

Political Affairs Digest

A daily summary of political events affecting the Jewish Community
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities
SCoJeC

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House of Commons Written Answer

Religion: Curriculum

Jim Shannon (DUP) [185597] To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has received representations on the exclusion of Christianity from the religious studies syllabus; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb: No representation has been received on the exclusion of Christianity from religious education curriculum or the GCSE in religious studies.

Teaching about Christianity is a mandatory element of religious education. All state funded schools in England are required to teach religious education from age 5. This must 'reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.'

The government sets the content specification for Religious Studies GCSEs which requires students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian. Further information on GCSE subject content can be found at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcse-religious-studies.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-30/185597/>

House of Lords Written Answer

Home Office: Staff

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (UKIP) [HL11043] To ask Her Majesty's Government how many individuals who have declared as (1) Muslims, and (2) members of other faiths and none, there were in the top four grades of the Home Office on (a) 1 September 2012, and (b) 31 September 2014.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The information is provided in the table below

Religion	Sep-12	Sep-14
Muslim	*****	*****
Other Faiths	64%	70%
No Religion	*****	*****

Data Source: Data View - Office for National Statistics compliant monthly snapshot corporate Human Resources data for Home Office. Period Covered:01/10/2011 to 30/09/2012, 01/10/2013 to 30/09/2014 Organisational Coverage:

Home Office Employee Coverage: Data is based on Headcount of current paid permanent civil servants in SCS grade, Top 4 grades classed as SCS members (SCS PB1, PB2 (Directors), PB3 (Director Generals) and PB4 (Permanent Secretary)) Note: Figures for protected characteristics of Religious Belief are representative of only those staff who have made a positive statement.

Those who 'Prefer not to say' or are 'Not Surveyed' have been excluded. Statistical disclosure controls: these have been applied to this information to comply with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice and the Data Protection Act.

Where a category has either (a) fewer than 5 employees or (b) no employees figures have been redacted and replaced with ***** (5 stars) to prevent the disclosure of small numbers. This enables transparency of as much information as possible without the need to redact the overall figures.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-25/HL11043/>

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

Faith Leader Training [England only]

In the [Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#), published in March 2018, we committed to supporting non-theological, voluntary training for faith leaders. We want to support places of worship to have well-qualified, informed and confident faith leaders, who understand their rights and responsibilities, so they can better support their congregations.

Following a period of consultation with religious ministers across all faiths, we have published a prospectus which lays out the aims and outcomes we would like to see from the faith leader training initiative, as well as our expectations around course structure and assessment methods.

To apply, prospective training providers will need to send a completed application form to FaithLeaderTraining@communities.gov.uk by 5pm on Thursday 20 December 2018.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/faith-leader-training-prospectus-and-application-form>

Faith Leader Training Initiative Programme Specification

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/754760/Faith_Leader_Training_Initiative_-_Programme_Specification.pdf

Faith Leader Training Initiative: Application Form

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/754762/Faith_Leader_Training_Initiative_-_Application_Form.docx

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Holocaust

European Commission

Statement by First Vice-President Frans Timmermans and Commissioner Věra Jourová on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the 'Kristallnacht' (Night of Broken Glass)

80 years ago the lives and history of Jews in Europe changed forever in the space of one night. The state-sponsored Antisemitism of the Nazi regime triggered the murder of Jews, the burning of synagogues, and the looting of Jewish-owned businesses and Jewish houses. Around thirty thousand Jewish people were deported during the 'Kristallnacht', an event which marked the beginning of the Holocaust and the extermination of six million Jews. Today we must pause and reflect on these events, and to remind ourselves of why we must do everything in our power to prevent this from ever happening again.

There is reason to be vigilant, for despite the horrors of our past, recent developments show that antisemitism is still present in our society; there are still individuals who deny that these events even took place. Jewish people are still being attacked and threatened on the streets of many EU countries; hate speech continues to be spread and there is still space to incite violence, not least online. Hatred started with words and ended in violence. And we are seeing that tendency again through the shocking murders in Toulouse, Brussels, Paris, and Copenhagen, and most recently in Pittsburgh in the United States.

We cannot allow our society to suffer from collective amnesia. We have a duty to continuously teach our young generations about this and how to tame Europe's inner demons – so that nobody forgets. This is why we have dedicated funding for European remembrance, and why the Commission helps raise awareness and educate people about the Holocaust.

To fight Antisemitism better, we need to understand it better as well. This is why the Commission continues to support Member States and civil society to improve reporting on Antisemitism in the EU. We have a Commission Coordinator on combating Antisemitism to liaise with Jewish communities and strengthen the collaboration with international organisations, Member States' authorities and NGOs. The Horizon 2020 project 'European Holocaust Research Infrastructure' is the largest ever EU-funded research programme on the Holocaust, with a budget of €8 million and a goal of strengthening the network of European research on the Holocaust.

Jewish people should never again have to ask themselves whether they or their children have a future in the European Union. They should never have to question whether the authorities will stand on their side to guarantee their safety. Nobody should ever be afraid to go to a synagogue or wear a kippah in the European Union. Today, as every day, the European Commission stands firm against all forms of Antisemitism. We will continue to relentlessly fight prejudice and stereotypes in Europe, whomever it regards, and we will always defend people's right to practise their religion – whichever it is – freely and without fear. ...

To read the full press release see

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release STATEMENT-18-6318_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-18-6318_en.htm)

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House of Commons Written Answers

The following two questions both received the same answer

Trade Agreements: Israel

Antoinette Sandbach (Conservative) [185701] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress he has made in transitioning the existing EU trade agreement with Israel; and whether he has received any requests for changes to that agreement.

Trade Agreements: Palestinians

Antoinette Sandbach (Conservative) [185702] To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress he has made in transitioning the existing EU trade agreement with the Occupied Palestinian Territory; and whether he has received any requests for changes to that agreement.

George Hollingbery: We have been in constant dialogue with all our trading partners to achieve continuity by replicating the effects of our existing EU trade agreements. They understand this must be primary objective, and securing continuity will be a strong foundation to build on our already successful trading relationship.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-30/185701/>

and

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-10-30/185702/>

The same question was also asked in respect of Mexico, Chile, Peru, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Switzerland, South Korea, and Antigua. All received the above answer.

Gaza: Overseas Aid

Richard Burden (Labour) [186931] To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what steps her Department is taking to introduce a new economic development package in Gaza to (a) increase trade (b) support job creation and (c) enhance the supply of electricity and clean water.

Alistair Burt: In July 2018 the UK committed to provide up to £38 million over five years (2018-2023) to support economic development in Gaza and the West Bank. Through this programme we will increase trade and job creation across Gaza and the West Bank by helping to enable greater movement and access for people and goods. We will also provide support to facilitate the construction of the Gaza Central Desalination Plant, which will increase access to clean piped water and help replenish the Gaza aquifer, and in turn help Gazans access clean water. In addition, this UK aid programme will help to install solar panels for hospitals, businesses and households, increasing the availability of electricity in Gaza. Since July 2018, we have been undertaking routine design and early-implementation stage activities, such as assessing implementing partners to ensure they meet DFID's delivery standards, clarifying and agreeing roles and responsibilities, and setting out expected outcomes, results and timelines.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-11-01/186931/>

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Foreign Affairs

Foreign and Commonwealth Office & Department for International Development

Government commits £12 million to champion freedom of Religion or Belief worldwide

The Coalition for Religious Equality and Inclusive Development (CREID) programme, funded through UK Aid Connect, will work with faith groups, NGOs and academics to promote religious diversity, with a focus on helping countries around the world to embed freedom of religion or belief policies in poverty reduction and development approaches.

The Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon said: "This money will go a long way in bolstering the work of civil society and NGOs to promote respect, and the value of religious diversity and tolerance. It will sit alongside the excellent work British diplomats do in flying the flag for human rights.

As the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief, I will ensure that the UK stands up for everyone's right to practise or not practise a religion that is in line with their conscience, wherever they are in the world." ...

The announcement follows the government's recent announcement of a further £1 million funding for places of worship that have been subjected to hate crime attacks.

To read the full press release see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-commits-12-million-to-champion-freedom-of-religion-or-belief-worldwide>

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Relevant Legislation ** new or updated today

UK Parliament

Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/holocaustreturnofculturalobjectsamendment.html>

Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/marriageact1949amendment.html>

Online Forums Bill

<https://services.parliament.uk/Bills/2017-19/onlineforums.html>

Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Bill

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2017-19/organdonationdeemedconsent.html>

Scottish Parliament

**** Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill**

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/108681.aspx>

Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee Stage 1 Report

<https://sp-bpr-en-prod-cdneq.azureedge.net/published/DPLR/2018/11/6/Human-Tissue--Authorisation---Scotland--Bill--Stage-1/DPLRS052018R53.pdf>

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Consultations

** new or updated today

Reform of the legal requirements for divorce (closing date 10 December 2018)

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/reform-of-the-legal-requirements-for-divorce/>

The future of civil partnership in Scotland (closing date 21 December 2018)

<https://consult.gov.scot/family-law/the-future-of-civil-partnership-in-scotland/>

2021 Census: Outputs Strategy Consultation for Northern Ireland (closing date 9 January 2019)

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/dfp/2021-census-outputs-strategy-consultation-for-northern-ireland-document.pdf>

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