

OSCE Meeting on Freedom of Religion and Belief

Warsaw, Poland, 23. – 26. September 2013

Peter Zöhrer, Vienna, 3. Oct 2013



Dear Leaders,

Last week I have attended the OSCE Conference on Freedom of Religion and Belief in Warsaw. Government delegations from 57 OSCE member-states and over 200 NGO representatives from Civil society were present. Over 130 NGOs made their statements - including FOREF. Even in Europe and the adjoining countries there is a lot of religious persecution. Besides the Balkan and the Stan-countries (Kazakhstan, etc.) also France, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Hungary have been criticised various human rights groups and religious NGOs.

FOREF specifically reported about [state sanctioned persecution of religious minority groups in Hungary](#). Our rapporteur was **Mr. Jura Nanuk**, AfP, founder of CERFI ([Central European Religious Freedom Institute](#)) and former war-photographer for REUTERS. His statement was very clear and FOREF got good feedback. The Hungarian government delegation listened carefully...

We were shocked to learn about the **persecution of Journalists in Russia**: Since 1992 over 132 (!!!) journalists have been killed and the assassins have so far never been identified/punished. Almost all of the victims were critical of Putin...

I have made the proposal to the **OSCE Media panel** to publish guidelines for mainstream media on how to treat religious minority groups (**Anti-discrimination Guide**). This suggestion was very much welcomed by human rights advocates and journalists dealing with that area.

On the final day [FECRIS](#), the France based **European Anti-Sect Umbrella Organisation** has made 2 very outrageous statements in the Plenum, heavily stigmatising religious minorities. We were so shocked!!! After that various representatives of human rights & religious NGOs came to me to make a public response to FECRIS on their behalf. I had just about one hour or less to prepare my statement but I honestly felt that Heaven wants me to do this.

I had 3 minutes for my reply and I did it with indignance and a loud voice. After I left the microphone I saw many delegates smiling at me and holding up their thumbs. The statement is pasted in at the end of this mail.

The conference was a fantastic opportunity for networking and freshening up old friendships. However, most of all it is a wonderful forum for the suppressed and discriminated to voice their concerns to the government delegations. Furthermore, the conference is extremely informative regarding the human dimension within our region/ continent. You hear the things which mainstream media never report and government never tell you.

All in all it was a good impact on behalf of religious freedom in Europe and beyond. There are many representative from mainstream churches (even the Vatican has sent delegates) as well as smaller churches using this opportunity. I hope next time Unification Church from all the providential nations as well as UPF and WFWP can send delegates to the next OSCE conference and take advantage of this unique chance.

- [LINK to OSCE official website](#)
- [OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting:](#)
- [Program & Statements](#)
- [FOREF Statement on Hungary](#)
- [FECRIS Statement](#)
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Heartfelt greetings,
Peter Zoehrer

PS:

Below I have also posted the link to the photos and the text of my reply to the FECRIS Statement.

Sie sind eingeladen, das Album von Peter Zoehrer anzusehen:
[OSCE - WARSAW 24. - 26. 09.2013](#)



OSCE - WARSAW 24. - 26. 09.2013

29.09.2013

von Peter Zoehrer

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OSCE/

Reply to th FECRIS Statement (by Peter Zoehrer, SG of FOREF Europe)

This text is unedited - just for your information

Madame Moderator, distinguished ladies and Gentlemen,

This morning we heard the Statement of FECRIS which is the France based European Anti-Cult umbrella organisation.

For that moment some of my colleagues and I thought we are in the wrong Conference!

This is supposed to be a conference on Freedom of Religion and Belief - not a Conference of hate speech against religious minority groups.

FECRIS was founded in 1994 in Paris and is at present uniting 25 Anti Cult Organisations around Europe

FECRIS calls itself an NGO, yet over 92 % of its budget is financed by the French government.

To get detailed background information on this controversial organisation I recommend to every human rights- and religious freedom advocate to study this book published by a German academic publishing house: "A Case Study on FECRIS"

This organisation is has openly declared it's goal to export highly contraversial and discriminating French Anti-Cult law to the member States of the European Union.

Just some hours ago, during a side event I was shocked to learn, that FECRIS affiliated groups in Romania and Italy were also linked to the horryfying police rates on the Yoga group Misa in Romania as well as the brutal interventions of the Anti-Sect Squads ("Sect-Busters") in Italy. The shameless impunity by the French government in the face of these Europe-wide activities of FECRIS is totally incomprehensible.

Therefore we recommend the OSCE to launch a special investigation on this organisations structure, financing and it's activities.

Thank you for your attention!