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Session 3



Thinkout

THINKOUT Récommendations

2 April 2019

SESSION III: The Role of Educational Programs and Civil Society Initiatives as a Means to Address Negative Stereotyping and Stigmatization and Promote Mutual Respect and Understanding: State Responses, Coalition Building, Community Resilience

Thinkout is a non-governmental organisation based in Belgium.

Dear

Let me start with a rather worrying remark. It is as if a lot of countries in Europe are trying to develop multiple ways to circumvent their own laws by creating bylaws or even trying to change their constitution.

A rather remarkable example of this was seen in Belgium, when they introduced the prohibition on the ritual cutting of animals. They changed the proposition into one of ending the suffering for animals when it bounced back from the courts and art.9 of the ECHR and said they would

have discussions with the religious leaders of the Moslim and Jew communities. In the meantime, the prohibition is already in place since 2019 as the only country in Europe and the religious communities are complaining that they haven't even been spoken. A good communication with both of the religious communities here could have solved a lot of problems.

Another point of issue, especially to prevent hatecrimes, is the education of police forces. The esteemed gentleman Ioannis N. Dimitrakopoulos, presented yesterday some interesting numbers which pointed out that hundreds and thousands of hate crimes and attacks aren't being reported.

Alas the situation is that these kind of crimes aren't taken seriously and even being marginalized as childish pranks.

The most remarkable is that there are still no juridical consequences for islamophobia. They won't classify it under racism, as it is no race and all of the insults that are being said are put under freedom of speech.

This is one of the pain points and even a bleeding wound in our society today and especially OSCE can take a leading role in supervising in the education of police forces in the matter of human rights and protecting religious minorities.

The last point where I want to direct your attention to is the education of the bureaucracy in the matter of Human Rights. In a utopia, everybody would know it by hard and would practice it, especially the point of freedom of religion. Instead of what is going on now, where a lot are afraid of what they don't know or never had put the effort to learn from close by. Because it's easier to judge the unknown.

There are a lot initiatives taken, especially in Belgium, in the field of educating different layers of the society. The issue here is that they are allied with a political party and deemed immediately experts in their domain. I would like to make this a point of notice. Do not proclaim people as experts because of their alliances, but let this kind of important work be done by people who have indeed the knowledge, the know-how and expertise. Put these independent pundits to work and push them forward in educations or seminaries.

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