

Religious Diversity
and Secular Models
in Europe
Innovative Approaches
to Law and Policy



Negotiating Religious Pluralism in Europe:

Between the EU and the ECHR

RELIGARE Policy Dialogue Meeting

28th June 2012 (09.30 – 17.30) European Parliament Strasbourg, France







PRESENTATION AND OBJECTIVES

In Europe, religious questions are increasingly negotiated in a supranational arena, not only between domestic legal orders and European judges, but between two European level systems: the EU and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) of the Council of Europe.

While religious matters remain at the margins of EU competence, questions of religious pluralism are increasingly reaching European Courts, particularly where they intersect with human rights, a trend set to be reinforced by the EU's future accession to the ECHR and the now binding nature of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Freedom of religion, and related rights such as non-discrimination on grounds of religious belief, are likely to constitute a path to dialogue between both European systems. Strasbourg jurisprudence and the myriad principles, standards and recommendations developed by the Council of Europe will become increasingly important in the elaboration of religious freedom and belief in Europe.

The third RELIGARE Policy Dialogue Meeting Negotiating Religious Pluralism in Europe: Between the EU and the ECHR seeks to shine a light on the role of the Council of Europe and European Court of Human Rights in the developing field of law and religion in Europe. It asks: What is – and what should be - the role of the Council of Europe in resolving questions of religious pluralism? To what extent do we see a mutual influence between European legal systems and courts – do they adhere to a common set of principles? And what are the potential implications of the EU's accession to the ECHR in the domain of religion?

By helping to clarify the complex legal and political framework governing questions of religious pluralism in Europe, the meeting will provide a critical platform for the EU-funded **RELIGARE** research project (*Religious Diversity and Secular Models in Europe: Innovative Approaches to Law and Policy*) to devise and refine policy recommendations for European and national policymakers.

The Policy Dialogue Meeting is divided into **three sessions**:

The morning session will hear "key witnesses" – leading experts in the field of religion - discuss the relevance of religious pluralism for contemporary Europe and why questions of religious diversity should be addressed in the European sphere.

The two afternoon sessions will hear presentations by Council of Europe policymakers and legal practitioners discussing the role and influence of the Council of Europe in the field of religious pluralism and the current and future interactions between the European legal systems and Courts. Special attention will be paid to the state of affairs of the EU's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights and its implications on religious pluralism debates in the scope of EU policy making.

The event is co-organised by the **Centre for European Policy Studies**, the **Catholic University of Leuven** and the **National Centre for Scientific Research** (PRISME-University of Strasbourg).

Simultaneous translation will be provided in French and English.

- 09.30 10.00 Registration
- **10.00 10.30** Welcome Panel
 - Marie-Claire Foblets, Coordinator of the RELIGARE project University of Leuven
 - Alain Beretz, President of the University of Strasbourg
 - Francis Messner, Director of PRISME, University of Strasbourg

Chair: Jørgen Nielsen, University of Copenhagen [TBC]

- 10.30 12.30 Panel I: Religious Pluralism in the European Sphere
 - Presentations:
 - Amina Wadud, Virginia Commonwealth University
 - Olivier Roy, European University Institute
 - **Discussants:**
 - Veit Bader, University of Amsterdam
 - Prakash Shah, Queen Mary University of London
 - **Open Discussion**
- 12.30 13.30 Lunch break
- 13.30 14.00 Presentation of RELIGARE research tools
 - Silvio Ferrari, University of Milan
- 14.00-15.30 Panel II: Negotiating Religious Pluralism in Europe: between the ECJ and the ECtHR
 - <u>Chair</u>: Silvio Ferrari, University of Milan
 - <u>Presentations</u>:Juliane Kokott, Advocate-General, ECJ
 - Vladimiro Zagrebelsky, Former Judge, ECtHR
 - Christos Rozakis, Former Judge, ECHR
 - **Jean-Paul Costa**, Former President of the ECtHR [TBC]
 - **Discussants:**
 - **Rik Torfs**, University of Leuven [TBC]

15.30 – 17.00 Panel III: The Council of Europe and freedom of religion: what impact for national and EU policy?

Chair: Mathias Rohe, University of Erlangen

Presentations:

- Stephanos Stavros, Executive Secretary of ECRI, Council of Europe
- Matthias Kloth, Human Rights Law & Policy Division, Council of Europe
- Ambassador Margarita Gega, Permanent Representative of Albania to the Council of Europe, Chairperson of the Ministers' Deputies
- Representative of the Commission of Venice [TBC]

Discussants:

- Lisbet Christoffersen, University of Copenhagen
- Kristin Henrard, Erasmus University of Rotterdam

17.00 – 17.30 Closing Remarks by Marie-Claire Foblets, University of Leuven

Practical Information

Location: European Parliament, Strasbourg (France)

Registration meeting point: Entrance "Winston Churchill" only

Room: N1.3



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