

European Humanist Federation

RECOMMENDATION TO HDIM 2008

The European Humanist Federation, while unreservedly endorsing Freedom of Religion or Belief, is concerned at the growing tendency to identify people on the basis of their religion, because this:

- gives too much importance to religion or belief, a factor that for most people is not highly significant in their self-identity;
- gives undue power to religious leaders, despite clear evidence that they do not democratically represent the views and beliefs of their co-religionists;
- tends to a recognition of so-called group rights, which are an inherent denial of full human rights to individuals within those artificially designated religious groups;
- leads those in power to overlook and discriminate against people with non-religious beliefs or no religious beliefs, whose existence should instead be explicitly recognized in OSCE/ODIHR policies and documents;
- creates artificial barriers not conducive to social harmony and cohesion.

The EHF accordingly recommends that ODIHR takes note of these dangers and promotes more effective implementation of secularism in the sense of separation of religion and politics.