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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(29.7.2025)

The EU acknowledges the importance of education as a tool to combat discrimination and intolerance. In this respect, the EU is aware of the issue of religious content in non-religious school textbooks, as well as the potential discrimination against religious minorities. Pakistan has taken steps to revise teaching material and to remove religious references in school curricula and teaching materials on non-religious subjects in line with Article 22 of the Constitution of Pakistan. However, the EU believes that Pakistan needs to continue these efforts in order to address root causes of religious discrimination.

Freedom of religion or belief is one of the key issues the EU discusses with Pakistan. In this context, the EU also addresses the topic of religious content in non-religious curricula and school textbooks. The Special Envoy on freedom of religion or belief raised the issue during a visit in September 2024. Core conventions on human rights cover, amongst others, access to education and non-discrimination of religious minorities. These conventions need to be observed in order for Pakistan to obtain a reduction in duties for a wide range of products entering the EU market. For this reason, the topic of Islamic religious reference in teaching material on non-religious subjects was mentioned in the latest Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus monitoring report of November 2023¹ and is part of the ongoing monitoring process.

¹ [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD\(2023\)363&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=SWD(2023)363&lang=en), p.9.