

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002353/26

**to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
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(9 June 2026)

Subject: Religious freedom training for EU diplomats

Religious freedom is a fundamental human right, enshrined in most constitutions, as well as in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Many conflicts across the globe have a religious component and Christians are especially heavily persecuted. Open Doors estimates that 388 million Christians worldwide are persecuted because of their faith. It is therefore paramount that the EU is fully equipped to engage in dialogue with stakeholders outside of the EU on the freedom of religion or belief. The European Parliament called on the European External Action Service (EEAS) to train EU diplomats in this respect in its discharge resolutions of 2023 and 2024. Various tools to address this are available and have been used in the past for training, such as the Freedom of Religion or Belief (FORB) learning platform.

1. How does the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) plan to implement Parliament's call for training?
2. How does the VP/HR ensure that all EEAS staff are equipped to engage in dialogue on religious freedom and how are tools such as the FORB learning platform used?
3. What staff and budget resources are allocated to prioritise this issue?

Submitted: 9.6.2026

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

(29 July 2026)

The European External Action Service regularly provides dedicated training on religion-related aspects of foreign policy and diplomacy, including freedom of religion or belief. Recent annual courses addressed religion and geopolitics, religion in Africa, and religious nationalism, with a particular focus on religious literacy, human rights, conflict prevention and practical tools for diplomatic engagement.

Freedom of religion or belief is also addressed through cooperation with the Directorate-General for International Partnerships of the Commission on the EU learning package on freedom of religion or belief, including the e-learning courses 'Freedom of Religion or Belief for All' and 'Freedom of Religion or Belief and Gender Equality', complemented by webinars and practical guidance. In May 2026, an EU-wide training on practical resources to address freedom of religion or belief was offered to staff in Headquarters and EU Delegations.

The course 'Religious nationalism and the evolving geo-political reality' is organised on annual basis with approximately 40 participants. Human rights trainings are integrated into broader diplomatic training, including international human rights law in the Essential EU Diplomatic Training. These activities are implemented within existing human and financial resources and in cooperation with relevant Commission services.
