



EUROPEAN UNION
Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office
and other international organisations in Geneva

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
46th session

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on
Freedom of Religion or Belief (FORB)**

2 March 2021

EU Intervention

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

The EU thanks you for your presentation and will study your findings and recommendations. The EU reaffirms its support to your mandate.

The EU is determined to promote freedom of religion or belief as a right to be exercised by everyone everywhere, based on the principles of equality, non-discrimination and universality. In doing so, the EU focuses on the right of individuals. The EU is impartial and not aligned with any specific religion or belief. We maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with all parties involved in the Member States.

With regard to today's discussion, the EU agrees that combating discrimination and hatred against Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim is an essential part of efforts to uphold human rights and protect human dignity. States have a duty to combat indirect and direct discrimination, violence and persecution of persons based on their religion or belief.

The EU combats hatred, discrimination and persecution of Muslims both within and outside the EU. Outside Europe we have put great efforts in assisting in preventing atrocities, also against Muslims. EU action in addressing anti-Muslim hate crime

focuses not only on getting a solid legal framework in place, but also on countering incitement to hatred against Muslims, including online, and raising awareness on anti-Muslim bias and its manifestations. In this context, the EU prefers the use of the well-defined term of anti-Muslim discrimination or hatred.

Policies aimed at fighting anti-Muslim hatred must be an integral part of promoting the sustainable development goals and the Agenda 2030, and thus involves efforts in the areas of teaching, education, media platforms, integration, social inclusion policies, employment and non-discrimination. Any response should respect human rights and democracy, and be victim-oriented, non-discriminatory, participatory and gender sensitive.

Lastly, fostering cooperation and mutual recognition is key. Just a few weeks ago, the European Commission's Coordinator on combating anti-Muslim hatred organised a workshop bringing together over 50 civil society organisations and representatives of equality bodies, to explore concrete methods and avenues for cooperation on combating anti-Muslim hatred and discrimination. The follow up will be a toolbox with a list of actions.

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

What could this Council further do to advance work on this important issue?

Thank you.