



CONFERENCE OF INGOs
OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Recommendation adopted on 27 January 2011

CONF/PLE(2011)REC1

“Sectarian Excesses and Violations of Human Rights”

The Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe,

Recalling Recommendation 1412 (1999) of the Parliamentary Assembly on illegal activities of sects, following its Recommendation 1178 (1992) on sects and new religious movements;

Recalling that Recommendation 1412 (1999) attached special attention to protecting those most vulnerable, and particularly children;

Recalling that the Parliamentary Assembly recommended in particular the setting up of national or regional information centres on groups of a religious, esoteric or spiritual nature, education programmes on important schools of thought and on religion, the setting-up of non-governmental organisations for the victims and the families of victims, particularly in eastern and central European countries, and in conclusion, to set up a European observatory as a facilitator of exchange of information between national centres;

Recalling the reply of the Committee of Ministers (765th meeting/19 September 2001) stressing that the main objective of Recommendation 1412 (1999) was to protect human dignity and the most vulnerable people and expressing its agreement with the ideas set out, but considering that, for resource reasons, it was not in a position to accede to the proposal to set up a European observatory, without however excluding the possibility that the Council of Europe could facilitate and promote networking among national information centres;

Observing that the occurrence of sectarian excesses is a cause of infringements of human rights, in particular in the fields of health, education and the respect of private and family life;

Observing that the organisations generating sectarian excesses often act under the cover of freedom of religion and endanger the fundamental freedoms of citizens and consequently constitute a threat to democracy;

Observing that, benefitting from the permeability of borders, the phenomenon is spreading in central and eastern European countries whilst it is not decreasing in the countries of Western Europe;

Observing that to date only two States (Belgium, France) have taken legislative measures to follow up the above mentioned Recommendations and that some other States (Austria, Germany, Switzerland...) have taken or supported measures of observation and information with regard to sectarian excesses;

Concerned by the fact that the Member States of the Council of Europe have not, to date, taken measures to face the challenge of sectarian excesses, which constitute of attacks on human rights and the basic principles of any democratic society;

Invites the Parliamentary Assembly,

To encourage the implementation of its Recommendation 1412 (1999), and in particular the creation of national or regional information centres on sectarian excesses;

Invites the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

To work on the subject 'Sectarian Excesses and Violations of Human Rights' and to also encourage the creation of national or regional centres of information on sectarian excesses;

Invites the Committee of Ministers

To support the creation and operation of a European network of the national and regional information centres on sectarian excesses with the objective of exchanging information and developing common measures.