

**Church of Scientology – Office of Human Rights****OSCE HDIM 2014****30<sup>th</sup> of September – Working session 13**

On April 10, 2014 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe voted down a report by French MP Rudy Salles, Board member of Miviludes, the French Inter-Ministerial Mission for Monitoring and Combating Sectarian Abuses, on “The protection of minors against the excesses of sects”.

For years, France has singled out minority religious groups labeled as “sects” or “sectarian movements” for official hostility and adverse treatment by the government and other public authorities. French authorities have seen the protection of minors as a mean to sensitize European countries and institutions to their view on the issue of so called “sects” and get an agreement on their policy in this regard.

The report submitted to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe by Mr. Salles proposed a Resolution and a Recommendation to adopt the French anti-religious minorities discriminatory policies at the European level in the 47 countries of the Council of Europe, in particular special indoctrination sessions for judges and police forces against targeted religious minorities, financing of anti-religious minorities associations and adoption of exceptional legislation to criminalize conversion to minority beliefs as “psychological subjugation”.

In reaction, more than 80 faith based or non faith based NGOs, from all over the world, including Christians, Muslims, Jews, Scientologists, Sikhs, Hindus, Scientologists and even Atheists and Humanists wrote protest letters to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and stood up against this discriminatory bill in a vote which has been described by human rights advocates as a *“decisive victory for the protection of human rights and religious freedom, which was made possible because of the thousands who stood up and voiced their opposition in a critical time of need”*.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the Recommendation to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe was rejected by the Assembly, and the Resolution was fully amended by the Assembly to now request the Member States to implement policies of non-discrimination of traditional and non-traditional religions, new religious movements and “sects”, as provided at point 9 of the final Resolution:

9. The Assembly calls on member States to ensure that no discrimination is allowed on the basis of which movement is considered as a sect or not, that no distinction is made between traditional religions and non-traditional religious movements, new religious movements or “sects” when it comes to the application of civil and criminal law, and that each measure which is taken towards non-traditional religious movements, new religious movements or “sects” is aligned with human rights standards as laid down by the European Convention on Human Rights and other relevant instruments protecting

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.worldreligionnews.com/issues/religious-freedom-victory-council-europe>

the dignity inherent to all human beings and their equal and inalienable rights.<sup>2</sup>

This final decision from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe shows that the Council of Europe is democratically opposing discriminatory French policies against religious minorities.

We urge the French authorities to draw the necessary conclusions from this outcome. The countries of the Council of Europe, in alignment with the OSCE guidelines on non discrimination on the basis of religious affiliation, do not want such a discriminatory system as the one existing in France. We are open to any discussion on this topic with the French representatives, and respectfully ask the ODIHR to engage in discussions with France to put an end to discrimination against religious minorities in this country.

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=20889&lang=en>