Does the Commission intend to step up efforts to promote respect for women's rights in this problematic area?