



## Statement by Bürgerbewegung Pax Europa

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

### Session 6

### Freedom of Thought, Religion, and Worship

Warsaw, September 26, 2013

Distinguished delegates, it is a pleasure to be here in this venue to speak on one of the most important freedoms we have, the freedom to believe what we find fitting, be it the tenets of a well-established religion, of a smaller religion or to have no religion at all, as also stressed by the US delegation this morning.

It is fundamental to note that this right is inalienable; it is a so-called negative right inherent to human nature as such. It is not a positive right granted by any authority, secular or divine, and cannot be relativized, limited, or abrogated by any authority, organization or persons.

It is important to recall that freedom of religion is an individual right, not a group right, and problems related to this freedom should be handled as such, and not be framed as group rights.

The direst threat to freedom of religion, though, remains threats and crimes against persons changing their religion. This practice is unfortunately sanctioned by canonical Islamic law, and thus most prevalent in Islamic societies. In this respect we refer to Copenhagen 1990 (9.4)

BPE thus recommend to OSCE, and in particular to ODIHR:

- That OSCE work on freedom of religion issues focus on inalienable individual rights, not group rights,
- That OSCE and pS call upon Islamic leaders to unconditionally repudiate capital punishment for leaving Islam.