



**Associazione culturale “Giuseppe Dossetti: i Valori”  
TUTELA E SVILUPPO DEI DIRITTI**

Osservatorio per la Tolleranza e la Libertà Religiosa  
Observatory for Religious Tolerance and Freedom

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**Statement of Mattia F. Ferrero  
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Intolerance and discrimination against Christians should not be underestimated. They are extensive, they take place in a variety of contexts all over the world and in the OSCE area as well, and they result in suffering for tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of believers. There are recurring episodes of violence. As was remembered yesterday, just few months ago, in Turkey, three Christian Bible publishers were brutally killed in what had appeared to be a religious-motivated attack. In the same country, one year ago, a Catholic priest, Fr Santoro, was also brutally murdered.

In Cordoba Conference first, then in Bucharest one, it was remarked that although many OSCE commitments referring to religious freedom, in some participating States intolerant and even discriminatory laws, decisions and behaviour which deny this freedom still subsist against Churches and Christian communities, and against other religious communities, as well as their relative members.

Undue restrictions remain against the registration of these Churches and communities. Sometimes it happens that, in the presence of a majority religion, civil authorities do not recognize the legal personality of Churches and these are subjected to limitations in other several issues often linked to acquiring legal personality (for example, acquiring property for a place of worship and other religious use; eligibility to establish educational institutions for training clergy; obtaining visas for missionaries or volunteers; arranging visits and ministries in hospitals, prisons, and the military; and so forth). Undue restrictions also persist against the importation and distribution of religious material.



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My Observatory urges the OSCE participating States to fully respect and guarantee the religious freedom through the compliance with all the OSCE commitments in the area of this freedom. My Observatory also urges the ODIHR to pay attention to the effective implementation of the OSCE commitments to fight discriminations against Christians and to ensure the religious freedom in the whole OSCE Region.

The specific contribution of Christians to the building and well-being of our democratic systems is an added value for society. Only the acknowledgment of this contribution can be a guarantee and an expression of true pluralism.

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