

Question for written answer E-016017/2015
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Csaba Sógor (PPE)

Subject: VP/HR - EU-China Dialogue on Human Rights and detention of pastors in Zhejiang Province

On 30 November and 1 December 2015, the EU and the People's Republic of China held the 34th EU-China Dialogue on Human Rights. According to a press release issued by the European External Action Service, the dialogue included discussions on freedom of religion or belief, and the EU raised concerns about the ongoing detention of a number of human rights lawyers and activists since July and August 2015. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, also raised these concerns during a visit to China from 9 to 14 November 2015.

In addition to the human rights lawyers and activists still detained in China, however, approximately nine pastors and lay Christians, as well as the Christian lawyer Zhang Kai, remain in detention for peacefully opposing the removal of hundreds of crosses from churches across the province.

In light of this statement:

Has the EU been able to make representations to the Chinese about these pastors who are being detained in Zhejiang Province?

Given that the right to freedom of religion or belief was discussed during the dialogue, how does the EU plan to work with the Chinese Government and civil society to further promote and protect this right in China?