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**Working Session 15: Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.**

*Statement delivered by Francesco Di Lillo<sup>1</sup>  
OSCE 2015 Human Dimension Meeting, Warsaw, Poland, September 30, 2015.*

Madame Moderator, Excellences, Dear Participants,

I am honoured to represent The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a Christian faith with more than 15 million members worldwide and established in most of the OSCE participating States, on matters related to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief. Thank you for the work that you are doing to protect this important right.

We would like to address the participating States about the importance of regular, structured and open dialogue with churches and religious communities. Religion and government cannot ignore each other, nor need they be enemies. The spheres of spirituality and law differ, but they cooperate best when freedom of conscience and the common good make space one for another.<sup>2</sup> This engagement is based on an understanding that promotes civility, protects inalienable rights and works toward the common good. Of course, this civic engagement does not require that religion has the most powerful voice in society. It simply accords religion an equal opportunity to voice its concerns and shape important public matters.<sup>3</sup>

We commend the European Union for its commitment to an open, transparent and regular dialogue with churches, according to Article 17 TFEU and we invite participating States to adopt similar provisions at the national and local level, if not already in place.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Head of Office, European Union Office of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

<sup>2</sup> Doctrine and Covenants 134:2, <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/134?lang=eng>

<sup>3</sup> "Religious Values in the Public Square," see <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/religious-values-in-the-public-square>.