

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002048/24
to the Commission
Nikolaos Anadiotis (NI)
(14 October 2024)**

Subject: Persecution of Christians outside Europe

The EU was built on three pillars: ancient Greek philosophy, Roman law and Christianity. Acceptance of religious freedom is a core principle of the EU. Despite this, the persecution of Christians around the world has become a daily reality. It is happening in Afghanistan, North Korea, Somalia, Libya, Yemen, Eritrea, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran and elsewhere. In many of these countries, converting to Christianity is forbidden and punishable even by death.

Thus, while we rightly talk about respect for religious tolerance, there is insufficient information about the persecution suffered by Christians outside of Europe and the way in which resulting problems are dealt with.

Open Doors ⁽¹⁾, an international Christian organisation founded by Dutch Christian missionary Andrew van der Bijl, monitors, for example, and records such acts of persecution against Christians. I am calling on the EU to show increased awareness of and sensitivity towards the persecution of Christians worldwide.

In light of the Plenary debate of 10 October 2024 on the rise of religious intolerance in Europe, can the Commission answer the following:

Does it intend to act and take to the global stage to express its anger over the persecution of Christians in other continents other than Europe?

Submitted: 14.10.2024

**Question for written answer E-002245/24
to the Commission
Anna Maria Cisint (PfE), Susanna Ceccardi (PfE), Silvia Sardone (PfE), Isabella Tovaglieri (PfE)
(24 October 2024)**

Subject: Urgent measures to protect persecuted Christians

According to the World Watch List 2024 report, 365 million Christians are suffering persecution worldwide. On a global level, one in every seven Christians is being persecuted, and this is one in five in Africa and two in five in Asia. North Korea is the most dangerous country for Christians, followed by Somalia, Libya, Eritrea and Yemen. Nigeria has the highest number of murders (4 118 out of 4 998 overall) and kidnappings (3 300 out of 3 906 overall). In 2023, there were over 14 766 attacks on churches and places of worship, along with violence against Christians and Christian properties.

In 2022, the EP adopted its report on the persecution of religious minorities on the grounds of belief or religion, which drew criticism from the Catholic Church for failing to include important references to the persecution of Christians in the Middle East and Africa. Many of the references, bar one, had been removed.

On 1 October 2024, the UCANEWS Agency reported on the kidnapping of a Christian girl in Pakistan, who had been repeatedly raped by her kidnappers, in just one of many such cases.

The right to freedom of religion, as well as the protection of women and girls, are fundamental values.

Can the Commission therefore say what steps it will take to help the millions of Christians who are being persecuted, and especially women and girls?

Submitted: 24.10.2024

**Joint answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(20 December 2024)**

The promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief is a high priority of EU human rights action, both in multilateral fora and bilateral relations with third countries.

As an expression of this commitment, the Commission appointed Mr Frans Van Daele in 2022 as Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU ⁽¹⁾.

¹ <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/>

⁽¹⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/9730cd4e-685f-424e-a8c1-461deb1613e5_en?filename=Mandate%20Special%20Envoy%20-%20final.pdf

The Commission and the High Representative/Vice-President are deeply concerned about persecution, discrimination and violence against people of any religion or belief, especially those belonging to religious minorities, whether they be Christian, Jewish, Muslim or of other faiths.

To address these concerns, the EU continues implementing the 'EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief' ⁽²⁾ adopted by the Council in 2013.

The Commission and the High Representative/Vice-President regularly speak out about attacks or discrimination against persons, whether they be women or girls, men or boys, because of their religion or belief wherever they may occur, regardless of whether the victims belong to majority or minority religious groups or are non-believers.

Freedom of religion and belief is often discussed in the context of the human rights dialogues between the EU and third countries. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights is also active on issues related freedom of religion and belief.

Moreover, the EU continues to support projects related to freedom of religion or belief including for Christians and their communities through Global Europe-Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) geographic and thematic Human Rights and Democracy and Civil Society programmes.

⁽²⁾ https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137585.pdf