

Draft minutes of the TRG meeting on human rights

Brussels, 11-12 April 2016

Present:

Fr. Aimilianos Bogiannou (Fr A)
Mag Elizabeta Kitanović (EKi)
Dr Patrick Schnabel (PRS)
Ms Natallia Vasilevich (NV)
Ms Gessje Werkman (GW)

Via skype:

Dr Göran Gunner (GG)
Ms. Pamela Slotte (PS)

Apologies: Ms Fiona Buchanan (FB), Mrs Marta Cecha (MC), Rev Serge Fornerod (SF) Dr Peter Krömer (PK), Rev. Attila Palcso (AP),

1. Church and Society questions on human rights

NV: in Belarus the repressive legislation still exists, but direct repressions against individuals and groups are not very regular, there are very few cases in the domain of freedom of religion or belief. Pastor Alexander Khomtchenko from Donjeck region was witnessing in Brussels in presence of the MEP's about tortures experienced by him from armed groups at the Donjetsk region on religious basis. Hearings were organised by Polish MEP Małgorzata Gosiewska.

Fr. Aimilianos – in Greece a law was adopted in order to be up to date regarding on human rights. This law mostly has been used to suppress the voice of the church, like denial of the ponitici genocide. The government and the church, especially on migration are trying to present situation in such a way that it is not real. Everybody is willing to help the migrants. If the church speaks out against the Greek government it does not reflect positively on the church. People are scared in Brussels due to the attacks. Closing the borders is not a solution that is humanitarian. Turkey – Christian refugees are persecuted in Turkish camps, they find different ways to.. The Ecumenical patriarch will hold the meeting with Pope and Greek Orthodox Archbishop on 16 April in Lesbos. There are many Christians who are still the minority.. People have been harassed as refugees. The majority in the camps create tensions.

Patrick – 2-3 issues in Germany: there have been legal changes concerning the right to asylum, including the question which non-EU-countries can be regarded as safe.. It is being discussed, how far the Turkish deal jeopardizes our own values in terms of the human rights regime in Turkey, freedom of press and media and religion. Also, Turkey has been complaining about satirical covering of their president, so that on the one hand a public debate has begun on the state of freedom of opinion in Turkey and in Germany, on the other on cultural sensitivity and respect. These debates have also helped the rise of a new populist (right wing) party in Germany, AfD, which is now present in diverse local and federal-state legislative chambers. The rise of nationalist movements in Germany and abroad is therefore also debated in the context of the migration challenge.

Geesje –

Geesje – government is against religion, normally there will be new laws and no in “the grace of God” will be removed from Dutch laws, government is trying to forbid Salafism, there is a voice in society that there is freedom of religion or belief guaranteed by the constitution.. there are violations against Christian refugees, should there be separate shelters for Christian refugees.. In the Netherlands if refugees use violence against others, they do not receive benefits.. ACT is active in Samos, Chios and Kos, and the Evangelical church in Greece at Idomeni , there is not enough food, or hygiene materials.. the tensions made by Europe also mean that these violations are going on and on...

Pamela: Archbishop of Lutheran, Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim leaders published statements in the newspaper, where Finland was portrayed as a country where family unification is made ever more difficult. It will increase inequality. The government wants to put a limit for what people have to earn per month if they want to have family unification. Through these laws, they want that make Finland less attractive for migrants. The leaders also criticised Europe for abandoning its own ideals. Churches and other religious organisations are working together for migrants.

Göran: Sweden, everybody needs a passport to enter Sweden, what is happening who can enter Sweden, harassment of Christians in the camps, they hear about Kurdish and Turkish groups, there are tensions growing, increased by the different languages within these groups? More asylum seekers are converting to Christianity, last week there were 15 baptised, people want to join the church, they want to change their beliefs..

New law in Switzerland – a Muslim is excused if he doesn't shake the hand with women - where is this debate going?

Seminar – where are the borders on freedom of religion or belief?

2. Evaluation of the EEAS guidelines

So far there were 2 responses and one is in the pipe line. EKi will send a reminder to the CEC member churches on the EEAS guidelines with a deadline no later than May 15.

3. Programme and the invitation – Summer School

EKi informed TRG on HR about the current draft programme, for the Summer School on Human Rights which was developed with Nikos Maghioros from the Theological school of Thessaloniki. The programme was fine-tuned and the majority of the members of the TRG will attend the SSHR. Several changes were made to the programme. The moderators of the sessions need to leave 20 minutes for the discussions. There should be flexibility for the dinner arrangements as maybe some participants would like to go to down-town.

4. Seminar on Freedom of Religion or Belief in the EP/ autumn 2016

There are 2 dates 27 September and 15 November 2016. The Seminar will be organised by KAS, EPP group and CEC. It will tackle freedom of religion or belief inside the EU and outside the EU.

5 Human Rights Training Manuel VOL II

TRG took the decision to take the part in the universality of human rights in a separate book which will discuss only this concept from different viewpoints. The current programme was

discussed and the frames for the articles were developed by EKI and Patrick Schnabel after the meeting and cases, like Turkey, Germany and UK were added as they belong to different legal systems. It doesn't make sense to have 2 articles of 6000 words, but one article which should take FoRB inside and outside of Europe. Instead of developing the chapter on security and human rights it was suggested by Patrick that this is added under Number 3. Example outside of Europe, especially as the article in question is just about two or three pages long. See below.

Introduction:

1. Freedom of Religion or Belief in Europe and outside of Europe- CoE

(6000 words – footnotes included) followed by several examples: Kromer

- Introduction – history of FoRB – significant for human rights
- Forms of codification (where do we find legal basis for religious freedom?)
- Legal dogmatics (positive and negative aspect, scope, limitations – freedom from religion/of/in religious freedom, individual and collective aspects)
- Variety of state of legal protection (between minimum and maximum - some examples)
- FoRB and other fundamental rights (anti-discrimination, mutually supporting rights like religious/ethnic minorities)
- Current challenges (inside of Europe and outside of Europe)

2. Examples – inside of Europe

- Legal basis – how it is framed in the national context
- Institutional framework – how protection is guaranteed
- Current challenges (including interesting legal cases from national contexts)
- Recommendations
 - a) Croatia (2000 words - footnotes included) – Vlada Djuric
 - b) Montenegro (2000 words) – Nikifor Milovic
 - c) Great Britain (2000 words) - Mark Hill
 - d) Denmark (2000 words) - Kristofferson
 - e) Germany (2000 words) - Patrick Schnabel.
 - f) France (2000 words) – Frédéric ROGNON
 - g) Italy (2000 words) – Peter Ciaccio
 - h) Cyprus (2000 words) – Bishop Porfirios

i) Turkey (2000 words) – Yiannis Ktistakis - ONE training manual for this session.

3. Examples - outside of Europe

a) Contribution from the TRG on peacebuilding

b) Syria and Iraq (2000 words)

c) Pakistan (2000 words)

d) India (2000 words)

e) Eritrea (2000 words) ONE training manual for this session.

4. Specific Human Rights

a) The Rights of the Religious Minorities + training manual

b) The Rights of Women + training manual

c) The Rights of Prisoners + training manual

d) The Rights of People with Disabilities + training manual

e) The Rights of Indigenous People + training manual

Oxford editing system to be used.

3. Halki publication - It was advised that EKi and Fr. Aimilianos will take the French translation out of the publication, and add an English version of the article that Fr. Aimilianos is translating. There should be more photos from the event in the book. In editing it was advised that *thank you* and *addressing* are left out. It was advised by Pamela S that there should be a short bio of two lines on the beginning and at the end the final statement. So far, 3 articles are still pending and the first draft of the publication is still there.

4. EU FRA – Freedom of religion or belief in the EU – Patrick and EKi will work on this paper for the EU Fundamental rights agency on the alleged violations of FoRB in the EU

5. Rights of the Religious Minorities – planning the conference in Croatia

The TRG on human rights discussed the term “minority” and it was said that minority is non-dominant group in society and that it doesn’t depend on the number. It was

agreed that one session should be added as a first one on the concept of minority and that Göran Gunner would prepare it.

21-22 October, 2016 - Venue - CROATIA, ZAGREB

Addressing the Rights of Religious Minorities in/out of Europe

(19-20 TRG on HR in Zagreb, Croatia)

Day 1 – OCTOBER 2016

08:30-09:00	Welcome and Introduction
09:00-10:30	
Session I	What do we mean by the concept of minority? Presentation Göran Gunner, Church of Sweden
10:30-11:00	Beverage break
11:00-12:30	
Session II	European legal framework for religious minorities: Moderator: a) UN b) OSCE c) EU d) Coe
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:30	
Session III	Current challenges for Religious Minorities in Europe Moderator: a) Italy b) Austria c) Croatia d) Turkey
15:30-16:00	Beverage break
16:00-17:30	
Session IV	Current challenges for Religious Minorities outside of Europe Moderator: a) Syria b) Iraq c) Israel Palestine – Middle East Council of churches

18:30 Vespers and the visit to the Baptist Church of Croatia
19:30 Dinner

Day 2 – OCTOBER 2016

09:00-10:30 Discrimination of various minorities
Moderator:
a) Spanish case
b) Roma
c) Migrants

10:30 – 11:00 Beverage break

11:00-12:30 How to continue? Evaluation

12:30-13:00 Conclusion

Departures

6. Writing the paper on common perspective on human dignity (follow-up of conference in Helsinki) – Book on Universality will cover that project.
7. Planning projects in human rights filed for 2017
 - a) The next Summer School should take place in 2017 in Halki Island. The subject will be migration and the partner will be CCME. (preliminary dates for the Summer School on Migration - week 5– 11 of June or week 12-18 June 2017 {Pamela might be absent})
 - b) Second project in 2017 could be on Access to Holy Sites and what should be done in the war zones if they are destroyed. So far among documents there is a Universal code of conduct on holy Sites.

The conference should take place in the Baltic States or Serbia in

13-15 November and 9-11 November 2017..

8. The meetings of the TRG on Human Rights in 2017 – use doodle

Feb. 20-21 2017 TRG on HR and 13-14 Feb. – TRG on Human Rights

Sept. 18-19 and 21-22 Sept. 2017 – TRG on Human Rights

9. Ukraine – the follow-up will be done on the CEC political level
10. Montenegro – Law on religious freedom to be monitored
11. On the question of Syria and Iraq – CEC should develop relations with Middle East Council of Churches.
12. Female genital mutilation – CDDH – CoE – not to be added on the CEC Human Rights plate as there are more specialized organizations dealing with this issue.
13. EPRID meetings – EKi informed that she became chair of the working group on FoRB in the EU. This position is for one year.
14. 15 CEC Assembly – TRG on Human Rights will need to develop programme 2018-2024.
15. The next meeting of the TRG will be on 20 October 2016 in Zagreb and linked with the conference of 21-22 October 2016 on Rights of Religious minorities