

Statement on Freedom of Assembly and Association at the OSCE HDIM, Sept 25, 2012, on behalf of the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe.

OBSERVATORY ON INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN EUROPE

The Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians monitors and documents the incidents of intolerance and discrimination against Christians, focusing on West of Vienna. In over 700 cases, researched and documented in past six years, in a fragmented landscape of social hostility, negative stereotyping, vandalism, hate incidents and subtle infringements of different rights and freedoms, a concerning pattern becomes visible.

We are very grateful to OSCE and ODIHR for being aware of the problem, which is recognized by the TANDIS as well as several documents of the ministerial council. OSCE must be applauded for seeking answers to this growing problem in numerous meetings, such as the expert round table in Vienna in 2009, seminars on how to combat hate incidents against Christians in 2010 and 2011, and a parliamentary assembly resolution in 2011.¹

With regard to freedom of assembly, on our website www.IntoleranceAgainstChristians.eu you find cases of Christians events, Christian prayer meetings or Church services as well as Christian manifestations being disturbed or attacked by groups which disagree with different standpoints these Christian groups hold.

We recorded such hate incidents for example in Belgium, Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain. In Madrid such incidents took also place at the Catholic Event of World Youth Day.

The groups include the radical left – anti-religion groups, antifa groups; radical feminists groups or radical LGBT activist.

The methods include verbal insult (such as drawing of crucified pigs), incitement to violence, overboarding noise to make speaking impossible, as well as the blocking of roads or doors of conference halls, material damage and even physical attacks.

¹ June 26-27, 2012, OSCE/ODIHR on the role of civil society in combating Hate Crimes against Christians; September 12, 2011, OSCE High-Level Meeting on Preventing and Responding to Hate Incidents and Crimes against Christians; July 2011: OSCE Parliamentary Assembly urges states to combat intolerance and discrimination against Christians in the West; March 4, 2009: OSCE Round Table in Vienna on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians; 2005, 2006 and 2007: the Ministerial Council of OSCE emphasizes to combat intolerance against religion, including Christianity.

Our recommendations:

- We recommend to OSCE and participating states: to improve the training and raise awareness for law enforcement officers, so that the perpetrators will be found and brought to justice - because what is happening is not just a polite disagreement.
- We recommend to participating states not to react to these atrocities by prohibiting or geographically limiting manifestations for the protection of unborn life. This would be in itself a violation of freedom of assembly.
- We recommend to revisit the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly which encouraged "in view of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, that legislation in the participating States, including labour law, equality law, laws on freedom of expression and assembly, and laws related to religious communities and right of conscientious objection be assessed."²

To conclude I would like to offer to all of you our research, documentations and reports, which you find on our website, as well as any cooperation for the protection of rights and freedoms of all people, including Christians.

Contact us!

Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians

Möllwaldplatz 5, A-1040 Vienna

Tel: +43 / 1 / 274 98 98, Mob: +43 / 650 / 25 26 933

observatory@IntoleranceAgainstChristians.eu

www.IntoleranceAgainstChristians.eu

Twitter: [OIDACEurope](#)

Facebook: [OIDACEurope](#)

² The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly recommended in July 2011 in Belgrade that a "public debate on intolerance and discrimination against Christians be initiated and that the right of Christians to participate fully in public life be ensured" (12); that "in view of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, that legislation in the participating States, including labour law, equality law, laws on freedom of expression and assembly, and laws related to religious communities and right of conscientious objection be assessed" (13); and "encourages the media not to spread prejudices against Christians and to combat negative stereotyping" (15).