



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) I: Freedom of Religion or Belief: Issues, Opportunities, and the Specific Challenges of Combatting Anti-Semitism and Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians, Muslims, and Members of Other Religions.

VIENNA 22 June - 23 June 2017

CAP is an association created in 2000 to unite minority religions in Europe to counter discrimination in France and in Europe. It has NGO consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

During the last OSCE session on freedom of religion or belief in September 2016¹, CAP exposed the harmful activities of FECRIS (European Federation of Centres of Research and Information on Sectarianism) in Russia and its integral financing by the French Government.

Members of FECRIS and of its Russian branch, the Saint Ireneus of Lyons Centre for Religious Studies, have been waging for years a campaign against non-Orthodox minorities in order to eradicate them from the Russian territory.

Alexander Dvorkin, Vice-President of FECRIS and Director of the Saint Ireneus of Lyons Centre is the major spokesperson and activist in this campaign against religious minorities in Russia.

The situation of religious minorities has now worsened during the last months: the banning of Jehovah's Witnesses' practice of their faith on the Russian territory; and the sentencing of five Scientologists to two months pretrial detention and a raid of their Church in St Petersburg.

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This phenomenon of religious exclusion could spread now to hurt all the non-Orthodox religions, Catholic newspaper *La Croix* stated in an article of 9 June 2017²:

“Any missionary or evangelization activity such as predication or religious teaching is from now on forbidden outside sites officially religious such as Churches and other places of worship. The introduction of a strict control to avoid any proselytism harms particularly non-Orthodox Christian Churches and other religious minorities, when the sharing of one’s faith is at the heart of any religious life.”

FECRIS claims in its by-laws that its activities do not enter « the religious field » and declares to be neutral in this matter. Why is it then that the Vice-President of FECRIS, an organization registered in secular France and massively financed by the French State, is Alexander Dvorkin, a Russian citizen blessed, financed and missioned by the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch to combat religious minorities perceived as competitors?

We therefore ask the French Government to cease its support to FECRIS and its harmful activities in Russia.