

European Parliament Working Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief

5th Newsletter
13th January 2014

1. About the EPWG on FoRB

European Parliament Working Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief (EPWG on FoRB) was founded by a group of like-minded MEPs to promote and protect FoRB in the EU's external actions.

The EPWG has a Bureau made up of two Co-Presidents (Dennis De Jong and Peter Van Dalen) and five other MEPs: László Surján, Gianni Pittella, Pat the Cope Gallagher, Hannu Takkula, Margrete Auken and a secretariat (Alfiya Vaiya and Marina Zaitsava).

2. EPWG on FoRB news

EPWG on FoRB report/conference: The EPWG on FoRB is currently preparing its first report which will focus on freedom of religion or belief in third countries and include recommendations for the EU-institutions and Member States on promoting and protecting FoRB. The report will be presented at a conference titled "The State of Freedom of Religion or Belief in the world" which will be held at the European Parliament on February 12th 2014. The conference will be co-hosted by the EPWG on FoRB, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and the European Platform on Religious Intolerance and Discrimination. More details about the event and how to register will be given in the coming weeks.

European Parliament annual human rights report: The European Parliament's annual report on human rights was recently adopted during Parliament's plenary session in Strasbourg in December 2013. For the second consecutive year the report including a strong and elaborate section on FoRB. This was achieved because of a series of amendments tabled by the EPWG on FoRB. The EPWG on FoRB press release on this can be viewed at: <http://www.religiousfreedom.eu/our-work/press-releases/>

EPWG on FoRB Parliamentary questions to VP/HR Catherine Ashton: EPWG on FoRB Co-presidents Peter Van Dalen and Dennis de Jong and Bureau members Laszlo Surjan and Hannu Takkula tabled parliamentary questions on the murder of Christian leaders in Zanzibar and Tanzania and on the situation of freedom of religion or belief in the northern and central states of Nigeria. EPWG on FoRB Co-President Dennis De Jong also tabled a question on the situation of Bahá'ís in Iran and in particular the situation of the seven Bahá'ís leaders who were sentenced to 20 years in jail. All three question can be viewed at: <http://www.religiousfreedom.eu/our-work/parliamentary-questions/>

3. Forthcoming events

EPWG on FoRB Bureau member Hannu Takkula and the EPWG on FoRB and Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) will be hosting an event on 4th March 2014 in the European Parliament titled "FoRB in Indonesia – Pluralism in Peril". More details on how to register will be given in the coming weeks.

4. Contact us

For any enquiries or more information about
the working group please email:

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