

EN

E-000261/2026

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(16.3.2026)

The promotion and protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) for all individuals around the world remains an essential priority of EU's external action, as highlighted in the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2027)¹.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights² is one of the Conventions falling under the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+)³ regulation and therefore part of the GSP+ monitoring exercise in Sri Lanka.

During the annual EU-Sri Lanka working group on Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights the issue of minorities, including religious minorities, is extensively discussed. The last one took place on 5 May 2025 in Colombo back-to-back with a GSP+ monitoring mission.

The Delegation of the EU to Sri Lanka is also in regular contact with civil society organisations and human rights defenders on FoRB. There are also specific EU funded programmes⁴ on freedom of religion and empowerment of minority communities.

The EU will continue to follow the situation very closely and raise it with the Sri Lanka authorities.

¹ EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2027):

https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/Action-Plan-EN_2020-2027.pdf.

² The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>.

³ <https://trade.ec.europa.eu/access-to-markets/en/content/generalised-scheme-preferences-plus-gsp>.

⁴ Two relevant grants related to the empowerment of minority communities are the following: (i) The Minority Rights Group grant on 'Minority Empowerment for Democracy and Pluralism in Sri Lanka'; (ii) the National Peace Council grant on 'Active Citizens for Elections and Democracy in Sri Lanka and the Maldives'.