

Question for written answer E-004913/2016
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Mark Demesmaeker (ECR)

Subject: VP/HR - Anti-terrorism law in China

At the beginning of this year, the Chinese authorities adopted a new anti-terrorism law. This law constitutes a threat to human rights in China and Tibet. Human rights organisations have indicated that the Tibetan minority, in particular, is in danger of persecution.

In March, the European Union issued a joint statement with the USA, Canada, Germany and Japan, expressing its concern.

1. Have the Chinese authorities responded to this statement? If so, what was their reply?
2. Has the VP/HR expressed her concern through other diplomatic channels?

According to critics, the human rights dialogue between the EU and China is of very limited use, because the EU does not apply any transparent criteria for the purpose of measuring and assessing China's progress with regard to human rights.

3. Can the VP/HR indicate what priorities she intends to put forward at the next human rights dialogue?

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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini
(18.10.2016)

China's first Counter-Terrorism Law came into effect in January 2016. There were two public consultations on the text prior to adoption, where the EU submitted detailed comments. However, only a few of the EU's comments were taken into account. The final text maintained a number of controversial provisions and introduced factors of uncertainty for civil society, media and economic operators. The definition of terrorism in the law is vague and could be used to persecute groups or individuals, including from ethnic and religious minorities, who refuse to adhere to state political and socio-economic policies. This could constitute a threat to human rights in China, not only for the Tibetan minority but also for the ethnic and religious minorities in the Xinjiang province. The EU expressed its concerns on the final text, but received no formal response from the Chinese authorities.

The VP/HR also expressed the EU's concerns in her meeting with Mr Meng Jianzhu, Secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission of the CPC, in May 2016; highlighting particularly the EU's concerns on the definition of terrorism included in the law and underlining the need to adhere to international law.

During the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue (HRD) that took place in November 2015, the EU asked about measures intended to address deep-rooted grievances in Tibet, including the lack of freedom to practice their own religion and culture. The next HRD is scheduled to take place before the end of 2016.