



Commission des Episcopats de la Communauté Européenne  
Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community  
Kommission der Bischofskonferenzen der Europäischen Gemeinschaft

***A Compilation Report on Religious Freedom  
at the European Parliament and the  
European External Action Service (EEAS)  
(January 2010 – September 2012)***

**SEPTEMBER 2012**

The current report was compiled by the Secretariat of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE) includes documentation on the initiatives taken by the European Parliament and the European External Action Service (EEAS) on religious freedom, covering the years 2010 – September 2012.

The document endorses three sections:

- a) A compilation of 49 European Parliament Resolutions and recommendations on religious freedom, with some relevant extracts of those texts;
- b) A compilation of 47 statements, speeches, remarks, declarations of the EEAS on religious freedom, including also some excerpts;
- c) A chronological table comparing the activities of aforementioned institutions on religious freedom.

Our analysis highlights the extent of which EU actors, namely the European Parliament and the EEAS, positioned themselves differently regarding the issue of religious freedom, mainly when reacting to the breach of this fundamental right in specific cases corresponding to individual countries.

As already indicated, the time span studied initiates from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 till 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012. During this period, the countries being mentioned are mainly the following:

- As regards the European Parliament: Afghanistan (x1), Azerbaijan (x1), Bahrain (x2), Belarus (x1), Burma (x2), China (x3), Egypt (x4), Indonesia (x1), Iraq (x2), Iran (x5), Malaysia (x1), Montenegro (x1), Nepal (x1), Nigeria (x2), Pakistan (x3), Syria (x3), Tibet (x3), Turkey (x2), Vietnam (x1), Yemen (x2); also mentioned are: the Gulf Cooperation Council (x1), EU-Africa partnership (x1), European Neighbourhood Policy (x1), EU Strategy for Central Asia (x1);
- As regards the EEAS: Afghanistan (x2), China (x1), Egypt (x7), Iraq (x1), Iran (x16), Mali (x3), Nigeria (x5), North Korea (x1), Pakistan (x1), Palestinian Territories (x3), Syria (x4), Tibet (x1) and Tunisia (x1).

We should say that, occasionally, both institutions refer to the above-mentioned countries, either individually or collectively.

From the above, one could easily deduce that the geographical concern of the European Parliament on religious freedom is by far extended to more countries and regions rather than that of the EEAS.

Concerning the religious groups and minorities mentioned, the European Parliament is broader and more explicit, specifically referring to Christians (for they are the most persecuted minorities), Muslims (Sunnis, Shi'ites, Sufis), Buddhists, and

Baha'is, whereas in the EEAS's statements, the most mentioned minorities are Christians (mainly Egyptian Copts) and Baha'is (especially those in Iran).

From the retrieved data, one could easily conclude that the European Parliament, within its competence, is definitely contributing to further enhance the concept of 'deep and sustainable democracy' wherein the right to vote should be integrated with other fundamental rights, including religious freedom. It is evident that the European Parliament is regularly exerting its influence upon the EEAS in order to take the necessary action for the protection of harassed individuals (victims of hate speech and crime) and religious communities and minorities, mainly Christians, in third countries.

As for the EEAS, its clear support to religious freedom should be firstly, more specific and articulate, and ultimately, it should be followed by concrete actions in order to safeguard religious minorities' rights.

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

## 2010

**21 January** Resolution on recent attacks on Christian communities<sup>1</sup> (in Egypt and Malasia):

*“4. Calls on the Egyptian Government to guarantee that Coptic Christians and members of other religious communities and of minorities enjoy the full range of human rights and fundamental freedoms – including the right to choose and change their religion freely – and to prevent any discrimination against them”.*

**10 Febr.** Resolution on Iran<sup>2</sup>:

*“F. whereas, in addition, the security forces have stepped up their systematic harassment of members of religious minorities, such as Baha’is (all seven members of whose former leadership have been arrested and are now standing trial) Sunnis and Christians (including eight priests), and have carried out a campaign of arbitrary arrests and executions against Kurdish, Azeri, Baluch, and Arab civil society and political activists; whereas, in particular, 21 Kurds are on death row at the moment (...)”.*

**10 Febr.** Resolution on the situation in Yemen<sup>3</sup>:

*“6. Calls on the Yemeni Government to refrain from discrimination against any ethnic or religious groups in the country and to take account of the common interest of all its citizens in its policies;”*

**11 Febr.** Resolution on Burma<sup>4</sup>:

*“6. Condemns (...) particularly the continuing repression and intimidation of Buddhist monks; urges the Burmese authorities to desist from further politically motivated arrests and to release all prisoners of conscience, including the monks (...)”.*

*“8. Expresses its concern at the continuing discrimination, human rights violations, violence, child and forced labour, displacement and forms of repression suffered by numerous ethnic and religious minorities, and calls on the Government of Burma/Myanmar to take immediate action to improve their respective situations”.*

**25 Febr.** Resolution on the 13th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (Geneva, 1-26 March 2010)<sup>5</sup>:

*“10. Reiterates its position with regard to the concept of ‘defamation of religions’ and, while recognising the need to address fully the problem of discrimination against religious minorities, considers that the inclusion of this concept in the Protocol on*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0005+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201103/20110324ATT16413/20110324ATT16413EN.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2010-17>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2010-33>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2010-36>

*complementary standards on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination is not appropriate; calls on the UN Member States to implement fully the existing standards on freedom of expression and freedom of religion and belief”.*

**10 March** Resolution on the situation of civil society and national minorities in Belarus<sup>6</sup>:

*“5. Repeats its call in recent resolutions (...) to guarantee freedom of speech and association (...) religious freedom (...)”.*

**25 March** Recommendation to the Council on the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly<sup>7</sup>:

*“(ap) To exercise leadership in the promotion and protection of human rights, including the rights of members of vulnerable groups and minorities, freedom of expression and free media, freedom of religion”.*

**6 May** Resolution on the mass atrocities in Jos, Nigeria<sup>8</sup>:

*“G. whereas the problems in the area of Jos stem from a lack of economic development, from the adverse effects of climate change, and from the tension rooted in decades of resentment between indigenous groups, mostly Christian or animist, vying for control of fertile farmland with migrants and settlers from the Hausa-speaking Muslim north,*

*H. whereas it is not possible systematically to place Muslims or Christians in the role of either aggressors or victims, since historically they have been both (...)”.*

**20 May** Resolution on religious freedom in Pakistan<sup>9</sup>:

*“Q. whereas the vast majority of people accused under the blasphemy laws are Muslim, but accusations against individuals from minority faiths can trigger disproportionate violence against their community as a whole; whereas it was blasphemy accusations that triggered anti-Christian mob violence in Gojra and Korian in summer 2009, leaving eight dead and at least a hundred houses destroyed.”*

**20 May** Resolution on the situation in Burma/Myanmar<sup>10</sup>:

*“B. whereas in their published form the five electoral laws and the four decrees violate all democratic principles and make the holding of free elections impossible, in particular by excluding the country's 2200 known political prisoners; whereas members of religious orders in Burma/Myanmar, including an estimated 400 000 Buddhist monks, are explicitly banned from voting, highlighting the perpetual discrimination by the military junta on the basis of religion or status,”.*

*“17. Reiterates its call for a solution to the problem of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh; urges the Bangladesh Government to authorise their official registration as refugees and the Burma/Myanmar authorities to halt all forms of persecution of the*

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2010-0055&language=EN&ring=P7-RC-2010-0134>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2010-84>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2010-0157&language=EN>

<sup>9</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:161E:0147:0151:EN:PDF>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2010-196>

*Rohingya and fully to respect their fundamental rights as a religious and ethnic minority”.*

**8 July** Resolution on North Korea<sup>11</sup>:

*“K. whereas the DPRK Government does not allow organised political opposition, free and fair elections, free media, religious freedom, freedom of association or collective bargaining”.*

**8 Sept.** Resolution on the human rights situation in Iran, in particular the cases of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani and Zahra Bahrami<sup>12</sup>:

*“P. whereas the persecution of religious and ethnic minorities in Iran continues unabated; whereas in August 2010 the seven leaders of the Baha'i faith, Fariba Kamalabadi, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, Saeid Rezaie, Mahvash Sabet, Behrouz Tavakkoli and Vahid Tizfahm, who have been imprisoned since 2008 solely on the basis of their religious beliefs, were sentenced to 20 years in prison on charges of propaganda against the State and espionage (...)”.*

**25 Nov.** Resolution on Tibet – plans to make Chinese the main language of instruction<sup>13</sup>:

*“1. Condemns the increased crackdown on the exercise of the cultural, linguistic, religious and other fundamental freedoms of Tibetans, and stresses the need to preserve and protect the distinct cultural, religious and national identity of the six million Tibetan people and to address concerns about the repression and marginalisation of the Tibetan language, which underpins Tibetan identity;”*

**25 Nov.** Resolution on Iraq: the death penalty (notably the case of Tariq Aziz) and attacks against Christian communities<sup>14</sup>:

*“G. whereas, on 22 November 2010, two Iraqi Christians were killed in Mosul; whereas, on 10 November 2010, a series of bomb and mortar attacks targeting Christian areas killed at least five people in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad; and whereas these attacks came after Islamist militants had seized a Syriac Catholic cathedral in Baghdad on 31 October 2010, leaving more than 50 worshippers dead,  
H. whereas the militant group Islamic State of Iraq, considered part of the international Al-Qaida movement, has claimed responsibility for the killings and has vowed to launch further attacks against Christians,  
J. whereas hundreds of thousands of Christians have fled from the country in the face of repeated attacks against their communities and churches; whereas many of the remaining Iraqi Assyrians (Chaldeans, Syriacs and other Christian minorities) are now internally displaced persons, having had to flee extremist violence aimed at them,  
K. whereas the Assyrians (Chaldeans, Syriacs and other Christian minorities) constitute an ancient and indigenous people who are very vulnerable to persecution and forced emigration, and whereas there is a danger of their culture becoming extinct in Iraq”.*

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<sup>11</sup><http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201008/20100823ATT80214/20100823ATT80214EN.pdf>

<sup>12</sup><http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201103/20110324ATT16409/20110324ATT16409EN.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:099E:0118:0119:EN:PDF>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2010-448>

**15 Dec.** Resolution of 15 December 2010 on the future of the EU-Africa strategic partnership following the 3rd EU-Africa Summit<sup>15</sup>:

*“13. Urges that all actions conducted under the terms of the various partnerships be pursued without any discrimination on grounds of (...), religion or conviction (...).”*

**16 Dec.** Resolution on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2009 and the European Union's policy on the matter<sup>16</sup>:

*“131. Remains deeply concerned that discrimination based on religion or belief still exists in all regions of the world, and that persons belonging to particular religious communities, including religious minorities, continue to be denied their human rights in many countries, such as North Korea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Maldives, Afghanistan, Yemen, Mauritania, Laos, Uzbekistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Pakistan and Egypt; condemns the Chinese authorities for the persecution of individuals who practise their religion outside officially sanctioned channels, including Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and Falun Gong practitioners; urges China to ratify the ICCPR as it promised; urges the Chinese authorities to refrain from their oppressive policy in Tibet, which could eventually lead to the annihilation of the Tibetan religion and culture; condemns the Iranian authorities for the persecution of individuals belonging to religious minorities, including Christians, Baha’i, and Muslims who have converted to another or no religion; urges the Iranian authorities to protect religious minorities in accordance with their obligations under the ICCPR; urges the authorities of the Russian Federation to impose a moratorium on the implementation of the 2002 Law on Fighting Extremist Activity, which is extensively misused to persecute peaceful religious minority groups; expresses its concern about the situation of the Montagnard Christian minority living in the Central Highlands of Vietnam; reminds the Vietnamese authorities that the rights of minorities include freedom to practise their religion without restriction, freedom of association and expression, the right of peaceful assembly, the equal right to own and use land and the right to participate fully and effectively in decision- making regarding issues that affect them, including with respect to economic development projects and re-settlement issues;”*

**16 Dec.** Resolution on a new strategy for Afghanistan<sup>17</sup>:

*7. Reiterates that the EU and its Member States should support Afghanistan in the reconstruction of its own state, (...), and respect for the historical, religious, spiritual and cultural traditions and rights of all ethnic and religious communities on Afghan territory, while recognising the need for fundamental change in the attitude towards women;”*

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2010-482>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2010-0489&language=EN>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2010-490>

## 2011

### **20 January** Resolution on the situation of Christians in the context of freedom of religion<sup>18</sup>:

*“D) (...) the majority of acts of religious violence are perpetrated against Christians...whereas in some cases the situation facing Christian communities is such as to endanger their future existence, and if they were to disappear, this would entail the loss of a significant part of the religious heritage of the countries concerned,”*

*“E) (...) innocent lives were being cut short in atrocious attacks designed to strike the Christian community in Nigeria on 11 January 2011 (...)”.*

*“17. Calls on the leadership of all religious communities in Europe to condemn attacks on Christian communities and other faith groups on the basis of equal respect for each denomination”.*

### **20 January** Resolution on Pakistan, in particular the murder of Governor Salmaan Taseer<sup>19</sup>:

*“7. (The European Parliament) is concerned that the Pakistani blasphemy laws, which were publicly opposed by the late Governor Taseer, are still being used to persecute religious denominations, including Christians such as Asia Bibi, the mother of five children, who has been sentenced to death;”*

*“13. Expresses its deep concern that the blasphemy laws – which can carry the death sentence in Pakistan and are often used to justify censorship, criminalisation, persecution and, in certain cases, the murder of members of political, racial and religious minorities – are open to forms of misuse that affect people of all faiths in Pakistan”.*

### **17 Febr.** Resolution on the situation in Egypt<sup>20</sup>:

*“10. (...) Calls on the Egyptian authorities to ensure that Coptic Christian communities do not fall victim to current events and that all religious communities can live in peace and freely express their beliefs throughout the country”.*

### **9 March** Resolution on Turkey's 2010 progress report<sup>21</sup>:

*“24. Supports the Government's ongoing dialogue with religious communities, including the Alevi, as well as the Greek, Armenian, Aramean and other Christian communities; is disappointed, however, that only limited progress has been made on the legal framework for the functioning of these communities, notably as regards their ability to obtain legal personality, to open and operate houses of worship, to train clergy and to resolve property problems not addressed by the Law on Foundations”.*

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2011-0021+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2011-0026&language=EN&ring=B7-2011-0061>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-64>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-90>



*"25. (...) restates its expectation that the Government's announcements about the reopening of the Halki Greek Orthodox seminary will soon be followed by action and by measures providing for the unhindered training of Christian communities' clergy".*

**9 March** Resolution on the European integration process of Montenegro<sup>22</sup>:

*"21. (...) Encourages both political and religious leaders on both sides of the Serbo-Montenegrin border to contribute to a positive inter-ethnic and inter-religious climate by finding compromise solutions on controversial issues including contested religious sites".*

**10 March** Resolution on Pakistan, in particular the murder of Shahbaz Bhatti<sup>23</sup>:

*"3. Recognises Minister Shahbaz Bhatti's dedication to combating the blasphemy laws and the injustice they have facilitated".*

**10 March** Resolution on the situation and cultural heritage in Kashgar (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China)<sup>24</sup>:

*"9. Calls on the European External Action Service to devise additional measures in the context of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights in order to protect the human and cultural rights of China's ethnic, religious and linguistic minority groups".*

**10 March** Resolution on the EU's approach towards Iran<sup>25</sup>:

*"24. Deplores the fact that, contrary to the Constitution, members of religious minorities endure discrimination in housing, education and official jobs, which is leading young members of these minorities to opt for emigration; condemns in particular the systematic persecution of the Baha'i community, the wave of arrests of Christians in 2009, and the harassment of religious dissidents, converts and Sufi and Sunni Muslims".*

**24 March** Resolution on European Union relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council<sup>26</sup>:

*"7. (...) Invites the GCC member states to safeguard and promote the rights of minorities – including religious minorities – (...)."*  
*"12. Encourages the EU to examine and propose, together with the GCC, solutions for removing the obstacles to the full and effective exercise of the fundamental right of religious freedom, both individually and collectively and in both public and private spheres, for members of minority religions in the region".*

**5 April** Resolution on migration flows arising from instability: scope and role of EU foreign policy<sup>27</sup>:

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-91>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2011-0098&language=EN&ring=B7-2011-0177>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-100>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201103/20110323ATT16254/20110323ATT16254EN.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-109>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-121>

*“53. Calls on the Commission, when preparing the new external action instruments for the period after 2013, to ensure that the proposed architecture allows for synergies and mutual reinforcement between the development pillar and the security and stability pillar and provides for the rapid allocation of emergency and recovery funds, a rapid response in order to provide relief and assistance for migrants in a situation of distress - particularly those who are in a very vulnerable situation, such as women and unaccompanied minors - specific programmes to provide active support for minorities, including religious (...) communities,”*

**7 April** Resolution on the ban of the elections for the Tibetan government in exile in Nepal

*“5. Calls on the authorities to refrain from preventive arrests and restrictions on demonstrations and freedom of speech that deny the right to legitimate peaceful expression and assembly during all activities undertaken by the Tibetan community in the country and urges the Government of Nepal to include such rights and to ensure religious freedom within Nepal’s new constitution, due to be enacted by 28 May 2011”.*

**8 June** Resolution on the external dimension of social policy, promoting labour and social standards and European corporate social responsibility<sup>28</sup>:

*“20. Calls furthermore on the Commission and the Member States to cooperate with each other and with the partner countries to protect vulnerable groups and to fight (...) discrimination on grounds of (...) religion or belief (...)”.*

**7 July** Resolution on Indonesia, including attacks on minorities<sup>29</sup>:

*“4. Express grave concern at the incidents of violence against religious minorities, particularly Ahmadi Muslims, Christians, Baha’is and Buddhists”.*

**7 July** Resolution on EU external policies in favour of democratization<sup>30</sup>:

*“30. Considers that a global, coherent approach is required, based on targeted strategies relating to development, human rights, good governance, social inclusion, promotion of women and minorities and religious tolerance, as an additional instrument of EU foreign policy, and that this is essential as a means of combining the two approaches to promoting democracy, namely the developmental approach, which focuses on socio-economic progress for all and pro-poor growth, and the political approach, which supports political pluralism, parliamentary democracy and respect for the rule of law, human rights and basic freedoms and for a functioning civil society”.*

**7 July** Resolution on the situation in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain in the context of the situation in the Arab world and North Africa<sup>31</sup>:

**Syria:** *“H. whereas there is a serious risk of an increase in violent attacks by extremist groups, including armed jihadi groups; whereas it is important to ensure protection for the various religious communities in Syria, including the large number of Iraqi refugees that have arrived in the country.”*

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-260>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2011-0341+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-334>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2011-0333&language=EN>

**Arab world and North Africa:** “34. Stresses that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a fundamental human right which should be guaranteed by the authorities; urges the authorities to provide reliable and efficient protection for the religious denominations present in their countries and to ensure the personal safety and physical integrity of members of all religious denominations.”

**27 Oct.** Resolution on the situation in Egypt and Syria, in particular of Christian communities<sup>32</sup>:

“4. Calls on the Egyptian authorities to ensure full respect for all fundamental rights, including freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of religion, conscience and thought for all citizens in Egypt, including the Coptic Christians, and that Coptic Christian communities do not fall victim to violent attacks and can live in peace and freely express their beliefs throughout the country; calls for the adequate protection of the churches in order to put an end to the continuous aggression and destruction of churches by Islamic extremists; welcomes continued efforts to adopt a ‘Common Code for building places of worship’; stresses that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a fundamental right guaranteed by legal instruments; urges the Egyptian authorities to end discrimination against Coptic Christians, for example by deleting references to religion from all official documents, and to ensure equal dignity and equal opportunities for all citizens in Egypt to have access to all public and political posts, including representation in the armed forces, in Parliament and in Government”.

“17. Stresses the importance of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Syria, and notably freedom of religion, belief, conscience and thought; expresses, in this context, its support for the Christian community in the country and, at the same time, encourages this community to play a positive and constructive role in the ongoing events in Syria; encourages also Syrian opposition forces to declare or reconfirm their commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, and notably freedom of religion, belief, conscience and thought”.

**27 Oct.** Resolution on Tibet, in particular self-immolation by nuns and monks<sup>33</sup>:

“4. Calls on the Chinese Government to guarantee freedom of religion to all its citizens in accordance with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to abolish criminal and administrative penalties which target religion and have been used to punish citizens for exercising their right to freedom of religion”.

“18. Urges the People’s Republic of China to respect the religious freedoms and basic human rights of the monastic and lay communities in Ngaba, and to suspend the implementation of religious control regulations in order to allow Tibetan Buddhists to identify and educate religious teachers in a manner consistent with Tibetan traditions, to review the religious and security policies implemented in Ngaba since 2008, and to open a transparent dialogue with the leaders of Tibetan Buddhist schools”.

**17 Nov.** Resolution on Iran – recent cases of human rights violations<sup>34</sup>:

“B. whereas the most urgent issues concern (...)the persecution of religious and ethnic minorities (...)”.

J. whereas the pressure on religious minorities, most notably the Baha’i, converts and dissident Shia scholars, continues to increase; whereas the Baha’i, despite being the

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-471>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2011-0474&language=EN&ring=P7-RC-2011-0540>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-517>

*biggest non-Muslim religious minority, suffer heavy discrimination, including denial of access to education, and whereas legal proceedings against their seven imprisoned leaders are ongoing and over 100 community members remain under arrest; whereas there are reports that in the first half of 2011 at least 207 Christians were arrested; whereas Sunni Muslims continue to face discrimination in law and in practice, and are prevented from fully exercising their right to practise their religion; whereas a state-supported defamation campaign against (Shia) Nematullahi Sufis, depicting all forms of mysticism as satanic and persecuting Sufi worshippers, is continuing, the most glaring example being the armed attack in Kavar in September 2011, which killed one person and left others seriously injured;*

*K. whereas individuals who have converted from Islam have been arrested, and whereas Article 225 of the draft Penal Code seeks to make the death penalty mandatory for convicted male apostates; whereas the protestant pastor Yousef Nadarkhani is still under threat of execution for apostasy”.*

**17 Nov.** Resolution on Egypt, in particular the case of blogger Alaa Abd El-Fattah<sup>35</sup>:

*“5. Reiterates its solidarity with the Egyptian people in this critical period of democratic transition in the country and continues to support their legitimate democratic aspirations; calls on the Egyptian authorities to ensure full respect of all fundamental rights, including freedom of thought, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, freedom of expression and of internet, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association”.*

**14 Dec.** Resolution on the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy<sup>36</sup>:

*“9. (...) Notes that instruments should also be identified to concretely support religious and ethnic minorities in the areas covered by the initiative;”*

*11. Calls on the EEAS and the Commission “(...) to provide a clear and adequate methodology and detailed benchmarks to assess the record of the ENP countries concerning respect for and promotion of democracy and human rights (including in particular freedom of speech, conscience, religion, association and the media) and to deliver regular sufficiently detailed reports, which should be the basis for the allocation of funds under the new performance-based approach ‘more for more’”.*

*“18. Considers that full and effective respect for the freedom of religion (at individual, collective, public, private and institutional level) should be identified as a priority, particularly for all religious minorities present in the region, together with the need to provide specific assistance for these groups”.*

**15 Dec.** Resolution on the state of implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia<sup>37</sup>:

*“54. Reaffirms its support for actions aimed at fostering regional cooperation as a major way to address the many cross-border security, resource management, ethnic, environmental and development problems, as well as the fight against terrorism and violent religious extremism within the states concerned;”*

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-518>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-576>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2011-588>

## 2012

### **2 February** Resolution on the European dimension in sport<sup>38</sup>:

*“20. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to urge the International Olympic Committee to impose their own rule in the Olympic Charter forbidding all demonstrations or political, religious or racist propaganda at sports events and at the same time to ensure that political pressure is not put on women to violate this rule and that it is not evaded by women not being sent by their countries to compete;”*

*26. Underlines that parents' prohibiting immigrant girls from taking part in sports and swimming at school cannot be tolerated or excused on cultural or religious grounds;*

*97. Calls on the Commission and the European External Action Service to promote, despite rules or obligations imposed on women related to cultural, traditional, historical or religious factors in society, the absolute freedom to exercise any kind of sport for both women and men”.*

### **16 Febr.** Resolution on Parliament's position on the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council<sup>39</sup>:

*“3. (...) Takes note of the reports to be presented by the Special Rapporteurs on, among others, the situation of human rights in the DPRK, Iran and Burma/Myanmar, and those on torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, on the situation of human rights defenders and on the freedom of religion or belief; calls on the Member States to actively contribute to these debates”.*

*“5. (...) Actively encourage the UNHRC to pay equal attention to the question of discrimination on all grounds, including gender, race, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief”.*

### **15 March** Resolution on the situation in Nigeria<sup>40</sup>:

*“D. whereas Boko Haram has targeted Christians, notably on Christmas Day, (...).*

*18. (...) In this context underlines that the public element is central to religious freedom, and that to prevent Christian believers and others from expressing their faith publicly, while reducing their religion to a private phenomenon, gravely violates their right to religious freedom”.*

### **15 March** Resolution on human rights violations in Bahrain<sup>41</sup>:

*“10. Calls on the Bahraini authorities to restore and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression, both online and offline, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, (...)”.*

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2012-25>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2012-58>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2012-0090&language=EN&ring=B7-2012-0149>

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2012-94>

**29 March** Resolution on the 2011 Progress Report on Turkey<sup>42</sup>:

*"9. Encourages Turkey (...) for the full recognition of all its ethnic and religious communities, (...)".*

*"28. Recalls, however, the urgent need to continue vital and substantial reform in the area of freedom of thought, conscience and religion, in particular by enabling religious communities to obtain legal personality, by eliminating all restrictions on the training, appointment and succession of clergy, by recognising Alevi places of worships and by complying with the relevant judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and reflecting the opinions of the Venice Commission in the legal framework, and the need to fully recognise the rights of all religious communities; calls on the Government of Turkey to ensure that the Saint Gabriel monastery, founded in 397 AD, is not deprived of its lands, and that it is protected in its entirety;"*

*"29. (...) Urges the Government of Turkey to pay special attention to educational materials in schools, which should reflect ethnic and religious plurality and plurality of beliefs in Turkish society, eliminate discrimination and prejudice and promote the full acceptance of all religious communities and minorities..."*

**18 April** Resolution on Human rights in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter including implications for the EU's strategic human rights policy<sup>43</sup>:

*"I. whereas freedom of religion or belief continues to be under growing threat in many parts of the world from governmental and societal restrictions alike, resulting in discrimination, intolerance and violence against individuals and religious communities, including religious minority representatives;"*

*"41. (...) Underlines that in this context the right to religious freedom should also be assigned a duly prominent role; points out that this right is in fact generally recognised as one of the most fundamental of all human rights;"*

*"60. (...) Stresses that the 'Arab Spring' would become a paradox if it were to develop in a direction that denies the fundamental human rights of women, human rights defenders, religious minorities and other societal groups in the Arab Spring countries;"*  
*Title: "Human rights, freedom of religion, and the persecution of Christians in the world" (points 106-110).*

**10 May** Resolution on support for the establishment of a European Day of Remembrance for the Righteous<sup>44</sup>:

*"D. whereas the remembrance of good is essential to the process of European integration because it teaches younger generations that everyone can always choose to help other human beings and defend human dignity, and that public institutions have a duty to highlight the example set by people who managed to protect those persecuted out of hate;*

*1. Supports the call made by leading citizens to establish a European Day of Remembrance for the Righteous to commemorate, on 6 March, those who challenged crimes against humanity and totalitarianism with individual responsibility".*

**24 May** Resolution on the human rights situation in Azerbaijan<sup>45</sup>:

*"17. Strongly condemns the threats made by radical Islamist organisations and individuals against participants in the upcoming Eurovision Song Contest, and*

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<sup>42</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2012-116>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P7-TA-2012-126>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2012-0205+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2012-0228+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

*in particular those belonging to the LGBT community; strongly supports Azerbaijan's secular identity and its free choice of foreign policy orientation;”*

**14 June** Resolution on the human rights situation in Tibet<sup>46</sup>:

*“13. Reiterates its condemnation of the Chinese authorities’ continued crackdown on Tibetan monasteries, and calls on the Chinese Government to guarantee freedom of religion both for the people of Tibet and for all of its citizens;*

*(...)*

*16. Calls on the Chinese authorities to uphold the linguistic, cultural, religious and other fundamental freedoms of Tibetans (...).*

*9. Urges the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the EU to appoint a special coordinator with a mandate to report regularly on Tibet in order to advance respect for the human rights of the Tibetan people, including their right to preserve and develop their distinctive identity and its religious, cultural and linguistic manifestations (...).”*

**14 June** Resolution on the situation of ethnic minorities in Iran<sup>47</sup>:

*“1. Expresses its serious concern at the steadily deteriorating human rights situation in Iran, including for persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, due to systematic political, economic, social, and cultural discrimination;*

*2. Calls on the Iranian authorities to eliminate all forms of discrimination against persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, officially recognised or otherwise;*

*7. Calls on the Iranian authorities to guarantee religious freedom in accordance with the Iranian constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to put a stop in practice to discrimination against and harassment of religious minorities such as non-Shia Muslims, including Assyrians and other Christian groups, the systematic persecution of the Baha'i minority and the application of the death penalty to converts from Islam;”*

**13 Sept.** Resolution on Syria<sup>48</sup>:

*“17. Calls for a peaceful and genuine Syrian-led political transition to democracy (...) committed to ensuring respect for the rights and freedoms of minorities including ethnic, religious, cultural and other minorities;”*

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2012-0257+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2012-0265+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2012-0351+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

## EEAS ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

### 2010

**12 January** Declaration of Ashton on behalf of the EU on the trial against seven Baha'i leaders in Iran<sup>49</sup>:

*"The European Union expresses its serious concern about the start today of the trial against seven Baha'i leaders in Iran, as the charges against them appear to be motivated by their belonging to a minority faith. The EU recalls that freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a fundamental and undeniable right which shall be guaranteed in every circumstance, in accordance with article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which the Islamic Republic of Iran has signed and ratified. (...) The EU calls on Iran to end the persecution of the Baha'i community and to release the detained individuals."*

**20 January** Statement by Ashton on the situation in Iran at the European Parliament on 19 January 2010<sup>50</sup>:

*"Another recent issue is the detention of another 12 members of the Baha'i religious community. These people must be assured a just, open and fair trial in accordance with international standards."*

**5 Feb.** Statement by Ashton on imminent executions in Iran<sup>51</sup>:

*"Iranian authorities declared on 2 February that nine individuals sentenced in recent mass trials on various charges including mohareb, or 'taking up arms against God', would be executed soon. This announcement is part of a disturbing trend to intimidate opposition protestors. The European Union is opposed to capital punishment under all circumstances and calls on Iran to institute an immediate moratorium on executions."*

**12 May** Declaration by Ashton on behalf of the EU on the execution of five individuals in Iran<sup>52</sup>:

*"The European Union furthermore calls on Iran to consider alternative sentences for Mrs Zeynab Jalalian and Mr Hossein Khezri, both sentenced to death for "moharebeh" ("enmity against God") and currently in prison."*

**2 July** Statement by the spokesperson of Ashton on the attack against the Data Darbar Sufi shrine in Lahore, Pakistan<sup>53</sup>:

*"Such attacks represent an assault on moderate believers everywhere in Pakistan and on everyone who does not share the perpetrators' fanatical views."*

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<sup>49</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_9401\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_9401_en.htm)

<sup>50</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_9421\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_9421_en.htm)

<sup>51</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_9467\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_9467_en.htm)

<sup>52</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_9738\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_9738_en.htm)

<sup>53</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india/documents/press\\_corner/20100702\\_01\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india/documents/press_corner/20100702_01_en.pdf)



**6 July** Statement by Ashton on imminent executions in Iran<sup>54</sup>:

*"I am deeply concerned by reports that the executions of Mr Mohammad Reza Haddadi and Ms Sakineh Mohammadi-Ashtiani may be imminent. I call on Iran to halt these executions and convert the sentences, as well as that of Ms Zeynab Jalalian, a Kurdish political prisoner sentenced to death for 'mohareb' whose case the EU already mentioned in a public declaration on 12 May."*

**12 Aug.** Iran: EU Declaration by Ashton on sentencing of seven Baha'i leaders<sup>55</sup>:

*"The European Union expresses its serious concern about the sentencing of seven Baha'i leaders in Iran to 20 years imprisonment and calls for their immediate release. The verdict appears to be based on the defendants belonging to a religious minority and the judicial process was seriously flawed, respecting neither Iran's international commitments under the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) nor its national legislation regarding fair trial rights. The EU recalls that freedom of thought, conscience and religion are fundamental rights which must be guaranteed under all circumstances according to article 18 of the ICCPR which the Islamic Republic of Iran has signed up to and ratified. The EU calls on Iran to put an end to the persecution of the Baha'i community."*

## 2011

**3 January** Statement by the spokesperson of Ashton, following the attack against worshippers at a Coptic Church in Alexandria, Egypt, on 1 January 2011<sup>56</sup>:

*"The High Representative is deeply saddened by the news of the attack against worshippers at the Coptic Church in Alexandria that killed and injured a large number of innocent civilians. Catherine Ashton condemns unreservedly the attack against innocent Copt worshippers and expresses her deepest sympathies to the families and friends of the victims, and to the Egyptian Authorities. There cannot be any justification for this attack. The right of Christian Copts to gather and worship freely must be protected."*

**6 January** Statement by Ashton on the occasion of her visit to the Middle East<sup>57</sup>:

*"I was very happy to visit Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity on the eve of Orthodox Christmas. This is an opportunity to reiterate my call for all religious groups around the world to gather and worship freely. The EU condemns all forms of intolerance and violence against persons because of their religion or belief, wherever it takes place."*

**19 January** Speech by Ashton on the situation of Christians in the context of religious freedom (European Parliament)<sup>58</sup>:

*"I fully share the concerns of this House about the recent violence against persons belonging to religious minorities as well as those who stand up for religious freedom. (...)*

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<sup>54</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_9913\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_9913_en.htm)

<sup>55</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_10020\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_10020_en.htm)

<sup>56</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/syria/press\\_corner/all\\_news/news/2011/20110103\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/syria/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/20110103_en.htm)

<sup>57</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_10541\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_10541_en.htm)

<sup>58</sup> <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/32&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

*I underlined the need for all religious groups around the world to be able to gather and worship freely. I also stressed that the EU condemns all forms of intolerance and violence against persons because of their religion or belief, wherever it takes place. (...) I have strongly condemned the recent terrorist attacks in Iraq and Egypt targeting places of worship, as well as the assassination of Mr Tajeer, Governor of Punjab in Pakistan. (...) In today's world, all too often people's human rights are violated because of their religion or belief. The victims do not belong to one faith or region. Regrettably, no part of the world is spared from the scourge of religious intolerance. Any discrimination or violence against an individual because of his/her religious belief runs against the values that the EU upholds. (...) Long-established Christian communities in the Middle East face difficulties, (...). I am fully committed to keeping freedom of religion or belief at the top of the EU's agenda."*

**21 January** Statement by the spokesperson of Ashton on the recent attacks across Iraq<sup>59</sup>:

*"High Representative Catherine Ashton strongly condemns the continuing acts of violence in Iraq. The victims of Thursday's atrocious terrorist attacks were innocent Shia pilgrims heading to Karbala to celebrate the religious festival of Arbaeen."*

**21 Febr.** Statement by Ashton on the killing of a Polish priest in Tunisia<sup>60</sup>:

*"Tunisia has traditionally been a land of religious tolerance and I underline the importance that this be preserved in order to build a fully democratic rule based on the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right which needs to be protected everywhere and for everyone. Therefore I call upon the Tunisian authorities to continue to protect and safeguard the right of citizens to practice their religion freely, without fear of intolerance and attacks."*

**9 March** Speech by Ashton on UN Human Rights Council (European Parliament)<sup>61</sup>:

*"The EU will present an initiative on freedom of religion or belief. Faced in recent months with an increasing number of acts of religious discrimination and violence in different parts of the world, we need to send a strong, collective message against religious intolerance and in favour of the freedom of religion or belief for all people everywhere."*

**1 April** Statement by Ashton on the sentences of seven former Baha'i leaders in Iran<sup>62</sup>:

*"(...) The EU recalls that freedom of thought, conscience and religion are fundamental rights which must be guaranteed under all circumstances according to article 18 of the ICCPR which the Islamic Republic of Iran has acceded to. I therefore call on the Iranian authorities to immediately release the seven Baha'i leaders, whose sentencing appears to be motivated by their belonging to a minority faith, and to put an end to the persecution of religious minorities in Iran."*

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<sup>59</sup>[http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/iraq/documents/press\\_corner/news\\_2011/21012011\\_statement\\_attacks\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/iraq/documents/press_corner/news_2011/21012011_statement_attacks_en.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/119403.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/119403.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/161&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<sup>62</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/press\\_corner/all\\_news/news/2011/20110401\\_3\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/20110401_3_en.htm)

- 9 May** Statement by Ashton on the violent clashes in Cairo<sup>63</sup>:
- "I am gravely concerned at the deaths and injuries resulting from the violent clashes outside a Coptic church in Cairo on 7 May (...)  
"Freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right which needs to be protected everywhere and for everyone. Freedom of religion or belief is intrinsically linked to freedom of opinion and expression as well as to other human rights and fundamental freedoms, which all contribute to the building of pluralist and democratic societies."*
- 11 May** Speech by Ashton on main aspects and basic choices of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence policy (European Parliament)<sup>64</sup>:
- "(...) The spectre of religious intolerance casts its shadow - witness the recent events in Egypt - finding its excuse in uncertain times to play on fear and wreak destruction. Freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right that must be protected everywhere. We need to condemn all those who seek to use religious belief as a means of oppression - and support those who advocate tolerance, whether in Syria, Pakistan, Egypt or elsewhere."*
- 6 July** Speech by Ashton on de Keyser report on democracy (European Parliament)<sup>65</sup>:
- "(---) We had some real successes in Geneva with the renewal of mandates for various UN Rapporteurs: Burma, DPRK, Sudan, Somalia, Cambodia and Haiti and Resolutions on the DRC, Guinea, Kyrgyzstan and Freedom of Religion, a very important issue that is raised often in this chamber.  
We have also reached all our objectives at the 3rd Committee of the General Assembly in New York. The resolution for moratorium on the death penalty was passed with great support and the resolution against religion intolerance adopted by consensus."*
- 30 August** Statement by the spokesperson of Ashton on the worsening of the human rights situation in Syria<sup>66</sup>:
- "The attack against the al- Rifai mosque in the Kfar Sousseh district of Damascus on Saturday 27 August early morning, during the most holy night of the Ramadan, is yet another illustration of the reckless and indiscriminate violence by the Syrian security."*
- 6 Sept.** Statement by the Spokesperson of Ashton on attack against Al-Nurayn mosque in the West Bank<sup>67</sup>:
- "The High Representative strongly condemns the setting on fire and vandalising of the Al-Nurayn mosque in Qusra in the West Bank on Monday. Attacks against places of worship undermine the freedom of religion or belief which is a fundamental human right."*

<sup>63</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/121896.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/121896.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/121939.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/121939.pdf)

<sup>65</sup> <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/506&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<sup>66</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/124453.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/124453.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_11339\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_11339_en.htm)

**6 Sept.** Iran: Statement by the Spokesperson of Ashton on persecution of Baha'i community<sup>68</sup>:

*"The European Union calls on Iran to immediately release all individuals detained on religious grounds, to put an end to the ongoing persecution of the Baha'i community, including in the field of education, and to refrain from all forms of discrimination against religious minorities, so as to guarantee the full respect for freedom of religion or belief in Iran."*

**29 Sept.** Iran: Ashton extremely concerned about trial of pastor Nadarkhani<sup>69</sup>:

*"Mr Nadarkhani faces the death penalty for 'apostasy' if he does not reject his Christian faith. I urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to respect its international human rights commitments, including on freedom of religion or belief, and strongly appeal to Iran not to sentence Pastor Nadarkhani to death. I call for Mr Nadarkhani's immediate and unconditional release."*

**8 Oct.** Statement by the spokesperson of Ashton on targeted killings in Syria and other incidents<sup>70</sup>:

*"The High Representative condemns the brutal repression as well as all acts aimed at inciting interethnic and inter-confessional conflict."*

**10 Oct.** Remarks by Ashton following the Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Luxembourg<sup>71</sup>:

*"We were concerned about the violence that happened yesterday and continues today in Egypt and I have already put out a statement on this. There is a unity amongst the 27 member states on the importance of protecting freedom of religion and belief. This is a universal human right and it needs to be protected everywhere and for everybody."*

**10 Oct.** Statement by Ashton, on the violence in Egypt<sup>72</sup>:

*"I am extremely concerned by the large number of deaths and injuries among the Coptic Christian community, resulting from the violent clashes in Egypt. (...) An investigation is necessary so that those responsible for the violence can be brought to justice. The authorities must protect the right to demonstrate peacefully. Freedom of religion or belief is a universal human right, which needs to be protected everywhere and for everybody. It must be an essential part of the transition to democracy as Egypt builds a free and democratic society."*

**12 Oct.** Statement by Ashton on the situation in Egypt, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain<sup>73</sup>:

*"(...) What we saw in Egypt on Sunday night was totally unacceptable - we were all shocked and appalled by the violence against a peaceful demonstration by the Coptic*

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<sup>68</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_11340\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_11340_en.htm)

<sup>69</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_11449\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_11449_en.htm)

<sup>70</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/press\\_corner/all\\_news/news/2011/20111013\\_5\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/20111013_5_en.htm)

<sup>71</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/125029.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/125029.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/press\\_corner/all\\_news/news/2011/20111013\\_2\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/20111013_2_en.htm)

<sup>73</sup> <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/661&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

*Christian community that led to the death of 25 people with more than 300 people injured.*

*"I urge the authorities to protect the right to demonstrate peacefully, and the right to freedom of religion or belief – one of the most fundamental of all human rights."*

**12 Nov.** Speech by Ashton at the Women's Rights Forum in Tripoli<sup>74</sup>:

*"I call this building Deep Democracy because it is about building the institutions and ensuring the rights of everyone. That includes freedom of expression, freedom of religion, respect for minorities."*

**22 Nov.** Statement by the spokesperson of Ashton following her meeting with the Syrian National Council<sup>75</sup>:

*"She also highlighted the importance of an inclusive opposition political platform taking in all religious and ethnic communities."*

**6 Dec.** Statement by Ashton, on today's attacks in Afghanistan<sup>76</sup>:

*"I call on all parties to protect the values of tolerance which mark religious life in Afghanistan."*

**8 Dec.** Statement by the spokesperson of Ashton on the attack on the mosque in Burqin in the West Bank<sup>77</sup>:

*"The High Representative condemns the attack against the mosque of Burqin village in the West Bank on 7 December 2011, in which a flaming tyre was thrown into the entrance of the mosque and the mosque's walls were sprayed with graffiti. Accountability and the rule of law are essential. Attacks against places of worship are particularly troubling."*

**13 Dec.** Speech by Ashton on the Annual Human Rights Report (European Parliament)<sup>78</sup>:

*"The events of this year have served to highlight the vital links between human rights and democracy. (...) That is where the right to vote is accompanied by effective freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of religion or belief, (...)"*

*"We continue our efforts to build consensus on freedom of religion or belief. I have also maintained my focus on promoting LGBT rights through the implementation of the EU's toolbox. Promoting and protecting the universal rights of freedom of religion, belief and sexual orientation are central to the EU's approach"*

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<sup>74</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126034.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/126034.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_11614\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_11614_en.htm)

<sup>76</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/press\\_corner/all\\_news/news/2011/20111207\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/20111207_en.htm)

<sup>77</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/press\\_corner/all\\_news/news/2011/20111213\\_03\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/20111213_03_en.htm)

<sup>78</sup> <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/885&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

**13 Dec.** Speech by Ashton on Syria (European Parliament)<sup>79</sup>:

*"We all agree on the importance of a strong and inclusive opposition political platform taking in all religious and ethnic communities."*

**26 Dec.** Statement by Ashton on the terrorist attacks in Nigeria<sup>80</sup>:

*"I am profoundly shocked and saddened by the terrorist attacks which took place in several regions of Nigeria, including cowardly attacks on religious symbols and Churches during the Christmas period, with appalling loss of human lives. (...)"*

## **2012**

**23 January** Remarks by Ashton upon arrival to Foreign Affairs Council<sup>81</sup>:

*On Nigeria: "The persecution of religious minorities, anywhere, is wrong, fundamentally wrong. Freedom of religion and belief is absolutely a fundamental part of who we are as Europeans and we support that everywhere in the world."*

**23 January** Remarks by Ashton following the Foreign Affairs Council:

*"We also discussed the concerns we have not least about the events in Nigeria over the weekend, on freedom of religion and faith and belief."<sup>82</sup>*

**23 January** Statement by Ashton on the bombings in Kano, Nigeria<sup>83</sup>:

*"(The EU) pledges its support to the vast majority of Nigerian citizens who have a long tradition of religious and social tolerance, and who seek to live in peace with their neighbours."*

**10 March** Remarks by Ashton following Informal Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers (Gymnich)<sup>84</sup>:

*"I invited ministers to talk this time, as Villy has said, on how effective our foreign policy is now that the European External Action Service is just over a year old, on how we could address more appropriately the issue of human rights, and within that, a discussion on freedom of religion and belief."*

**18 March** Statement by the Spokesperson of Ashton on the passing away of Pope Shenouda III<sup>85</sup>:

*"The High Representative pays tribute to Pope Shenouda III, the Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church who passed away yesterday. She expresses her deepest condolences to*

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<sup>79</sup><http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/886&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<sup>80</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127126.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127126.pdf)

<sup>81</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127431.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127431.pdf)

<sup>82</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_11792\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_11792_en.htm)

<sup>83</sup> [http://217.114.80.84/News\\_\\_\\_30484.aspx?slaveid=135905](http://217.114.80.84/News___30484.aspx?slaveid=135905)

<sup>84</sup> [http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article\\_11952\\_en.htm](http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_11952_en.htm)

<sup>85</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/press\\_corner/all\\_news/news/2012/20120320\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/egypt/press_corner/all_news/news/2012/20120320_en.htm)

*the Egyptian people and to the Coptic community in particular. Pope Shenouda III was a respected and visionary leader of the region's largest Christian community, who advocated tolerance, religious dialogue and harmony. He will be greatly missed both at home and in the wider world. The High Representative joins the calls by the main political and religious leaders in Egypt and elsewhere to follow the Pope's commitment to national unity, reconciliation and freedom of belief".*

**17 April** Ashton on the report on Human rights in the world and the EU's policy on the matter (European Parliament)<sup>86</sup>:

*"Discrimination against people of faith, including Christians, as well as those who have no religious belief. Tolerance is at the root of the EU. That is why the EU needs to strengthen its policy on the Freedom of Religion or Belief, which is so fundamental to a free society".*

**15 May** Ashton at the presentation of the ENP package 2012, Brussels<sup>87</sup>:

*"(...) We've done in Egypt where the 20 million Euros we gave to civil society was the largest package ever given to one country for civil society support. That means freedom of expression, freedom of religion, support for women's rights."*

**12 June** Statement by Ashton on EU annual report on human rights and democracy<sup>88</sup>:

*"The Annual Report details all of this action for 2011. But it does more: In line with the wishes of Parliament, the report contains a section on Freedom of Religion or Belief, so essential to the development of free societies. 2011 saw worrying developments in this connection, with intolerance spilling over from discrimination into violent attacks."*

**13 June** Speech by Ashton on the situation in Tibet (European Parliament, 12 June 2012, Strasbourg)<sup>89</sup>:

*"The EU calls upon the Chinese authorities to ensure that the human rights of the Tibetan people are respected, including their right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, as well as to enjoy their own culture to practise their own religion and to use their own language."*

**20 June** Joint Statement by Ashton and EU Commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström, on the occasion of the World Refugee Day<sup>90</sup>:

*"In a world where people continue to fear for their lives just because of their race, religion, or political beliefs, Europe has to remain true to its principles by showing solidarity towards refugees."*

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<sup>86</sup> <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/12/270>

<sup>87</sup> <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/12/352&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<sup>88</sup> <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/12/434&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<sup>89</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/130897.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/130897.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131079.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131079.pdf)

- 21 June** Statement by the spokesperson of Ashton on the Human Rights situation in Iran<sup>91</sup>:
- "(...) A clear deterioration of the human rights situation in Iran, in the general context of an increase in use of the death penalty, repression of ethnic and religious minorities and the ever precarious situation of human rights defenders in the country."*
- 25 June** Remarks by Ashton following the Foreign Affairs Council, Luxembourg, 25 June 2012<sup>92</sup>:
- "In the debate we had on human rights we focused on a number of areas. Let me pick up specifically two. The importance of the rights of women and girls in every society and the importance of freedom of religion and belief: in that context we are very concerned about events currently taking place in Nigeria."*
- 28 June** Statement by the spokesperson of Ashton on anti-Semitic statements by Iranian First Vice-President Rahimi<sup>93</sup>:
- "The High Representative is deeply disturbed by racist and anti-Semitic statements made by Iranian First Vice-President Mohammad Reza Rahimi at the UN "International Day against Drug Abuse" in Tehran on Tuesday 27 June. She condemns them unreservedly. Such statements are unacceptable and should not be tolerated. The High Representative reiterates the European Union's absolute commitment to combating racism and anti-Semitism."*
- 4 July** Statement by the Spokesperson of Ashton on the reckless destruction of historical heritage in Mali<sup>94</sup>:
- "The High Representative is deeply concerned about the wanton and ruthless destruction of mausoleums and holy shrines in Timbuktu. This appears to be a deliberate attempt to destroy a valued and ancient part of the religious and cultural heritage not only of Mali's people but of the whole world. These sacred places of prayer, listed by UNESCO as World Heritage, must be protected now and for posterity."*
- 11 Sept.** Statement by the spokesperson of Ashton on the release of Pastor Nadarkhani in Iran<sup>95</sup>:
- "The High Representative calls for the respect of freedom of religion and belief in Iran in line with its international obligations and hopes that this positive development will serve as an example for other similar cases."*

<sup>91</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131097.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131097.pdf)

<sup>92</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131186.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131186.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131322.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131322.pdf)

<sup>94</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131537.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131537.pdf)

<sup>95</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/132365.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/132365.pdf)



## COMPARISON TABLE

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT		EEAS	
<b>2010</b>		<b>2010</b>	
		<b>12 Jan.</b>	Iran (trial against Baha'i leaders; freedom of thought, conscience and religion)
		<b>20 Jan.</b>	Iran (at EP): detention of new 12 Baha'i members
<b>21 Jan.</b>	Egypt/Malaysia (attacks Christian communities)		
		<b>5 Feb.</b>	Iran (imminent executions: charges of 'mohareb' - "taking up arms against God"-)
<b>10 Feb.</b>	Iran (harassment against Baha'is, Sunnis, Christians)		
<b>10 Feb.</b>	Yemen (discrimination religious groups)		
<b>11 Feb.</b>	Burma (repression of Buddhist monks and religious minorities)		
<b>25 Feb.</b>	UNHR Council (defamation of religion; discrimination of religious minorities)		
<b>10 March</b>	Belarus (religious freedom)		
<b>25 March</b>	UN Assembly (freedom of religion)		
<b>6 May</b>	Atrocities in Jos, Nigeria (Muslim/Christians, aggressors/victims)		
		<b>12 May</b>	Iran (death penalty: 2 persons charged of 'mohareb')
<b>20 May</b>	Pakistan (blasphemy laws; anti-Christian violence)		
<b>20 May</b>	Burma/Myanmar (Buddhist monks)		
		<b>2 July</b>	Pakistan (attack against the Data Darbar Sufi shrine in Lahore)
		<b>6 July</b>	Iran (imminent executions: charges of 'mohareb')
		<b>12 Aug.</b>	Iran (Baha'i leaders sentenced to prison; fair trial; freedom of thought, conscience and religion)
<b>8 July</b>	North Korea (lack of religious freedom)		
<b>8 Sept.</b>	Iran (persecution of religious minorities)		
<b>25 Nov.</b>	Tibet (Chinese language for instruction; protection of religious freedom and identity)		
<b>25 Nov.</b>	Iraq (attack against Christian communities)		

	<b>EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT</b>		<b>EEAS</b>
<b>2010</b>		<b>2010</b>	
<b>15 Dec.</b>	EU-Africa partnership (non discrimination on religions grounds)		
<b>16 Dec.</b>	Annual HR Report 2009 (religious discrimination in some countries; persecution in China, Iraq, Vietnam...).		
<b>16 Dec.</b>	New strategy for Afghanistan (respect of religious traditions and rights of all religion communities)		
<b>2011</b>		<b>2011</b>	
		<b>3 Jan.</b>	Egypt (attack against worshippers at a Coptic Church, Alexandria, 1 January)
		<b>6 Jan.</b>	Ashton's visit to Bethlehem (call for religious groups to worship freely; condemning intolerance and violence based on religion or belief)
		<b>19 Jan.</b>	Situation of Christians (at European Parliament: call for religious groups to worship freely; condemning intolerance and violence based on religion or belief, against EU values; religious freedom at the top of the EU's agenda)
<b>20 Jan.</b>	Situation of Christians (actions of violence against them)		
<b>20 Jan.</b>	Pakistan (blasphemy laws; Christians; Asia Bibi)		
		<b>21 Jan.</b>	Iraq: recent attacks (condemns acts of violence, and attack against Shia pilgrims)
<b>17 Feb.</b>	Egypt (protection of Coptic Christians)		
		<b>21 Feb.</b>	Tunisia: killing of Polish priest (freedom of religion or belief is universal human right; authorities to protect free practice of religion)
<b>9 March</b>	Turkey's 2010 report (lack of legal personality of religious minorities)	<b>9 March</b>	UN Human Rights Council (EU initiative on freedom of religion or belief)
<b>9 March</b>	Montenegro (contested religious sites with Serbians)		
<b>10 March</b>	Pakistan (death of S. Bhatti and combat against blasphemy laws)		
<b>10 March</b>	Kashgar, China (protection of religious minorities' rights)		

	<b>EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT</b>		<b>EEAS</b>
<b>2011</b>		<b>2011</b>	
<b>10 March</b>	Iran (discrimination of religious minorities; persecution of Baha'is, Christians)		
<b>24 March</b>	Gulf Cooperation Council (full respect of religious minorities)		
		<b>1 April</b>	Iran (sentences of 7 former Baha'i leaders; freedom of thought, conscience and religion are fundamental rights; no persecution of religious minorities)
<b>5 April</b>	Migration flows (specific funding programmes for religious communities)		
<b>7 April</b>	Nepal (protection of religious freedom in Nepal's Constitution)		
		<b>9 May</b>	Egypt (violent clashes in Coptic church in Cairo, 7 May; freedom of religion or belief as universal human right)
		<b>11 May</b>	Egypt (religious intolerance and use of religious belief as mean of oppression)
<b>8 June</b>	External dimension of social policy (non religious discrimination)		
		<b>6 July</b>	Success at UN (resolution against religious intolerance)
<b>7 July</b>	Indonesia (attacks on minorities; Ahmadis, Christians, Baha'is and Buddhist)		
<b>7 July</b>	EU External Policies in favour of democratization (promotion of minorities and religious tolerance)		
<b>7 July</b>	Syria, Yemen & Bahrain (protection of religious minorities in Syria; safety and integrity of members of religious minorities)		
		<b>30 Aug.</b>	Syria (attack against the al- Rifai mosque in the Kfar Sousseh district of Damascus)
		<b>6 Sept.</b>	West Bank (attack against Al-Nurayn mosque; freedom of religion or belief which is a fundamental human right) Iran (release all individuals detained on religious grounds, to stop persecution of the Baha'i community; full respect for freedom of religion or belief)
		<b>29 Sept.</b>	Iran (Pastor Nadarkhani's death penalty for 'apostasy'; freedom of religion or belief)

	<b>EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT</b>		<b>EEAS</b>
<b>2011</b>		<b>2011</b>	
		<b>8 Oct.</b>	Syria (condemns all acts aimed at inciting interethnic and inter-confessional conflict)
		<b>10 Oct.</b>	Egypt (importance of protecting freedom of religion and belief as universal human right; violence against Coptic Christian community)
		<b>12 Oct.</b>	Egypt (violence against a peaceful demonstration by the Coptic Christian community; right to freedom of religion or belief – one of the most fundamental of all human rights-)
<b>27 Oct.</b>	Egypt and Syria, in particular Christian communities (protection of Christians, churches from Islamic extremists; non discrimination against Christians)		
<b>27 Oct.</b>	Tibet (self immolation by Buddhist nuns and monks)		
		<b>12 Nov.</b>	“Deep Democracy” includes freedom of expression, freedom of religion, respect for minorities
<b>17 Nov.</b>	Iran-human right violations (Baha’is, Christians, Sunni)		
<b>17 Nov.</b>	Egypt (ensure full respect of religious freedom)		
		<b>22 Nov.</b>	Syria (importance of an inclusive opposition political platform taking in all religious and ethnic communities)
		<b>6 Dec.</b>	Afghanistan (protect the values of tolerance which mark Religious life in Afghanistan)
		<b>8 Dec.</b>	West Bank (condemns the attack against the mosque of Burqin; Attacks against places of worship are particularly troubling)
		<b>13 Dec.</b>	Vital links between human rights and democracy, including freedom of religion or belief; continue our efforts to build consensus on freedom of religion or belief Syria (inclusive opposition political platform taking in all religious and ethnic communities)
<b>14 Dec.</b>	European Neighbourhood Policy (full and effective respect for the freedom of religion as a priority)		
<b>15 Dec.</b>	EU Strategy for Central Asia (fight against religious extremism)		
		<b>26 Dec.</b>	Nigeria (attacks on religious symbols & Churches in Christmas)

	<b>EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT</b>		<b>EEAS</b>
<b>2012</b>		<b>2012</b>	
		<b>23 Jan.</b>	Nigeria (persecution of religious minorities; freedom of religion and belief is absolutely a fundamental part of who we are as Europeans) Nigeria (bombs in Kano; traditional religious & social tolerance)
<b>2 Feb.</b>	Sports (International Olympic Committee to forbid religious demonstrations and propaganda in sport events; not to tolerate women's swimming at school on religious grounds is banned)		
<b>16 Feb.</b>	UNHR Council (non discrimination on religion or belief)		
		<b>10 Mar.</b>	Foreign Affairs Ministers (more appropriate discussion on freedom of religion and belief)
<b>15 March</b>	Nigeria (Boko Haram targeted Christians; public dimension of Christian faith)		
<b>15 March</b>	Bahrain: respect religious freedom		
		<b>18 Mar.</b>	Egypt (on Pope Shenouda III leadership of the region's largest Christian community)
<b>29 March</b>	Turkey's 2011 report (legal personality of religious minorities; restrictions on clergy; religious plurality in educational material)		
		<b>17 April</b>	Discrimination against people of faith, including Christians, and those who have no religious belief: tolerance is at the root of the EU; EU needs to strengthen its policy on the Freedom of Religion or Belief
<b>18 April</b>	HR in the world (titled dedicated to "HR, freedom of religion and persecution of Christians")		
<b>10 May</b>	European Day of Remembrance for the Righteous		
		<b>15 May</b>	Egypt (20 million EUR given to civil society: it means freedom of expression, freedom of religion)
<b>24 May</b>	Azerbaijan (condemns threats made by radical Islamist organizations)		
		<b>12 June</b>	EU annual report on human rights and democracy (section on Freedom of Religion or Belief)

	EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT		EEAS
<b>2012</b>		<b>2012</b>	
		<b>13 June</b>	Tibet (China respect Tibetans to practice their own religion)
<b>14 June</b>	Tibet (China to respect Tibetans to practice their own religion; Special coordinator)		
<b>14 June</b>	Iran (guarantee religious freedom; stop discrimination and harassment of religious minorities - non-Shia Muslims, including Assyrians and other Christian groups-, persecution of the Baha'i minority and death penalty to converts from Islam)		
		<b>20 June</b>	Joint Statement by Ashton and Malmström, on the occasion of the World Refugee Day (solidarity towards refugees, including those by their religion)
		<b>21 June</b>	Human Rights situation in Iran (repression of ethnic and religious minorities)
		<b>25 June</b>	Importance of freedom of religion and belief: events in Nigeria.
		<b>28 June</b>	Iranian First Vice-President (anti-Semitic statements; condemnation)
		<b>4 July</b>	Mali (destruction of historical heritage: <i>destroy a valued and ancient part of the religious and cultural heritage</i> )
		<b>11 Sept.</b>	Iran (release of Pastor Nadarkhani)
<b>13 Sept.</b>	Syria (respect of minorities, including religious ones)		