



Rappresentanza Permanente d'Italia
OSCE

ITALY'S STATEMENT AT THE 2024 WARSAW HUMAN DIMENSION CONFERENCE PLENARY SESSION 7: FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS II

Warsaw, 7 October 2024

Madam Chair,

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

The protection of freedom of religion or belief, the right of persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities and the fight against hate speech are crosscutting priorities of Italy's foreign policy.

Italy upholds the principles of religious freedom as enshrined in the Italian Constitution. We firmly believe that everyone should have the right to practice his/her faith without fear of discrimination or persecution. This commitment is reflected in our laws and our active engagement in promoting interfaith dialogue.

In 2019 the Italian Parliament established a fund to support persecuted Christian minorities in crisis area. Through this fund, we are currently supporting projects across the Middle East and Africa with a view to improving the economic condition of persons belonging to Christian minorities.

In addition, in 2023 the government appointed a Special Envoy for Religious Freedom and the Protection of religious minorities in the world, with a particular focus on Christian minorities.

However, challenges to achieve real equality in the OSCE region, regardless of religion or belief, are still present and change over time, also influenced by the international political context. When people are discriminated against or even persecuted because of their religion or faith, stability, prosperity, and peace are threatened.

For these reasons, Italy has contributed to the ODIHR publication "Understanding Anti-Christian Hate Crimes and Addressing the Security Needs of Christian Communities: A

Practical Guide” and is supporting ODIHR’s training activities for young people in the Western Balkans on issues related to the promotion of freedom of religion or belief and non-violent communication.

Madam Chair,

Collaboration among Participating States is crucial.

Italy stands firm in its commitment to promoting interfaith dialogue and education, which are essential to foster cooperation between communities and different faiths and help prevent violent extremism and discrimination.

Thank you.