

**Question for written answer E-001956/2019
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**

Rule 130

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Subject: VP/HR - New penal code in Brunei Darussalam

On 3 April, a new penal code, announced as long ago as 2013, entered into force in Brunei. Its implementation had previously been delayed due to opposition from human rights groups.

This code provides for very harsh sentences: the death penalty by stoning for adulterers and homosexuals, amputation of limbs (feet and hands) for theft, the death penalty for blasphemy and apostasy, and flogging for abortion.

The new code has been condemned as cruel and inhumane by the United Nations and numerous other international institutions, including the EU, which in a press release highlighted the fact that some of the intended punishments could be considered acts of torture, and as such were prohibited by UN conventions to which Brunei was a party (first and foremost the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment).

That said, can the High Representative say what diplomatic measures she intends to take to put pressure on Brunei with a view to ensuring that the penal code is not enforced and is amended as soon as possible?

Can she also say whether she considers it appropriate to continue negotiating a partnership and cooperation agreement with Brunei, or whether, instead she should not make the continuation of the talks conditional upon the amendment of the penal code by Brunei?