

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2009

30 September 2009



Pierre-Arnaud Perrouty, David Pollock, Vera Pegna and Staffan Gunnarson outside the conference hotel

The EHF held a [side meeting](#) at which David Pollock explored the limits that need to be placed on legal recognition of conscientious objections to legal obligations and duties – see [his paper](#) and a [brief intervention](#) he made in the plenary session on religion or belief.

Vera Pegna [spoke in the session on rule of law](#) about the relevant principles and breaches by the Vatican.

Pierre-Arnaud Perrouty [complained of the unfair distribution](#) by the Belgian government of their total budget for support of religion or belief organisations, whereby the Roman Catholic church received an amount quite disproportionate to their popular support.

Staffan Gunnarson spoke on the [discrimination by the European Union](#) in giving more favourable treatment to religious organisations than to the European Humanist Federation, on which the EHF has had repeated exchanges with the Commission.

The OSCE has an expert Advisory Panel which in 2004 produced [guidelines for review of legislation on religion or belief](#). They are planning to revise these and invited questions about them for a lunch-time side-meeting. We [submitted two](#)

[questions](#) and the British Humanist Association another: these figured in the discussion. We shall be responding to their invitation to make submissions to them on possible revisions to the Guidelines.

We also submitted a [recommendation about Hate Language](#), and the Italian Union of Agnostics, Atheists and Rationalists did so too.

In addition to these formal interventions, we held many informal discussions with OSCE staff concerned with human rights and non-discrimination, with the representatives of several governments (Belgium, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan and the United Kingdom among them), and with people from human rights and religious NGOs.