



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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Religion-motivated hate crimes have received attention only since a few years. We all view with appreciation the efforts of the ODIHR and of the three Personal Representatives of the Chairman-in-Office to combat such phenomena. But much work is still to be done.

Therefore the ODIHR and CiO Personal Representatives should focus their activity more to fulfilling the existing commitments and pay less attention to other concerns out the boundaries of the OSCE *acquis* on which there is not *consensus* and that are not matters of concern of the OSCE because not relevant for the security and stability of the Region.

In the OSCE Area – both East and West of Vienna – there are recurring hate crimes against Churches and Christian communities, as well as their own members, not only where they are minority but also where they are majority. The ODIHR and Participating States should avoid to consider hate crimes against majority religions less serious than those against minority ones because such crimes are serious *per se* and the OSCE commitments are referred to majority religions as well.

Especially East of Vienna there are recurring episodes of violence against properties or people, including murders: in particular the situation of the Christian community in Kosovo and Turkey is a real threat for the security and stability of the Region. Profanations of Christian cemeteries and churches recently occurred in several OSCE Countries.

Too often these crimes happen without an adequate response from the participating States: it is not satisfactory that violence does not derive from the States, since public authorities have the duty to actively support and protect the freedom of religion or belief of its citizens. Regrettably in some cases even the police or other governmental agencies harass Churches and Christian communities.



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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.

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