

## Religious refugees from China denied asylum in Europe

Written by Willy Fautré on 9 January 2018 in Opinion Plus  
Opinion Plus

Willy Fautré fears for the future of those fleeing religious persecution in China.



EU-China | *Photo credit: Fotolia*

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As of 1 December 2017, over 1600 members of the persecuted Church of Almighty God in China, who left their country in search of a safe haven in Europe, were under threat of being sent back to their country where they will be arrested and sent to prison for years.

So far, 780 applications have been rejected and 156 people have received a departure order. The cases of almost 900 others are still pending.

European Countries	Total Applications	Asylum Granted	Asylum Rejected	Departure Order
France	412	5	280	103
Switzerland	33	0	26	22
Netherlands	38	12	26	19
Belgium	12	0	10	10
Sweden	9	6	2	2
Italy	622	20	183	0
Germany	285	34	242	0
Spain	200	-	-	
Greece	44	1	6	0
Czech Rep.	42	-	-	
Finland	39	-	-	
Portugal	9	0	4	0
Austria	8	-	-	
UK	1		1	

Preliminary research by Human Rights Without Frontiers, covering 13 EU member states and Switzerland, shows that Italy, France, Germany and Spain are the four European countries perceived by these religious asylum-seekers as Promised Lands. However, their hopes have been short-lived.

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France has rejected 280 requests for asylum out of 412 and issued 103 orders of departure. There are 127 pending cases.

In Italy, 622 applications were introduced, the highest number in Europe: 183 were rejected with 419 cases pending..

In Germany, most of the applications were rejected: 242 out of 285. However nobody has yet received a departure order. There are nine pending cases.

In Spain, the 200 applications for asylum are still pending.

Switzerland had not granted asylum to any of its 33 applicants and has turned down 26 requests and issued 22 orders of departure. Three have been deported and five decided to leave the country. One of them was arrested on her return to China. There are seven pending cases.

In the Netherlands, 26 applications were turned down and 19 orders of departure were issued.

In Belgium, 12 members of the Church of Almighty God applied for asylum. Ten of them were denied asylum and received an order of departure. Two other cases are still pending.

In Sweden, two applicants received a negative answer and an order of departure. One case is pending.

In Greece, only one refugee was granted asylum out of 44 and six received a negative answer. All the other cases are pending. Nobody has been deported or has received an order of departure.

In Portugal, out of nine applications four were turned down. However nobody has received an order of deportation. The other cases are pending.

The UK has rejected the only application it received but no order of departure has been issued.

The Czech Republic, Finland and Austria respectively received 42, 39 and eight applications. They are all pending.

"While their members are victims of state violence in China, Beijing's propaganda is demonising their movement"

The Church of Almighty God is a new religious movement which appeared in 1991 in China.

While their members are victims of state violence in China, Beijing's propaganda is demonising their movement.

The academic publication The Journal of Cesnur has published two research works by [Dr Massimo Introvigne](#) [6] and [Dr Holly Folk](#) [7] refuting Beijing's fake news and fake accusations against the Church of Almighty God.

### **About the author**

Willy Fautré is Director of Human Rights Without Frontiers

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