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Answer given by High Representative/Vice President Ashton
on behalf of the Commission
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The EU is deeply committed to fighting all forms of discrimination, including caste discrimination, worldwide. The EU is extensively engaged in this fight through a number of existing tools and instruments:

- At bilateral level: Political and specialised dialogues are used to raise EU concerns. For example, in the context of EU-India Human Rights Dialogue, questions of caste discrimination are regularly raised by the EU. In addition, the EU Delegations in caste-affected countries maintain regular contacts with the local and international organisations that are attempting to address this issue.
- EU Programming: Caste discrimination and its effects have been addressed both through geographic instruments (Country or Regional Strategies) and thematic instruments, in particular the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). In addition, the Commission also finances activities under the EIDHR and other thematic budget lines, which are focused on caste-based discrimination and are implemented through civil society organisations. The EIDHR strategy documents for 2011-2013 contain an explicit reference to caste discrimination.
- At multilateral level: The EU is active in the UN context and has contributed to the work of the former UN Sub-Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, including the final report on Discrimination based on Work and Descent. The EU has also contributed in including caste based discrimination issues in the Universal Periodic Review process. Such has been the case for reviews on India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.