

2018 EU Parliamentary Q&A on the EU India Summit

Parliamentary questions

8 February 2018

E-000805-18

Question for written answer
to the Commission (Vice-President/High Representative)
Rule 130
Heidi Hautala (Verts/ALE)

Subject: VP/HR — 14th EU-India Summit held on 6 October 2017 in New Delhi



In her reply of 17 November 2017 to a letter from a group of MEPs concerning caste-based discrimination in view of the 14th EU-India Summit, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, noted, equally on behalf of the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, and the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, that non-discrimination, with a particular focus in India on caste-based discrimination, is a cross-cutting issue in most EU-funded projects, and assured the signatories that the EU will continue to raise caste issues in the bilateral political dialogue.

The VP/HR also stated that Presidents Tusk and Juncker discussed human rights with Prime Minister Modi.

1. Did the VP/HR express concern during the 14th Summit to the Indian representatives about the persistent discrimination against the Dalit community, and Dalit women in particular, urging India to take steps to put an end to all abuses against Dalits? 2. Does the VP/HR accept that progress in negotiating any future free trade agreement with India should be conditional on India taking steps to effectively tackle discrimination against Dalits?

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

31 May 2018

[E-000805/2018](#)

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

As pointed out in the High Representative/Vice-President's reply of 17 November 2017, Presidents Tusk and Juncker discussed human rights with Prime Minister Modi at the last EU — India Summit on 6 October 2017, and they looked forward to the next EU — India Human Rights Dialogue as a key tool to promoting the shared commitment to human rights.

As reflected in the Joint Summit Statement⁽¹⁾, India and the EU also agreed to enhance human rights cooperation in international fora, in particular the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council. Because of the rich agenda of the Summit and the discussions of many aspects of the EU-India Strategic Partnership, the Presidents could not address particular issues in detail.

India is a beneficiary of the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP), which links unilateral trade preferences to the respect of human and labour rights. India is not a beneficiary of GSP+, which provides additional EU trade preferences to GSP

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beneficiaries that take additional commitments in relation to 27 UN conventions on human and labour rights, the environment and good governance.

It is, however, a candidate to a free trade agreement (FTA) with the EU. EU FTAs include a Trade and Sustainable Development Chapter which, inter alia, covers obligations related to labour and environment standards, and provide a forum for dialogue with civil society which may touch upon certain human rights falling under labour rights and corporate social responsibility. While EU FTAs do not directly cover human rights, they are normally linked to the political framework agreements that govern relations between the EU and partner countries, and which normally address human rights, including discussion and monitoring.

The Commission is concerned about continued discrimination on grounds of caste. In 2016, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) dedicated specific support to civil society initiatives promoting the rights of persons affected by caste-based discrimination.

In addition, local support has been provided with EIDHR and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) country-based funding. Ongoing EIDHR and CSO projects targeting caste-based discrimination in India amount to some EUR 4.49 million.

[1](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23515/eu-india-joint-statement.pdf)<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23515/eu-india-joint-statement.pdf>