



5280 Coalition

OSCE 2015 HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING

Working Session 15: Fundamental Freedoms

Mr/Mme. Moderator, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you.

Religious Liberty is a basic freedom in the West. The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States says "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof"; this means there is a clear separation of church and state, with religion an individual and private matter.

But it seems in most of the public forums the discussion of "freedom of religion" has been finessed by self-defined Islamic entities to the subject of "combatting the defamation of religions"¹. And even though such documents refers to "religion", the texts clearly only refer to Islam.

The reason for this seems clear. In the West, freedom of religion includes changing one's religion or even choosing not to belong at all. This is not the case in other faiths. In fact, in some religions to leave is a capital offense.² So it's understandable that the self-identified Islamic entities would prefer to change the subject and make accusations of "defamation and Islamophobia" against anyone who brings up such matters.

The ACT for America 5280 Coalition believes that discussing unpleasant aspects the essence of true dialogue; that bringing up well-known published facts is certainly NOT hate, bigotry or slander in the Western sense. Certainly unpleasant facts about the West are brought up all the time.

The ACT for America 5280 Coalition recommends that western entities and governments stay on point when discussing these important issues and not be distracted or deflected by vague and undefinable terms.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen

¹ <http://www.un.org/press/en/2004/hrcn1082.doc.htm>

² "Reliance of the Traveller" §o8.0 p. 595