



European Union

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

15th Session

Item 3

Geneva, 13 August 2015

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

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EU Statement

Item 3: Discussion on Reflection Papers and Research Proposals

Mr. President,

The European Union wishes to thank the Advisory Committee for its work and for the discussions held during this week's 15th session of the Committee. We are grateful for this opportunity to engage in the discussion on the Reflection Papers and Research Proposals put forward by the distinguished experts for consideration by the Committee.

While the EU will carefully study the various proposals, we do wish to state at this point our concern about one of the proposals, namely the proposal [by the distinguished expert, Mr. Soofi] entitled: "Global grievance forum for perceived defamation of religion".

With the consensual adoption of resolution 16/18 [on "Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatisation of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief"] the Human Rights Council has moved on from the previous divisive discussions on "defamation of religions". Resolution 16/18 contains a catalogue of concrete actions by States to combat intolerance and other similar phenomena against persons based on their religion or belief.

Furthermore the Rabat Plan of Action, and its valuable recommendations, which was the result of important work conducted under the guidance of the OHCHR by experts from all regions, is another tool at the disposal of States committed to address these issues.

Let me also mention the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, who has the mandate to receive complaints about violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief.

In this context the EU believes that there are a number of good tools and mechanisms available and therefore we do not believe that there is a need to create an additional mechanism in this area.

We continue to strongly believe that it is the primary responsibility of national and local authorities to counter religious intolerance and safeguard individual rights. To achieve this, there needs to be greater focus on intensifying efforts to implement the actions contained in 16/18.

We hope that the Advisory Committee will take these concerns into account when considering the mentioned study proposal.

Thank you