



Associazione culturale “**Giuseppe Dossetti: i Valori**”
TUTELA E SVILUPPO DEI DIRITTI

Osservatorio per la Tolleranza e la Libertà Religiosa
Observatory for Religious Tolerance and Freedom

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In many participating States there is a growing opposition to the public role of religion, which in some cases has resulted in the exclusion of religious symbols and attire from public areas. Muslim communities are particularly targeted but no religion is immune from such phenomena because when one religion is under attack, all religions are under attack.

There is a number of participating States that adopted, or intend to adopt, legal measures seeking to restrict the wearing of religious symbols in public areas. As the UN Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief said: “it’s regrettable that societies with high level of income and education have openly expressed their aversion to see religious symbols in public”. The UN Human Rights Committee has repeatedly sustained – by arguing from the article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – that freedom of religion or belief encompasses the right to display religious symbols and wear religious attire in public space. We should always bear in mind that according to the VII Principle of the Helsinki Final Act in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms participating States should fulfil their obligations as set forth in the International Covenants on Human Rights.

Legal measures that forbid *tout court* to wear religious wearing in public space or on the workplace not only violate freedom of religion or belief but are also seriously discriminatory. The fact that they affect in the same manner the believers of all religious communities is not sufficient to exclude their discriminatory nature. In this case, in fact, discrimination does not take place between believers of different religious communities, but between those who wish manifest publicly their religious beliefs and those who manifest through their wearing or symbols other kinds of beliefs (such as political ideas or trade unionist affiliation and so on).