



# Conflict Prevention and Human Rights

***What Role for the new EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief?***

**International Press Centre - Residence Palace - Brussels**

**Monday, 10 December 2012**

As 2012 comes to an end, the global picture of conflict and tension, including mob violence, sectarian clashes and hate crimes on grounds of religion or belief, raises questions about how to reconcile competing identities and claims of legitimacy. Research shows that, today, it is rarely religious identity that drives a conflict but the extent to which religious freedom is restricted. Where this freedom is respected and upheld, the grounds are laid for more stable, peaceful and pluralist societies.

Among the core goals of EU foreign policy are promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and engaging in conflict prevention, mediation and peace-building. Following the commitment in the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights, the EU is preparing a new set of Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief to serve as practical guidance for EU officials on how to promote these goals in the EU's external action.

Against this background and on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day on 10 December, you are cordially invited to a Panel Discussion on "*Conflict Prevention and Human Rights – What Role for the new EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief?*", jointly organized by the Austrian Representation to the EU, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), the Bahá'í International Community (BIC) and the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), in partnership with the European Platform on Religious Intolerance and Discrimination (EPRID). The Panel Discussion will be opened by Austrian Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger, Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata and the European Union Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis, and will address central questions pertaining to conflict, peace, religion and belief in a globalised world order:

- What is the relationship between human rights, in particular freedom of religion or belief, and conflict prevention?
- How can freedom of religion or belief be incorporated into EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding policies and actions?
- How can the new EU-Guidelines contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the interrelatedness of human rights, security, and development and assist the EEAS-Delegations in their work on the ground?

The Panel Discussion will take place on 10 December 2012 at 10:30 am at the International Press Centre "Residence Palace", Room Polak, 155 Rue de la Loi, Brussels.

Please note that working language is English.

RSVP by 3 December 2012 at [johann.doerfler@bmeia.gv.at](mailto:johann.doerfler@bmeia.gv.at)



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## Programme

### **10.30      Opening**

- Michael Spindelegger, Austrian Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister for European and International Affairs
- Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata, Foreign Minister of Italy
- Stavros Lambrinidis, European Union Special Representative for Human Rights

### **11.00      Panel Presentations**

Chair: Catherine Woollard, Executive Director of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office

- Brian Grim, Senior Researcher and Director of Cross-National Data at Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life
- Franziska Brantner, MEP
- Ram Manikkalingam, Director of the Dialogue Advisory Group
- Sofia Lemmetyinen, Senior EU Advocate at Christian Solidarity Worldwide
- Guy Banim, Mediation Advisor, "Peace-building, Conflict Prevention and Mediation" at the EEAS

### **General Discussion**

### **Concluding Remarks**

- Charles-Michel Geurts, Deputy Head of Division "Human Rights Policy Instruments and Bilateral Cooperation" at the EEAS
- Sarah Vader, Bahá'í International Community