



**Associazione culturale “Giuseppe Dossetti: i Valori”**  
**TUTELA E SVILUPPO DEI DIRITTI**

Osservatorio per la Tolleranza e la Libertà Religiosa  
Observatory for Religious Tolerance and Freedom

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2008 – Session 12**

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Intolerance and discrimination against Christians are extensive, they take place in a variety of contexts all over the world and in the OSCE area as well, and they result in suffering for tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of believers.

In Cordoba Conference first, then in Bucharest one, it was remarked that although many OSCE commitments referring to religious freedom, in some participating States intolerant and even discriminatory laws, decisions and behaviour which deny this freedom still subsist against Churches and Christian communities, and against other religious communities, as well as their relative members.

There are also recurring episodes of violence. The last December, a Catholic priest was knifed in Izmir (Turkey) after a discussion with a young people about converting to Christianity. In several participating States religious confessions are harassed by the police or other governmental agencies.

Undue restrictions remain against the registration of Churches and Christian communities. Sometimes it happens that, in the presence of a majority religion, civil authorities do not recognize the legal personality of Churches and these are subjected to limitations in other several issues often linked to acquiring legal personality (for example, acquiring property for a place of worship and other religious use; eligibility to establish educational institutions for training clergy; arranging visits and ministries in hospitals, prisons, and the military; and so forth).

Undue restrictions also persist against the importation and distribution of religious material as well as there are visa restrictions for missionaries or volunteers.

Moreover not always the OSCE participating States respect the right of parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions. For example, in Sweden, it will soon become illegal even for private faith schools to teach religious doctrines, except for those directly related to religion classes.



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*In fine* hate crimes and hate speeches against majority religions cannot be considered less serious than those against minority religions because hate crimes and hate speeches are serious *per se*. Therefore the Observatory that I represent urges ODIHR to continue to monitor and report the recurring episodes of intolerance and discrimination against Christians, not only East by also West of Vienna.

For all this reasons, my Observatory also urges the OSCE participating States to follow-up the Cordoba and Bucharest Conferences by convening in 2009 a Conference at appropriate level to examine in a balanced way intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Jews, Muslims and members of others religions in the OSCE area, within the realm of existing commitments.

My Observatory urges the OSCE participating States to fully respect and guarantee the religious freedom trough the compliance with all the OSCE commitments in the area of this freedom and urge the ODIHR to pay attention to the effective implementation of the OSCE commitments to fight discriminations against Christians and to ensure the religious freedom in the whole OSCE Region.

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