

Press release

Brussels, 27th of June 2018

Freedom of religion is a fundamental right

S&D members launch the Alevi Friendship Group of the European Parliament

At the initiative of the S&D Group, yesterday the European Parliament held the founding meeting of the "Alevi Friendship Group": a platform to promote cooperation between the members of the European Parliament and the Alevi, and to give this 1.5 million community more voice and visibility at the European level.

S&D vice-president Josef Weidenholzer and S&D MEP Arne Lietz, the initiators of the Alevi Friendship Group, said:

"The Alevi Community stands for a peaceful, free and democratic Europe where all peoples are treated as equals. Under the banner of the rule of law, 1.5 million Alevi all over Europe come together as a vital part of our society. Today we celebrate their deep belief in European core values by founding the Alevi Friendship Group of the European Parliament."

Note to editors: The Alevi Community has experienced aggression from multiple actors in the past. In their country of origin - Turkey - they are actively oppressed and not accepted as an official community of faith. The multi-million strong community denounces authoritarian tendencies and embraces European democratic values such as freedom of speech and social equality for all.