

# EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



**The Head of Division**

**Directorate: Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia, Regional  
Cooperation & OSCE  
Division: Russia**

**Brussels, 10 September 2012  
EEAS.III.B3/MK/id/Ares(2012)**

**Dear Petitioner,**

**Thank you for your letter concerning Falun Gong practitioners in Russia and the classification of their principle book 'Zhuan Falun'.**

**The High Representative and Vice President of the European Commission, Catherine Ashton, has been following the case of Falun Gong in China and Russia very closely. Officials of the European External Action Service have met with Falun Gong representatives on a number of occasions in order to obtain firsthand information. We are therefore aware of the Falun Gong situation in Russia and the restrictive actions taken against them which include banned texts, prosecutions, searches, fines and confiscations. The High Representative/Vice-President is very concerned about this case and its broader implications.**

**Issues relating to the freedom of expression, the application of Russia's anti-extremism legislation, the freedom of religion or belief and the due process of law in Russian courts are all being discussed by us with the Russian authorities on a regular basis. The European External Action Service (EEAS) has raised the issue of the use and abuse of the law on anti-extremism in the last four consecutive human rights consultations with Russia, the most recent ones having taken place on 20 July this year. The issue of the Ministry of Justice's list of extremist publications and, more generally, the treatment of Falun Gong practitioners has been part of those discussions.**

**The EU is aware that the extensive restrictions imposed by the Chinese authorities upon members of the Falun Gong movement are considered as one of the reasons explaining their current situation in Russia. The EU believes that the current treatment of Falun Gong practitioners is incompatible with the freedom of conscience as recognised under Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**

**The EU therefore remains profoundly concerned about the severe restrictions imposed by the Chinese authorities upon the practice of Falun Gong, as well as about reports on the arbitrary arrest, detention and torture of Falun Gong practitioners. At the most recent session of the EU-China human rights dialogue on 29 May 2012, the EU reiterated its concerns about long prison sentences imposed on Falun Gong practitioners solely for having expressed their beliefs and underlined its anxiety at reports of prolonged solitary confinement of Falun Gong practitioners in re-education through labour camps.**

**The EU will continue to express its concerns to the Russian and Chinese authorities concerning the treatment of Falun Gong practitioners in both countries at all appropriate opportunities. We will continue to follow developments in this case closely.**

**Yours sincerely,**

**Michael Pulch**