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Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(23.10.2026)

The EU appreciates the cooperative efforts by Greece and Egypt to work towards safeguarding the rights of Saint Catherine's Monastery in Sinai and closely follows developments following the 2025 Ismailia Court of Appeals ruling linked to its legal status. In 2025, the Egyptian authorities assured European ambassadors of their firm commitment to maintaining the monastery's religious, historical, and spiritual status, emphasising that the court ruling formally protects the site for the first time.

The EU will continue to follow the matter and the commitments made by the government of Egypt, in close coordination with Greece, insisting on the necessity to preserve the monastery's religious, historical, and spiritual status, in accordance with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation's World Heritage Convention.

More generally, the EU regards freedom of religion or belief as an important issue within its external human rights policy, seeking to foster tolerance and tackle persecution globally. Through EU guidelines adopted in 2013¹, the EU engages with religious actors, monitors violations, and supports interfaith initiatives, raising possible matters of concern in its Human Rights Dialogues, political consultations and sub-committees.

¹ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/06_hr_guidelines_religion_en.pdf.