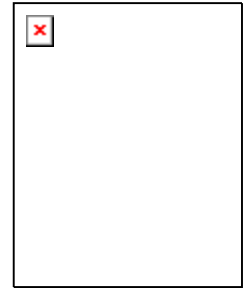


DR. CAROLINE LUCAS
Green Party
for the South East of England



Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner
DG External Relations
The European Commission
B1049 Brussels
Belgium.

February 9th 2006

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to bring to your attention the urgent need to exert pressure on the Russian government to improve its human rights standards in regard to religious minorities including Russian Hindus.

Hindu groups in the UK, including the Hindu Council UK launched a campaign earlier this year to highlight that religious minorities including Hindus and Krishna devotees are still suffering persecution. This ongoing problem is best illustrated by the examples detailed below.

Firstly, as I am sure you are aware, in December last year, the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, Archbishop Nikon, in a letter to the mayor of Moscow, described the Hindu God Krishna an "evil demon, the personified power of hell, opposing God." Obviously such remarks by a religious leader require condemnation, and yet none was forthcoming from the Russian Government.

The second case I want to highlight is that of the controversy surrounding the construction of a Hindu Temple in Moscow. The Mayor of Moscow had provided a plot of land for the construction of a new Hindu temple, after asking worshippers to vacate their current place of worship. In October 2005 the Mayor issued an order to take back this plot of land, leaving the Hindus without any permanent place of worship.

I trust that the issue of Religious Freedom, particularly the plight of the Russian Hindus, can be raised during the Commission's regular dialogue with the Russian government and pressure applied with respect to this important aspect of human rights.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caroline Lucas".

Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.