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Answer given by Mr Piebalgs

on behalf of the Commission

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The fights against discrimination on any ground is mainstreamed in EU development cooperation policy and programmes since the "The European Consensus on Development" (2005) which identified non-discrimination among the cross-cutting issues to be tackled by the EU in its external relations.

On this basis, EU regularly addresses discrimination based on caste in its political dialogues with third countries where the problem exist. The EU is also active in UN forums on the promotion and protection of the rights of people affected by any kind of discrimination, including class divisions in society. It uses a wide range of financial and technical cooperation instruments, including bilateral cooperation with governments and direct support to civil society, to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to any kind of discriminated groups.

In annex you will find some examples of EU supported programmes and policies that are targeted at fighting against caste-related discrimination or that have a potential impact in this area.

Finally the EU supports civil society organisations working for the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to groups discriminated on any ground, including caste, in particular through the EIDHR. The promoted activities aim essentially at contributing to combating discrimination, at developing equal participation in the social, economic and political life within the broader context of strengthening human rights, political pluralism and democratic political participation.