

**Question for written answer E-002087/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Peter van Dalen (PPE), Carlo Fidanza (ECR), Bert-Jan Ruissen (ECR)

Subject: The new GSP+-status of Uzbekistan and the safeguarding of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief

Uzbekistan has recently been declared eligible for GSP+-status by the Commission. This status comes with a number of obligations regarding the safeguarding of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. However, the situation regarding freedom of religion and belief in Uzbekistan is highly concerning. In essence, the state decides which religion can and cannot be practiced, and the revised criminal code that is currently being drafted does not change this situation.

1. Is the Commission aware that the situation regarding freedom of religion or belief in Uzbekistan is highly concerning, especially since the revised criminal code does not bring about the desired change?
2. Will the Commission address the situation of freedom of religion or belief with the government of Uzbekistan as part of the bilateral dialogue under the GSP+ programme?
3. What measures affecting to the GSP+-programme is the Commission preparing to take if the situation of freedom of religion or belief in Uzbekistan does not improve sufficiently?