



Conference of  
European Rabbis

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CATHOLIC HERALD

# Religious leaders condemn abolition of EU religious freedom envoy



Staff Reporter



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Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders have voiced concern after the European Commission decided to get rid of its special envoy for religious freedom.

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich of Luxembourg, president of the European Bishops' Conference said: "In some countries, religious oppression has now reached the level of genocide."

"Vulnerable religious minorities and groups are at risk, and the EU must continue campaigning for religious freedom, with its own representative included," he added.

Meanwhile Pinchas Goldschmidt, President of the Conference of European Rabbis, told [Deutsche Welle](#) that the move sent the "wrong signal" when "Jews and other religious minorities are increasingly being targeted online and offline by extremists, and the free exercise of religion is being undermined."

The post was created in 2016 under the Commission's previous president, Jean-Claude Juncker, following calls from the European Parliament. However, his successor, Ursula von der Leyen, decided last month that the position will not be retained. The envoy's work will instead be split between Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas and Eamon Gilmore, the EU's special representative for human rights.

Aiman Mazyek, the Chairman of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, also criticised the move, saying it was "all the more important that the voice of such an envoy is not silenced particularly now."

Last week, 135 German MPs urged their country to call for the restoration of the post, while Members of the European Parliament also appealed to Ursula von der Leyen to retain it.

<https://catholicherald.co.uk/religious-leaders-condemn-abolition-of-eu-religious-freedom-envoy/>

