Publication | 17.01.2011

Situation of Christians in the context of freedom of religion

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

The European Parliament,

– having regard to its annual reports on the situation of human rights in the world and its previous resolutions on religious minorities in the world,

– having regard to Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) of 1950,

– having regard to Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966,

– having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,

– having regard to the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and in particular her reports 29 July 2010 and 19 February 2010,

– having regard to the Council conclusions adopted on 8 December 2009 on freedom of religion or belief in which it underlines the strategic importance of this freedom and of countering religious intolerance,

– having regard to the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy following the attack against worshipers at Coptic Church in Alexandria, Egypt on 1 January 2011,

– having regard to the statement of the President of the European Parliament, Buzek on the deadly blast at Egyptian church, on 1 January 2011,

– having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the European Union has repeatedly expressed its commitment to freedom of religion, freedom of conscience and freedom of thought and has stressed that governments have a duty to guarantee these freedoms all over the world,

B. whereas Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights declares that everyone

has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; whereas this right includes freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice and freedom to change his religion or belief as well as freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching,

C. whereas freedom of thought, conscience and religion applies to adherents of religions but also to atheists, agnostics and people without beliefs,

D. whereas other groups of people such as refugees, internally displaced persons, asylum-seekers, migrants, persons deprived of their liberty, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities also face a growing number of violations of their right to freedom of religion or belief; recalling, in this respect, the principle of non-refoulement, according to Article 33 of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees,

E. recalling that international law is not intended to protect religions, ideologies or abstract values but protects an individual, alone or in a community, exercising, privately or publicly, his or her freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

F. whereas an attack on Coptic Christians killed and injured innocent civilians in Alexandria on 1 January 2011,

G. whereas the celebration of the Christmas Mass in the local church of St. Sinesios in the village of Rizokarpaso in Northern Cyprus was interrupted by force on 25 December 2010,

H. whereas two Iraqi Christians were killed in Mosul on 22 November 2010; whereas a series of attacks targeting Christian areas killed innocent civilians in Baghdad on 10 November 2010; whereas these attacks came after Islamist militants had seized a Syriac Catholic cathedral in Baghdad on 31 October 2010, leaving more than 50 worshippers dead,

I. whereas the assassination of Salmaan Taseer, Governor of Punjab, on 4 January 2011 as well as the case of Asia Bibi in Pakistan provoked protests by the international community,

J. whereas Europe, like other parts of the world, is not exempt from cases of violation of the freedom of religion and from attacks on members of religious minorities on the basis of their beliefs; stressing in this respect the minaret controversy in Switzerland referring to the ban of new constructions of minarets which is to be considered as an expression of intolerance,

1. Strongly condemns all kinds of discrimination and intolerance based on religion and belief and acts of violence against all religious communities; stresses once again that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a fundamental human right;

2. Urges governments and authorities in all countries concerned to continue their efforts aimed at protecting vulnerable religious communities, including Christian minorities, against violent attacks and to do their utmost to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice;

3. Reminds governments in all countries concerned of their obligation to guarantee that members of religious communities enjoy all aspects of the freedom of religion and to prevent any discrimination against them;

4. Stresses again that the respect for human rights and civil liberties are fundamental principles and aims of the European Union and constitute a common ground in its relations with third countries;

5. Calls on the Council, the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs

and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission to pay increased attention to the subject of the freedom of religion and to the situation of religious minorities in the agreements and cooperation with third countries as well as in human rights reports;

6. Reiterates its support for all initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue and mutual respect between religious and other communities; encourages all religious authorities to promote tolerance and to take initiatives against hatred and violent and extremist radicalisation;

7. Stresses the necessity to have a follow-up mechanism, including the appointment of a member of the relevant committee in order to follow ongoing developments and measures taken by EU Institutions and UN bodies;

8. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, parliaments and governments of the Member States, the parliament and government of Egypt, the parliament and government of Iraq, and the parliament and government of Pakistan.

Recommended

Press release

Sebastian P



Commission must overhaul EU Democracy Shield

15.09.2026

Study

©abraham osorio



REFORMING FRONTEX | A HUMAN RIGHTS - BASED REVIEW

01.07.2026

Press release

Nikolaus Riss



[MEPs denied proper inspection of detention center in G…]

29.06.2026

Press release

KinoMasterskaya



Returns Regulation sets Europe on shameful path

02.06.2026

Responsible MEPs



Margrete Auken

Member



Heidi Hautala

EP Vice-President, Member

Please share

- E-Mail