



Participant in the Fundamental Rights Platform of the European Union since 2010  
NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 2009  
INGO with participatory status at the Council of Europe since 2005

## **Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 26 September - 7 October 2011**

### **Working Session 2: Fundamental freedoms I (continued) including Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief**

**We cannot admit that totalitarian organisations, abusing fundamental freedoms, should appeal in the name of these very freedoms to get their anti-democratic and anti-human-rights practices protected.**

Founded in 1994, FECRIS (European Federation of Centres of Research and Information on Sectarianism) declares itself politically, philosophically and religiously neutral. It federates, at present, more than fifty associations of assistance to the victims of sects/cults and their related abuse in thirty countries.

FECRIS is an INGO represented in various international forums i.e. the Council of Europe, the FRA and UNO. This recognition, at international level, is relatively new and shows an awakening awareness to the danger represented by these organisations.

This awareness manifested itself early this year by the acceptance of a Recommendation by the Council of Europe's INGO Commission of Human Rights aiming to reactivate Recommendation 1412 of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly on the illegal activity of sects.

This year, as at preceding sessions, many sectarian and cultist groups use this microphone as a platform to complain against alleged breaches of their human and civil rights. Do not be misled: in fact these are groups which deprive their followers of their fundamental freedoms, the priceless asset of the modern democratic world based above all on the autonomy of individual thought. For many years these groups have practiced a shameless lobbying. The change of paradigm that they prone aims to operate a regression: individual, political, social, economic and cultural. The objectives of these groups is in fact the negation of the values which OSCE defends.

Sects and cults create a permanent “buzz” in the media by hiding behind religious masks, calling for the respect of their human rights and religious freedoms, personal realization and well being or the defence of aberrant therapies. Their declarations are misleading. Their objective to present themselves as victims of persecution whilst delivering their ideological and commercial propaganda.

This lobbying, dangerous for the citizens and for our democracies, should be counterbalanced and the real state of affairs exposed. States are responsible to ascertain that the freedom of

their citizens is not limited or confiscated by group doctrines and practices which scorn individual rights. From this point of view, the victims of such totalitarian groups call on the States for assistance to help them resist against the absolute power which has subjected them and allow them to restructure their lives after the destructive venture they experienced.

May these few words help the defence of individual freedoms both with respect to legislation and national and international judicial institutions.