

Statement on difficulties facing religious minorities

Session 15 - 2015 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting at Warsaw

“Dear moderator,

I speak as representing THE VALUES FOUNDATION, an NGO that cares for the interests of small Christian minorities, and I'd like to speak briefly on the problems that exist today where many genuine religious communities, some of them very old; are being labelled and classified by authorities as dangerous cults or sects.

This issue is important to raise as these minorities should enjoy the collective dimension of their freedom of belief as this Working Session is concerned about.

In recent years there has been a determined move by various anti-cult organizations to demonize small churches as dangerous and destructive, using the argument that if they do not follow mainstream religion, they must therefore be a cult, and a danger to society; and this often gets negative media attention which makes the situation worse.

This is putting pressure on member states of the OSCE to take action against many genuine Christian groups which results in discrimination of basic freedoms.

These Christian groups must be able to manifest their conscience and faith, to operate schools that fulfil national curriculum, to have fiscal benefits as appropriate to religious churches, be recognized that they are for public-benefit – many of them have integrated with society for many years and are part of Europe's cultural heritage.

We call on the OSCE to issue guidelines to highlight this concern to member states.

We also call on the Swedish, French and UK delegations, where we are aware of genuine Christian minorities being demonized and targeted as dangerous, suicidal cults or sects, that they do more to understand the seriousness of this and provide the needed protection of the fundamental rights of these minorities.

We would appreciate their interest in our concerns and to discuss further with them.

Thank you”

The Values Foundation
www.values-foundation.org
info@values-foundation.org