



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

OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Implementation Meeting on  
Freedom of Religion or Belief  
Vienna, 9-10 July 2009

Session III: Places of Worship

Statement by Dr. Mattia F. Ferrero  
Coordinator of the  
Observatory for Religious Tolerance and Freedom  
Associazione “Dossetti: i Valori”  
(Italy)

As remarked by several OSCE meetings, both East and West of Vienna there are recurring episodes of profanation of places of worship and cemeteries of Christian communities both as these are minority religion as well as they are majority one. Too often these crimes happen without an adequate response from the participating States. The ODIHR and the Participating States should pay more attention to these episodes in the questionnaire collecting data from national data collection point. Moreover in training of law enforcement agencies, media and civil society the ODIHR should consider carefully these hate crimes also if perpetrated against majority religions.

I would also point out that the right of property and the right to religious freedom implies the return to religious communities of the place of worship which were confiscated by public authorities and these properties should be returned to the original owner and not allocated to other religious communities.

As regard the building of mosques in non-Islamic States, you all know that there are people who subdue this right to the reciprocity with Islamic Countries but – as was remarked also by the UN Human Rights Committee – the principle of inter-State reciprocity in human rights has no place. However the availability of place of worship will be subdued to the zoning laws and ordinances which keep into account the demand of an equilibrated and correct land use, of its artistic, cultural, religious and environmental features. In addition the Participating States should promote a dialogue between the Muslim representatives and the religious communities present in the places where mosques are to be built in order to foster a climate of mutual tolerance and respect between believers of different communities.

Finally, in their activity pertaining the place of worship the ODIHR and the Advisory Panel should consult not only the participating States but also the Civil Society in order to better understand the



Associazione “Dossetti: i Valori”  
Observatory for Religious Freedom and Tolerance

requirements of the communities involved.

**Dr. Mattia F. Ferrero**

Coordinator

Associazione “Dossetti: i Valori” - Observatory for Religious Freedom and Tolerance

Mail address:  
Corso Monforte, 2  
I-20122 MILANO  
ITALIA - ITALY

e-mail: [mattia.ferrero@unicatt.it](mailto:mattia.ferrero@unicatt.it)  
Phone: +39-02-89452122  
Fax: +39-02-89452125  
Mobile phone: +39-339-6938096