



Rappresentanza Permanente d'Italia
OSCE

ITALY'S STATEMENT AT THE WARSAW HUMAN DIMENSION CONFERENCE

PLENARY SESSION IV: FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS II

Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief; Freedom of assembly and association, National Human Rights Institutions

Warsaw, 6 October 2023

Mr Chair,

Italy aligns with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to add some remarks in a national capacity.

Italy attaches the utmost importance to the protection of freedom of religion or belief and to the promotion of interfaith dialogue and cooperation. These two goals lie at the heart of our foreign policy as two mutually reinforcing objectives.

Freedom of Religion or Belief should not be advanced only on a purely inter-governmental level but through a multi-stakeholders approach, that involves also civil society at large and religious actors in particular, both leaders and community members.

We need to multiply our efforts to translate general statements into concrete policies and measures that can have a positive impact on people's lives. Challenges to real equality, irrespective of religion or belief, lie everywhere and are changing over time. When people are discriminated against or even persecuted because of their religion or belief, stability, prosperity and peace are under threat. When a religious community suffers, the whole society is impoverished and at risk.

For these reasons, Italy has contributed to two OSCE initiatives in the field of Freedom of Religion or Belief: the Inter-religious and Inter-faith Dialogue and Partnerships (IIDP)

Toolkit and the ODIHR upcoming publication “Understanding Anti-Christian Hate Crimes and Addressing the Security Needs of Christian Communities: A Practical Guide”.

Mr Chair,

In this historical phase of increasing international polarization, political leadership should leverage the common values shared by different religions to reduce distances and resolve differences. Recent cases of vilification of the Quran are deplorable acts that deserve the strongest condemnation. It is necessary, however, to avoid these gestures becoming an opportunity to pit countries or religions against each other and create tensions within our societies.

Thank you.