

**Question for written answer E-000374/2020
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Julie Lechanteux (ID)

Subject: Blasphemy laws

The laws on blasphemy are often used as a form of censorship to prevent any critical discussion on religion. In a democratic society, it is crucial that critical discussions on religion can take place in a safe environment.

Many countries, especially those where Islam is the predominant religion, still actively apply laws against blasphemy. The death penalty is sometimes handed down as punishment.

In its external policy, the European Union must take into account the fact that these blasphemy laws are abused, and the considerable human rights violations that this represents.

Given that the European Union is committed to supporting democracy and human rights in its external relations, as well as its competences in this regard, and in particular Articles 2, 3, 6, 21 and 25 of the Treaty on European Union and Article 205 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, to what extent does the Commission take into consideration the existence of blasphemy laws, their interpretation and how they are applied when cooperating with third countries? In the context of its external policy, does the Commission intend to impose sanctions on third countries that use these laws to oppress minorities?