

**Question for written answer E-007264/2015
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Zdzisław Krasnodębski (ECR)**

Subject: VP/HR - EEAS action on the use of forced labour in Uzbekistan's cotton harvest

Global pressure, including from the EU, led Uzbekistan to announce that it would stop using forced child labour in its cotton harvest. However, NGOs monitoring the 2014 cotton harvest report that forced child labour, although substantially reduced, was not entirely abandoned. Furthermore, to make up for the lost labour, more school pupils and students were used, as well as adults who are forced to take part in the cotton harvest under the threat of losing their jobs or having their social security benefits withdrawn. It is estimated that over a million people were involved in forced labour in 2014. It is also alarming that on average 30-60% (and up to 80% at the height of the season) of the staff of educational and medical establishments were forced to leave their jobs, disrupting young people's education and putting people's health at risk. There has also been a rise in the number of accidents, including fatal accidents, occurring as a result of using untrained labour in agricultural work.

What measures is the EEAS taking, in particular through the EU Delegation in Tashkent, to put pressure on the Government of Uzbekistan to end all child labour and to limit the use of forced labour by young people and adults during the 2015 cotton harvest?