



Doc. 13033

29 September 2012

Combating all forms of discrimination based on religion

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 1987 (2011)

Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully considered Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1987 (2011) on “Combating all forms of discrimination based on religion” and drawn it to the attention of the governments of its member States.
2. The Committee of Ministers recalls its Declaration on religious freedom, adopted in January 2011. The Council of Europe has a key role to play in strengthening democratic stability to counter all forms of intolerance, discrimination and extremism, including those linked to religion or non-religious beliefs. The pursuit of this objective is included in the terms of reference of intergovernmental co-operation structures and of the relevant monitoring mechanisms. The Committee of Ministers invites the Assembly to refer to the reply which it gave to Recommendation 1927 (2010),² which contains full information on this subject.
3. Since the adoption of that reply, the Committee of Ministers has set up a new Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP), which gives particular attention to the identification, exchange and dissemination of examples of good practices in respect of safeguarding religious pluralism, in ways which respect freedom of thought, conscience, religion and conviction. Furthermore, in co-operation with the European Wergeland Centre, the Council of Europe has initiated preparation of a “roadmap” to help public authorities to implement Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)12 on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education.
4. A crucial role in the field of the combating of discrimination based on religion also devolves to ECRI, which targets acts of violence, hate speech, discrimination and intolerance against all religious communities. In several of its country reports, ECRI has urged authorities to continue and step up their efforts effectively to combat violent manifestations of religious intolerance. ECRI has, *inter alia*, recommended that the authorities resolve as quickly as possible the issue of the administrative registration of minority communities and religious groups.
5. In their respective fields of responsibility, the aforementioned Council of Europe bodies work in co-operation with the partner international organisations to which the Assembly refers. The Committee of Ministers encourages them to continue along these lines.
6. Where it is more directly concerned itself, the Committee of Ministers in 2011 introduced new procedures for supervising the execution of judgments of the Court. These are intended to make the supervision of execution more effective and transparent and to target particularly important cases, which require urgent measures, such as those to which the Assembly refers. The Committee of Ministers notes that the signature and ratification of Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights by Council of Europe member States could contribute to develop Europe's capacity to combat discrimination based on religious grounds.

1. Adopted at the 1151st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (18-19 September 2012).

2. Cf. CM/AS(2011)Rec1927 final.



7. In conclusion, the Committee of Ministers assures the Assembly of the importance that it attaches to dialogue with the representatives of religious communities and major humanist and philosophical movements, in the framework of the Council of Europe Exchanges on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue. It welcomes the active participation of the Assembly in these Exchanges. During its chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, Albania hosted the 2012 Exchange on 3 and 4 September 2012 in Durrës, on the theme of "Taking responsibility for tomorrow's Europe: the role of young people in the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue".