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European Parliament Resolution on Cults in Europe

The European Parliament,

having regard to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 4 November 1950,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Articles F(2), K.1 (2), (5), (6), (7) and (9), and K.3 thereof,

- having regard to its resolution of 8 July 1992 on a European Charter of the Rights of the Child(1),

- having regard to Recommendation 1178 (1992) of the Council of Europe on cults and new religious movements,

A. reaffirming its attachment to the basic principles of democracy and the rule of law, such as tolerance, and freedom of conscience, religion, thought, association and assembly,

B. whereas recent events in France, and in particular the deaths of 16 people, three of them children, in the Vercors on 23 December 1995, have drawn attention to the dangerous activities of certain organizations commonly known as 'cults',

C. whereas the activities of groups of cults or cult-type associations are a phenomenon that is rapidly proliferating, and taking increasingly diverse forms, throughout the world,

D. whereas many religious and other sects are perfectly legitimate and are therefore entitled to have their organizations and activities protected under the guarantees of individual and religious freedom enshrined in the European Convention of Human Rights,

E. whereas, however, some cults operating through a cross-frontier network within the European Union are engaging in activities of an illicit or criminal nature and in violations of human rights, such as maltreatment, sexual abuse, unlawful detention, slavery, the encouragement of aggressive behaviour or propagation of racist ideologies, tax fraud, illegal transfers of funds, trafficking in arms or drugs, violation of labour laws, the illegal practice of medicine, and so on,

1. Reaffirms the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to freedom of association, subject to the limits imposed by the need to respect

- the freedom and privacy of the individual and to provide protection from practices such as torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, slavery, etc.;
2. Calls on the Member States to ensure that the legal and police authorities make effective use of existing legal provisions and instruments at national level and cooperate actively and more closely, particularly within Europol, to combat the attacks on the fundamental rights of individuals of which certain cults are culpable;
 3. Calls on the Member States to ascertain whether their judicial, fiscal and penal provisions are adequate to prevent the activities of such cults from resulting in unlawful actions;
 4. Calls on the governments of the Member States not to make the granting of religious status automatic and to consider, in the case of sects involved in undercover or criminal activity, withdrawing their status as religious communities, which confers tax advantages and certain legal protection;
 5. Calls on the Member States, in this regard, to step up the exchange of information between them so as to coordinate data on the cult phenomenon;
 6. Calls on the Council to study, propose and adopt any measures arising from effective implementation of the instruments incorporated in Title VI of the Treaty on European Union and existing Community law in order to control and combat the illegal activities of cults in the European Union; calls on the Council to promote cooperation between the Member States and third countries to trace missing persons and facilitate their reintegration into society;
 7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to show the utmost vigilance to ensure that Community subsidies are not granted to illicit cult-type associations;
 8. Instructs its Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs to propose to the corresponding committees of the national parliaments that their next joint meeting be devoted to the subject of sects; in this way, information on the organization, working methods and conduct of sects in each Member State could be exchanged and conclusions drawn on the best way to restrain undesirable activities by them and on strategies to raise public awareness about them. The conclusions of this meeting should be submitted to the plenary in the form of a report;
 9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Council of Europe.

OJ C 241, 21.9.1992, p. 67.

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ISLAM IN EUROPE (8-9 APRIL)

THURSDAY 8 APRIL

14 h 30 Opening of the conference (Magda Aelvoet, Dr Wolfgang Ullmann)

15 h 15 The question of the freedom of worship in a pluralist religious society (Ursula Caberta y Diaz, Hamburg)

15 h 45 The representation of the Muslim Community in Great Britain (Prof. Dr. Joprgen S. Nielsen, Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Birmingham)

16 h 15 Arab-Islamic philosophy as a central dimension of the European Reformation (Dr Frieder Otto Wolf, MEP)

16 h 45 "The last will be first", Islam in the suburbs in Europe (Dr Christian Guinchard, Bellford)

17 h 15 Islam in Europe and the Turkish community in FRG (Dr Faruk Sen, Institut für Türkei Studien, Essen)

17 h 30 Discussion (Moderator: Magda Aelvoet)

18 h 30 Closure of the debate

FRIDAY 9 APRIL

9 h 30 Islam in Europe - the integration of a religion (Dr Wolfgang Ullmann, MEP)

10 h 00 Islam as a political factor (Prof. Remy Leveau, Institut d'Etudes politiques, Paris)

10 h 30 Islam in the German schools - a judgment in Berlin (Dr Peter von Feldmann (Judge Supreme Administrative Court in Berlin)

11 h 00 The representation of the Muslim Community in Belgium (Lusi Myttenaere, Honorary Ambassador, Brussels)

11 h 30 Islam in Germany and the institutional affair (Prof Dr Hartmut Zinser, Free University, Berlin)

12 h 00 Discussion (Moderator: Ozan Ceyhun, MEP)

13 h 00 Lunch

15 h 00 Round table with questions to the representatives of the political parties

Ignatz Bubis, President of the Central Council of the Jews in Germany

Bishop Dr Walter Kasper, Bishopric Rothenburg Stuttgart

Bishop Karl Luswig Kohlwege, Northelb Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lübeck

Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General Muslim Council of Britain

Abdelkader Mohamed Ali, MEP Spain

Arie Oostlander, MEP Netherlands

Alfred Hartenbach, MEP Germany

Moderator: Dr Wolfgang Ullmann, MEP

18 h 30 End of the debate

A simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the official languages of the European Union and if necessary in Arabic and Turkish. Registration forms must be returned before March 31. They can be obtained at the office of Dr Wolfgang Ullmann Die Grünen

Ass: Anette Kirschling-Lemke Rue Wiertz, B 1047 Brussel Tel. 00 32 2 284 52 75

Fax: 00 32 2 284 92 75 Email: wullmann@europarl.eu.int