

**Question for oral answer O-000091/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 115

Eva Joly

on behalf of the Committee on Development

Subject: Caste-based discrimination

Caste-based discrimination, whereby caste-affected communities are subjected to so-called 'untouchability practices' in both the public and private spheres, is recognised as one of the most serious human rights problems in the world today and as a main cause of poverty and inequality in affected countries, severely impeding the goals of sustainable development and poverty eradication. Affecting an estimated 260 million people worldwide, this form of discrimination breaches the most fundamental principles of international human rights law and leads to pervasive human rights violations, with high rates of impunity. Caste discrimination, its cross-cutting nature and its consequences around the world, especially for women, have been addressed by UN human rights bodies, in particular the UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures, and by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Since 2007, Parliament has presented its concerns and recommendations to the EU in its resolutions, calling for EU action to address caste-based discrimination.

1. Do the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) agree that a comprehensive EU policy and action plan to address caste-based discrimination should be defined in order to fight this problem?
2. How is the EU addressing the issue of caste-based discrimination, including in the context of development assistance programmes and projects, especially in affected countries such as India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka? More broadly, how does the EU address discrimination related to work and descent, which occurs in countries such as Yemen and Mauritania?
3. Within the ambit of various training programmes for the police, the judiciary or civil servants which are being financed in various countries, what measures are being taken by the Commission and the EEAS to ensure the effective implementation and enforcement of the law by the police and the civil service, so as to facilitate access to justice and effective remedies for victims?
4. How do the Commission and the EEAS address this issue in their human rights dialogues with third countries and as part of global initiatives?
5. What will the Commission and the EEAS do to fight caste-based discrimination around the world as a cross-cutting issue, on a par with other grounds of discrimination, through all EU policies?
6. How will the EU address caste-based discrimination in the event of humanitarian crises arising in affected countries, in order to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to all marginalised groups?

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Forwarded: 20.9.2013

Deadline for reply: 27.9.2013