

Introduction by Danièle Muller-Tulli, President of FECRIS
Conference on Women in Cults, Gurus and Victims
Sofia Bulgaria, May 21, 2016

The title for our reflection during this “Women in Cults, Gurus and Victims” conference was not chosen by chance, on the contrary.

As you all know, FECRIS benefits of participatory status in the Council of Europe, has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and finally is a participant in the Fundamental Rights Platform of the European Union. These institutions, anxious to defend the fundamental rights of the citizens of the democracies of which they are part, have all placed a special emphasis in their programmes on the defense of women and children's rights. Therefore, it seemed essential to devote one day of study to the question of women in cults, because their role is vast, important, and often forgotten.

The added value of FECRIS is without a doubt the variety of the presentations as well as the geographic diversity of the speakers, who came from North America and Eastern and Western Europe to support their colleagues from Bulgaria, where the CRNRM “Research Centre for New Religious Movements”, located in Sofia, is a member of our Federation and coorganiser of this conference.

All our thanks go to Professor Ivan ZHELEV Dimitrov, President of CRNRM (Centre of Research on New Religious Movements) and to Prof. Stoyan Denchev, Dean of the SULTIT State University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, who could unfortunately not be here with us to open this conference due to another important event in Bulgaria. He has, nonetheless sent a warm welcoming letter to the participants which will be read out. I wish you all an excellent conference.