

# COMBATING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ATHEISTS

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Statement to OSCE by Michael Nugent of Atheist Ireland

This is the fifth year that Atheist Ireland has had to highlight the same issue at this conference.

The OSCE has organised events to combat discrimination explicitly against Muslims, Jews, Christians and other religions. Please organise a similar event to combat discrimination explicitly against atheists. We are also discriminated against, and openly so.

In Ireland, the State claims that it is constitutionally obliged to discriminate against atheists in order to buttress religion.

Several UN human rights committees have told Ireland to stop breaching our rights, and the chair of one said that Ireland's lack of separation of church and state makes us seem like a developing country.

The State not only allows but supports and funds this religious discrimination  
The State claims exemption from EU Equality Directive 2000/78  
There is no effective remedy for breaches of human rights  
President, Judges, and Prime Minister must swear religious oaths  
The law against blasphemy breaches right to freedom of expression  
Nearly all State-funded primary schools are privately run by Churches  
State-funded schools can require baptism certs for access  
State-funded schools integrate religion throughout entire curriculum  
State-funded schools discriminate against atheist/minority faith teachers  
The law discriminates against atheists who want to solemnise marriages  
The law against abortion breaches right to health and bodily autonomy  
There is no effective redress for victims of historical abuse by religions

This religious discrimination buttresses the Catholic Church, whose representative here yesterday complained that combatting discrimination and hate against LGBT people could distract from the work of the OSCE, and could prevent the Catholic Church from telling LGBT people that their behaviour is unacceptable.

This is the same Holy See whose Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor once told the BBC that atheists are not fully human.

Religious States promote religion. Atheist States promote atheism. We want a secular State that promotes neither.

A democratic secular State is the only way to respect equally everybody's human right to freedom of religion or belief.