



Universal Peace Federation – Deutschland e.v.

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*OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, 29. September 2009*

Statement by the Universal Peace Federation of Germany

*On occasion of
Working Session 2: Fundamental freedoms*

Recommendations:

1. German political parties should refrain from secretly circulating “black listed” organizations and minorities. Instead of advising their institutions not to engage in any communication with certain groups, political parties should deal with all segments of society in an equal and non-discriminatory manner.
2. The German government on all levels, be it on the community, the state or the federal level, should make sure that funds are only provided to social organizations (especially run by the two main churches) which do not discriminate against members of religious minorities.

Explaining recommendation 1)

The *Universal Peace Federation – Germany* has been informed by reliable sources that some political parties in Germany maintain the practice of unofficially and secretly black listing certain groups, organizations, religious communities, advising their respective institutions to reject any meaningful dialogue with them. Religious minorities on those “black lists” include the Church of Scientology, the Unification Church and the Jehova’s Witnesses among others. If one of those “black listed” organization tries to communicate with e.g. the party representative in charge of religious affairs, it either receives an offending answer, requesting the immediate suspension of any further attempt to get in touch with the person (the UPF was given copies of those letters), or no answer at all. This has most notably been observed in dealing with the Green Party (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) and the Federal Democratic Party (FDP) (the UPF was given copies of those letters). The latter case it is particularly worrisome, since the Federal Democratic Party will most certainly be part of the upcoming German government. It is obvious that such practice violates the notion of equally respecting all people regardless of colour, creed and gender and cannot be tolerated by a modern democratic society.

Explaining recommendation 2)

The *Youth Service Initiative – Deutschland e.V.* (www.youthserviceinitiative.org) has informed the *Universal Peace Federation* about a serious case of discrimination. The YSI was founded as a private organization with the aim of giving international young people the chance to devote one year to social work. It is to encourage them to become proactive members of society and learn how to initiate service projects.



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As reported by Geros Kunkel, the founder of YSI, his organization had been successfully cooperating with various church related associations in Frankfurt in a variety of social activities, such as children's gardens, youth centers, home for the aged, neighborhood support groups etc. All went well, till the Pastor of the Maria Hilf Protestant Community discovered that some of the young participants of YSI were members of the Unification Church. He then started to "warn" all other organizations cooperating with YSI, falsely stating that YSI was a "front organization of the Unification Church" and its only purpose was to proselytize new members for the church. Neither the subsequent letter by Mr. Kunkel (see attached document: *Clarification concerning the Youth Service Initiative*) nor personal meetings could change the mind of some 10, mostly church related social organizations, who stopped cooperating with the YSI, while meeting its members with thinly veiled suspicion and distain, which, of course, heavily damaged the idealism and enthusiasm accompanying the work of those young volunteers.

While such conduct by the main churches maybe explained (but not condoned) from their past history and their fear from anything looking like "competition", it is unacceptable that church-related organizations openly discriminating against members of other religious communities continue to receive ample public funding from various levels of government. Instead any public funding must be tied to receiving organization's adherence to principles of non-discrimination and fair and equal treatment of clients and partner organization.