

OSCE HDIM 2011  
Warsaw

Working session 2: Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.

## ARGUMENT OR ABUSE?

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Mr Chairman, I want to ask a question and suggest an answer.

Early this year, the European Humanist Federation, of which my organization is a member, submitted a paper called "Religion in Society" to the EU-sponsored academic collaboration called Religare.

It was a substantial, moderate, carefully argued paper, generous in its understanding of the importance of religion.

**Question:** Why then did the Observatory for Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians respond with a paper that was so full of falsehoods, abuse and hate against the EHF? Let me quote:

The EHF submission appears to have the sole purpose of attacking other worldviews and lifestyles. Such an ideology, which defines itself *ex negativo* (i.e. solely through its opposition to other people's beliefs and values) . . .

the militantly anti-religious views of EHF . . .

radically opposed to human rights . . .

the ideology underpinning the EHF submission (which is better known and more appropriately described as militant atheism rather than humanism) is one that by its very nature must be intolerant . . .

This negative, hostile, and intolerant attitude . . .

the EHF submission is full of rather unsubstantiated negative stereotypes, through which religion is identified as the single source of all social evils . . .

militantly anti-religious motivation . . .

An ideology that has the one and only purpose of attacking other worldviews and lifestyles . . .

the negative and destructive character of the atheist ideology . . .

an agenda that is not conducive, but radically opposed, to human rights. . .

the aberrant approach of secularism . . .

EHF's grotesquely aberrant reasoning virulent campaigning . . .

revelatory not only of their irrationality, but also of their intolerance and of their deeply rooted opposition against the very same human rights to which, on the surface, they pay profuse lip service. . .

EHF and other demagogues . . .

So much for quotes from this extraordinary document from the organization whose Dr. Martin Kugler has also said "It is important to note that hate crimes begin with mocking [and] negative stereotyping"!

**Another question:** why did the Vatican news agency Zenit give such a detailed and uncritical report of this shoddy paper from the Observatory?

**May I suggest an answer?** Is it because they have no better response to the European Humanist Federation's propositions? Are they unable to deal with the EHF's arguments, firmly based as they are on human rights, equality and non-discrimination?

I invite the conference to judge. Both papers are on the European Humanist Federation website. Look for yourselves at [www.humanistfederation.eu](http://www.humanistfederation.eu) (under Policy/Our View of Society).

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