

Information Guide : Policies



Religion and Europe

The religious dimension within the EU and the wider Europe

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Religion and the EU

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- Religion and the EU institutions
- Religion and other European governmental organisations
- List of religious representative organizations
- List of Pan-European NGOs
- Religion in Numbers
- Reports and Guidelines from European and Non-European institutions
- Themes covered by ESO



Religion in Europe

Religion and the EU Institutions



European Commission – Justice – Fundamental Rights – Churches/Religions/Non confessionals dialogue



European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights



Europe External Action Service – EU Relations with Holy See



EU Delegation to the Holy See

At a glance

September 2016



Dialogue of the EU institutions with religious and non-confessional organisations

Every year the European institutions hold dialogue sessions with churches, and with non-confessional and philosophical organisations. Based on Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) the dialogue focuses on issues on the European agenda.

From 'A Soul for Europe' initiative to the Article 17 dialogue sessions

In 1994, Jacques Delors, then European Commission President, identifying a need for European integration to go beyond a purely economic and legal dimension, established the first formal links of the EU institutions with religious communities under the initiative 'A Soul for Europe'. Structured dialogue with representatives of religions and humanist organisations began, with the aim of contributing to the spiritual and ethical perspectives of the EU, and promoting civil society participation in the integration process. A [Reflection Group](#) on the Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe was established in 2003 to reflect upon issues relating to values relevant for European unification. It fed into the work of the Convention which drafted the EU Constitutional Treaty, which in turn set the ground for the eventual adoption and entry into force (in 2009) of the Treaty of Lisbon.

With Lisbon, [Article 17](#) TFEU introduced, for the first time, a legal basis for regular, open and transparent dialogue between the EU institutions and churches, religious associations, and philosophical and non-confessional organisations. Article 17 also states that the EU shall respect the status of churches, religious organisations, and philosophical and non-confessional organisations, under national law in the Member States.

Dialogue partners

The EU institutions organise Article 17 TFEU dialogue sessions with representatives of religious organisations, notably [COMECE](#) (the EU Catholic bishops' conference), the Council of European Churches ([CEC](#) – including Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox and Old Catholic churches), Muslim communities, the [European Jewish Congress](#) and also Hindu, Sikh and Mormon associations. [Philosophical and non-confessional](#) organisations participating in the dialogue include Humanist organisations based on the Belgian model, which insist on the [secular](#) neutrality of the public sphere, Freemasons, and free thought, ethical or adogmatic organisations.

EU guidelines: freedom of religion, freedom from religion

In 2013 the Commission published [dialogue implementation guidelines](#) stipulating that dialogue topics are to be related to the EU agenda and agreed on by both parties, that participating organisations must be recognised or registered at national level and adhere to European values. Participating churches or associations are also encouraged to register with the European Transparency Register. That same year, the Council adopted [guidelines](#) on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief in EU external relations.

The [implementation](#) of Article 17 TFEU in the European Parliament (EP) is under the responsibility of one of its Vice-Presidents, currently Antonio Tajani (EPP, Italy). During the current parliamentary term, Article 17 dialogue sessions have focused on religious [radicalism and fundamentalism](#) (in March 2015), on how [education](#) contributes to tackling radicalisation (November 2015), and on the role of women in [countering radicalisation](#) (April 2016).

The EP [Intergrup](#) on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance, set up in 2014, aims at ensuring that the EU promotes and defends these freedoms in its external relations. It publishes yearly reports on the freedom of religion or belief all over the world, highlighting discrimination against religious minorities, among others against Jews, Christians and atheists.



Religion in Europe

Other European governmental organisations



OSCE – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

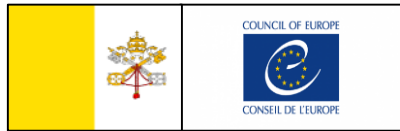


Council of Europe – Human Rights Themes: Religion and belief



Religion in Europe

List of religious representative organisations



Holy See as Observer
State of the Council of
Europe



Apostolic Nunciature of the Holy See
in the European Union



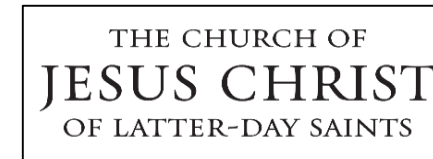
Council of European
Bishops' Conferences



Commission of the Bishops'
Conferences of the European
Community (COMECE)



Conference of
European Churches
(CEC)



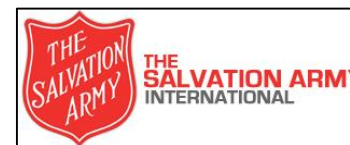
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-
Day Saints



Churches' Commission
for migrants in Europe
(CCME)



The Church of England in the
European Union



The Salvation Army - International

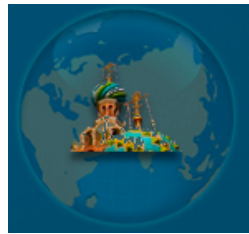


Religion in Europe

List of religious representative organisations



Church of Scientology –
European Office for
Public Affairs and Human
Rights



Russian Orthodox Church – Representation to
the European Institutions



Representation of the Church of Greece to the
European Institutions



Representation of the Church of Cyprus to the
European Institutions



Conference of European Rabbis



Romanian Orthodox Church –
Representation to the European
Institutions



Representation of the Church of
Ukraine to the European
Institutions



Quaker Council for European
Affairs



Religion in Europe Pan-European NGOs



Jesuit European Social Centre
Vision and Values for Europe

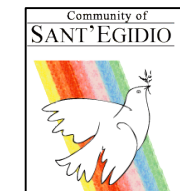


**Ekumeniska
EU-kontoret**

 **caritas europa**

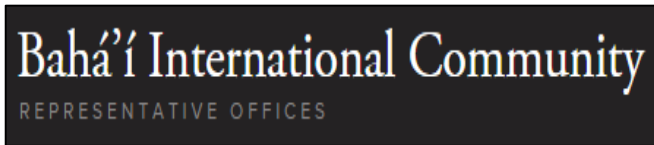


Eurodiaconia 





Religion in Europe Pan-European NGOs



For further information visit the [Transparency Register](#)





Religion in Europe

Religion in Numbers



Wikipedia - Religion in the European Union



Public Opinion (EC) – Personal religious background in Europe (pag.203) – 2010



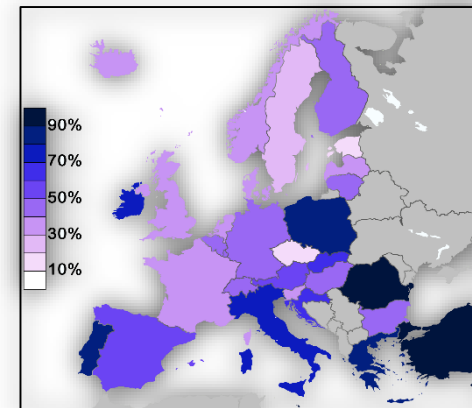
Public Opinion (EC) – Discrimination based on religion and belief (pag. 31) - 2015



Social acceptance and discriminations on the grounds of religion - 2015



Religious affiliation in UK



Belief 'There is a God' per country based on Eurobarometer poll (2005)



Reports and Guidelines from European and Non-European Institutions



European Commission –
Report on the application
of the EU Charter of
Fundamental Rights –
2015 (Freedom of Religion
pag.79)



Compilation of Council of Europe
standards relating to the principle of
thought, conscience and religion and
link to other human rights



Council of Europe –
Promotion and protection
of religion and belief



U.S. Department of State – Annual
Report on International religious
freedom



ECHR – Religious symbols
and clothing



SETA – European Islamophobia Report
2015-



ECHR – Freedom of
religion



Religion in Europe

Themes covered by European Sources Online



[Religion](#)

[European Commission
and religions](#)

[Burkini in France](#)

[European
Islamophobia Report
2015](#)

[ESO Information
Guide: Vatican City](#)

[Discrimination based
on the grounds of
religion](#)

[Islamic Veil](#)

[Islamophobia](#)

Visit ESO for further information

