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Answer given by Vice-President Schinas  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(6.4.2021)

The appointment of a Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU is indeed planned. This appointment will take place in due course. The mandate of the future Envoy is currently being fine-tuned, also in the light of previous experiences and ongoing challenges in the field.

Parallel to that, freedom of religion or belief remains a strong priority of EU external action on human rights in line with the newly adopted EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024)<sup>1</sup>. All EU actors continue to implement the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief<sup>2</sup>. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights has a particular role in promoting and protecting human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, in line with his mandate and under the political direction of the High Representative/Vice-President.

The EU consistently raises concerns for violations against individuals of all faiths and beliefs, including during its human rights dialogues. The EU is a strong advocate of freedom of religion or belief in multilateral fora. For example, it strongly supports the mandate of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and defends/promotes freedom of religion or belief resolutions at the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020JC0005>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137585.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137585.pdf)