After Mr Stylianides’ resignation as Special Envoy for religious freedom, the Commission is currently considering a new appointment and will soon take a decision on this issue. The mandate of the Special Envoy is to promote freedom of religion or belief outside the EU, and in particular to establish a dialogue with national authorities and other stakeholders in countries suffering from discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief and to support intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The Envoy is expected to encourage a dialogue between representatives of different faiths and support joint initiatives to promote freedom of religion and belief. In cooperation with authorities from third countries, the Envoy would also promote measures to target de-radicalisation, prevent extremism on grounds of religion or belief in third countries and promote religious diversity and tolerance within educational programmes and curricula.

Given their mandate, the role of the Envoy is also to advise the Commission Vice-President who is in charge of the Commission's dialogue with churches and religious associations or communities, and with philosophical and non-confessional organisations. The Envoy is expected to coordinate all activities within this mandate closely with the EU Special Representative on Human Rights. Promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief will continue to feature among the priorities of the external agenda of the EU on human rights, as highlighted in the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2020-2024). The EU will continue to use political and human rights dialogues, multilateral fora and emergency support to human rights defenders to promote and protect freedom of religion or belief for all.

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