
FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF BEYOND THE EU'S BORDERS

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Religious freedom is one of the most essential human rights, enshrined solidly in international law. Being part of EU primary law, the Union has committed to promote and protect religious freedom worldwide.

However, according to the Pew Research Center, about three-quarters of the world's population live in countries with high or very high restrictions or social hostilities to religious minorities. This decade has also witnessed a rise in religion-related terrorism, with some regions being more affected than others, which has also led to armed conflict and sectarian violence.

To answer to this global problem, in May 2016, Commission President Juncker appointed Ján Figel as the first Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the European Union. His mandate is due to expire in May 2017, potentially leaving the EU without representation in this arena.

EURACTIV organised a stakeholder workshop to discuss the freedom of religion and belief outside the EU. Questions included:

- How can the inclusion of all religious minorities be ensured?

☐ Should the mandate of the Special Envoy be renewed and if so, should his/her position be strengthened?

☐ Is the current institutional set-up suitable to guarantee the promotion and protection of freedom of religion and belief?

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