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Delegation of France

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF FRANCE AT THE 2010 OSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE

Warsaw, 4 October 2010

Working session 2: Fundamental freedoms I, including: freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief; presentation of activities of the ODIHR and other OSCE institutions and field operations to implement priorities and tasks contained in the OSCE decisions and other documents

Right of reply by France

The French Constitution guarantees freedom of opinion and freedom of religion and belief. Article 1 of that Constitution states that: “France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social republic. It ensures the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction as to origin, race or religion. It respects all beliefs”.

Within this constitutional framework, France guarantees and protects the free exercise of all religions. The latter must, naturally, respect the laws and regulations, as in any State based on the rule of law. It is only violations of these laws and regulations that are punished by the law.

The About-Picard law of 12 June 2001 does not infringe freedom of belief. It provides that the exercise of psychological control as a result of moral or physical pressure on particularly vulnerable persons causing them to commit acts that are harmful to themselves or to another must be curbed by law.

The task of the Interministerial Mission for Monitoring and Combating Sect-Related Deviancy (*Milviludes*) is to co-ordinate the work of the public authorities in preventing and suppressing such violations of the laws and regulations as may be committed by individuals or organizations in the specific area of sect-related deviancy. The Mission does not work on the basis of an *a priori* definition of the concept of sect nor *a fortiori* on the basis of a list.