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Intergroup welcomes the inclusion of FoRB action points in the adopted EU  
Action Plan on Human Rights

***Intergroup's recommendation for specific FoRB action points were included in the Action Plan***

The European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance welcomes the adoption of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights. The Intergroup is particularly pleased by the inclusion of specific freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) action points. The Intergroup Co-Presidents, on behalf of the Intergroup, had written to the High Representative in May expressing their concern that the draft Action Plan failed to include FoRB action points.

Paragraph 12 which is dedicated to freedom of religion or belief reinforces the EU's commitment to protecting religious or belief minorities in the world. It includes the Intergroup's recommendations to the EU, in its Annual Reports 2013 and 2014, to raise FoRB violations with third countries, cooperate with international partners, deepen awareness of FoRB in the EU institutions and for greater dialogue with religious or belief leaders and organisations. Intergroup Co-President Dennis de Jong said *"I am pleased that the EU included FoRB action points and has taken on board some of our recommendations. Still the inclusion of the action points is not enough. The EU must now show political will to implement the action points by taking heed of other recommendations we made in our Annual Reports such as better policy coherence and EIDHR funding for religious or belief organisations."*

The Intergroup also expresses its disappointment that although Paragraph 31 focuses on the implementation of EU Guidelines, the EU failed to include a specific FoRB action point on the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The Intergroup believes that the Guidelines are an effective tool but that the EU should ensure it undertakes the actions it committed itself to in the Guidelines. Intergroup Co-President Peter van Dalen said *"At an event two years ago in the European Parliament to mark the adoption of the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief, we spoke about how important the Guidelines are and how they would enable the EU to better promote FoRB. However the Guidelines can only be effective if they are a live document. The EU should have taken the opportunity of the Action Plan to have a specific action point on the implementation of FoRB Guidelines and a commitment that diplomats in EU delegations, in countries where FoRB is most restricted, are informed of the Guidelines."*