



Combating Hate Crimes and Ensuring Effective Protection against Discrimination
29 September 2015, Warsaw
Evident and Subtle Hate Crimes against Christians

ECLJ would like to denounce the growing phenomenon of active disrespect and hatred against Christians and the fight against Christianity in Europe. On one hand, Christian churches and graveyards are destroyed, covered with offensive graffiti, robbed, profaned, and desecrated¹, without being properly monitored, reported and sanctioned by the authorities. In 2014, in France, around 150 such cases were identified². And they also happened in Italy, Spain, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Kosovo³. On the other hand, Christian symbols, such as representations of God and saints, and religious objects and clothes are used in the production of “artistic” works (advertising material, various exhibitions, posters, theatre plays and movies), not to serve their religious purpose or to contribute to a debate, but to insult, offend and mock Christians and their religion, and after all, to tread on the values that founded our free society and our civilization. Those cases are “*hate speech*”, covered up under an artistic or creative pretext. In 2014, in France, 49 cases of abuse of Christian symbols were reported⁴. Similar expressions were noted in Spain, Italy, Belgium, and Germany⁵.

The history has demonstrated that repeated propagation of disrespect for a religion is the starting place for future violence against the religious community. Therefore, the ECLJ recommends to the participating States to monitor carefully the growing phenomenon of intolerance against Christians; to collect data with the specific aim at monitoring intolerance and discrimination against Christians; to take appropriate measures in response and to follow up its Parliamentary Assembly resolution of July 2011, “*encourag[ing] the media not to spread prejudices against Christians and to combat negative stereotyping*”.

The ECLJ also calls the OSCE/ODIHR and international governmental human rights institutions to report on intolerance and discrimination against Christians and recommend appropriate action to their member states and to encourage governments to monitor the situation of Christians carefully and to collect segregated data on hate incidents and crimes, including vandalism against Christians. Finally, ECLJ encourages journalists and artists not to oppose or ridicule Christians and Christianity, but to defend Christian principles which founded our free society and which often clash with today’s convictions of the masses.

¹ L’Observatoire de la christianophobie, « *Rapport 2015 sur la christianophobie en France* » ;

² L’Observatoire de la christianophobie, « *Rapport 2015 sur la christianophobie en France* » ;

³ Observatory of Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe ;

⁴ L’Observatoire de la christianophobie, « *Rapport 2015 sur la christianophobie en France* » :10 were made by the media, 14 by private and advertising companies, 15 by public institutions and 10 by artists ;

⁵ L’Observatoire de la christianophobie, *Profanation des symboles chrétiens*; Observatory of Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe.