

## **Human Rights Without Frontiers welcomes the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief**

HRWF (25.06.2013) - *Human Rights without Frontiers* welcomes the adoption of the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FORB) by the EU Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June in Brussels. The Guidelines on FORB are the result of the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy which the Council adopted one year ago.

FORB is a universal human right which is protected under Article 18 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). By adopting the FORB Guidelines the EU is mainstreaming and prioritising it in its external policies and sending a strong signal that all countries should respect them. *Human Rights Without Frontiers* welcomes the fact that the Guidelines cover the rights not only of believers but also of non-believers.

The Guidelines will be an important tool for EU officials in third countries to reference in identifying FORB violations and assisting citizens who have been discriminated against on the basis of their religion or belief. The Guidelines set out the actions and measures that the EU can take at multilateral-fora, regional and bi-lateral levels against countries which violate FORB.

*Human Rights Without Frontiers* has been pleased to be involved in the drafting process of the Guidelines along with religious communities and civil society at all stages of the drafting process.

*Human Rights Without Frontiers* along with religious communities and civil society will continue to monitor the implementation of the Guidelines and hold the EU accountable to its commitments.

### **More about the guidelines:**

#### **EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief**

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137585.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/137585.pdf)