

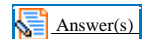
## Parliamentary questions

3 March 2015

E-003438-15

**Question for written answer  
to the Commission**  
**Rule 130**  
**Heidi Hautala (Verts/ALE)**

### ▶ **Subject: Caste discrimination**



Caste discrimination entails severe human-rights violations and affects more than 260 000 000 people globally. The UN has widely addressed caste discrimination, and reports prepared by the UN treaty bodies, the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, and the Special Procedures (17 mandate holders in total) have raised serious concerns about caste discrimination. Parliament Resolution 2013/2676(RSP) on caste discrimination stresses Parliament's deep concern at the systemic human-rights violations caused by this form of discrimination.

1. Has the Commission taken steps to develop a policy for combatting caste discrimination, taking into account in its analysis the concept of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, relevant human-rights-related dialogues and project support?
2. To what extent will specific initiatives aimed at addressing caste discrimination be incorporated into the EU's annual action plan?
3. What steps has the Commission taken to ensure acknowledgement in EU statements, policies and strategies of caste and other forms of discrimination?

Parliamentary questions

14 May 2015

E-003438/2015

### **Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the Commission**

On March 21, 2015 that was the International Day against Racial Discrimination, the HR/VP Federica Mogherini issued a Declaration on behalf of the EU that underlines the seriousness that the EU attaches to fighting discrimination on any ground.

EU development cooperation programmes as well the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) specifically target the fight against caste discrimination and support to vulnerable groups. As an example, the EIDHR Call for Proposals launched in India in 2013-2014 resulted in three contracts that benefit Dalit and other lower caste women suffering from multiple forms of discrimination.

The EU maintains a clear agenda when it comes to addressing the situation of all vulnerable groups and fighting all forms of discrimination. This also means that EU delegations conduct regular exchanges with civil society organisations working for the elimination of discrimination.

The EU is addressing caste-based discrimination issues in the Universal Periodic Review Process for countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh. Furthermore, these issues, including the recommendations themselves that arise from the UPR reviews, are the subject of regular exchanges and the Human Rights' dialogues with the concerned governments.

In the new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2020, the EU will step up its efforts to address the phenomenon of discrimination on any ground in accordance with our values and our obligations under international human rights law.