

**Question for written answer E-002299/2021  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

**Christine Anderson (ID)**

**Subject:** Voluntary self-censorship, restriction of freedom of expression and refraining from showing caricatures related to Islam at schools in Germany

After several attacks on school staff who showed caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad in the classroom as part of their efforts to teach pupils about freedom of expression, the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of Hessen, Germany, has now adopted a measure in response: teachers are being advised to voluntarily self-censor what they teach. Since the murder of the French school teacher Samuel Paty, who showed caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad to his pupils, teachers have been under increasing pressure to refrain from any such discussions with their pupils. The following was written in an email from the Hessen Ministry of Education to school head teachers in the region: 'The showing of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad or any pictorial representation of him can be interpreted as being critical of Islam, which can stir emotions and, in certain circumstances, lead to radicalisation of the recipients, including pupils.'<sup>1</sup>

1. Does the Commission share the assessment of the Hessen Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs that the showing of caricatures constitutes behaviour which is critical of Islam and which should be refrained from?
2. Does the Commission consider voluntary self-censorship, as mandated in this instance, to be a useful way for EU Member States to uphold freedom of expression in schools?
3. What measures is the Commission taking to help Member States maintain or improve freedom of expression, but also to ensure the safety of teachers in schools in the Member States?

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tichyseinblick.de/daili-es-sentials/hessisches-kultusministerium-mohammed-karikaturen/>