

Question for written answer P-005661/2014
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Philippe Juvin (PPE)

Subject: VP/HR - Plight of Christians in Iraq

Since the first Gulf War, the situation of Christians in Iraq has steadily deteriorated, in particular following the invasion of the country by the US-led coalition in 2003, which sparked an upsurge in anti-Western sentiment and brought radical Islamist groups to the fore. In 10 years, the Christian community in Iraq has reportedly shrunk by 90%. Today, Christians are thought to make up between 2% and 3% of the Iraqi population, as against 20% in 1932 and 5% in 2003. After being the target of repeated attacks, they are now suffering violent persecution at the hands of jihadists from the ISIS movement and fleeing Iraq en masse.

1. What steps does the EU intend to take, in accordance with the Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief of 24 June 2013, to protect the Christian minority in Iraq?
2. Does the High Representative intend to make regular trips to the Middle East in order to demonstrate her commitment to resolving this problem and express her solidarity with Christians in the region? Does she also plan to work together closely with the US on this matter?
3. Does the EU intend to support the International Organisation for Migration's efforts to deal with the mass exodus of people from Iraq, in particular members of the Christian community, and to ensure the safety of the refugees?