

# OBSERVATORY ON INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN EUROPE

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"Tolerance and Non-Discrimination II, including Promotion of Gender balance, preventing and responding to hate crimes, combating intolerance and discrimination"

This is an intervention, presented by Barbara Vittucci, on behalf of the **Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians**, an organization that monitors and documents such cases in Europe ([www.IntoleranceAgainstChristians.eu](http://www.IntoleranceAgainstChristians.eu)).

Increasingly Christians report to us that they are being discriminated against or treated in an intolerant manner or that they become victims of hate crimes, East and West of Vienna:

- We notice an increase in **vandalizing and desecration of Christian symbols and Church buildings** in several countries, esp. West of Vienna.
- **Religious people have reportedly been attacked on streets**, mainly with insults.
- **Social marginalisation** is often a result of declaring oneself as a Christian. In the work place this has been a reason for discrimination in numerous cases.
- Problems are caused by so-called **hate speech legislation** – penalizing expression of the Christian faith,
- In the **area of education** parents' rights regarding the education of their children are being violated,
- Discriminations are occurring in the area of **freedom of conscience, which is currently under threat through the McCafferty report proposed in the Council of Europe**, which will be voted on tomorrow, October 7th.
- Problematic is **anti-discrimination legislation**, which **causes reverse discrimination against Christians**. An example of which is the directive, which the European Union is currently finalizing.

Therefore we recommend to the OSCE/ODIHR and the OSCE Missions,  
for the OSCE Summit in Kazakhstan in view of the important course it will be  
setting,

**1) To recognise and condemn the problem of discrimination against Christians** in its different features, both in the Eastern and Western countries of the OSCE (East and West of Vienna) and to **reiterate** the findings and conclusions of the **Roundtable** on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians held in Vienna on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009

**2) To use all their means to work against intolerance against Christians,** inter alia by

- seeing the problem as one of their core issues in the framework of its work on tolerance related issues
- raising awareness throughout the OSCE region
- assessing legislation in the participating States in view of discrimination and intolerance against Christians
- encouraging the media not to enflame prejudices against Christians
- further developing the Tolerance And Non Discrimination Information System webpage (<http://tandis.odihr.pl/>) with more specific information
- devoting specific attention to the issue of discrimination in their reports on human rights offences, in particular on hate crimes and hate events against Christians.

3) **We ask Mr. Mario Mauro**, the OSCE Personal Representative on Combating Discrimination, including a focus on discrimination against Christians and members of other religions, **to give consistent attention to the fact that discrimination against Christians is part of the core issues of his mandate.**