Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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28 June 2012

The autonomy of churches and religious communities

Written declaration No. 530

This written declaration commits only those who have signed it

Considering that the autonomous existence of churches and religious communities is indispensable for pluralism in a democratic society,

Considering

– the Charter of the United Nations,

– the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18),

– the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 18),

– the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (Article 6),

– the Helsinki Final Act (Article VII),

– the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 9) and the well-established case-law of the European Court of Human Rights,

– the Directive 78/2000/EC of 27 November 2000 (Article 4),

– the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Article 10),

– the European Union Council Resolution of 16 November 2009,

The undersigned, members of the Parliamentary Assembly,

– reaffirm the utmost importance of the right to freedom of religion of churches and religious communities, implying the respect of the following principles: distinction between State and churches, doctrinal and institutional autonomy of the churches and religious communities, neutrality and impartiality of the State on religious matters;

– are concerned by the judgement of the 3rd Section of the European Court of Human Rights, Sindicatul Pastorul cel Bun v. Romania, which departs from the well-established case-law of the Court and has wide-ranging implications.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed [1]*:*

VOLONTÈ Luca, Italy, EPP/CD
AGRAMUNT Pedro, Spain, EPP/CD
DAVIES David, United Kingdom, EDG
DOBBIN Jim, United Kingdom, SOC
DUNDEE Alexander, (The Earl of), United Kingdom, EDG
FARINA Renato, Italy, EPP/CD
FRUNDA György, Romania, EPP/CD
FUSU Corina, Republic of Moldova, ALDE
GHILETCHI Valeriu, Republic of Moldova, EPP/CD
HALICKI Andrzej, Poland, EPP/CD
JANTUAN Stella, Republic of Moldova, SOC
KALMÁR Ferenc, Hungary, EPP/CD
KANDELAKI Giorgi, Georgia, EPP/CD
KYRIAKIDES Stella, Cyprus, EPP/CD
MARCZUŁAJTIS-WALCZAK Jagna, Poland, EPP/CD
NYKIEL Mirosława, Poland, EPP/CD
OSCARSSON Mikael, Sweden, EPP/CD
PALIHOVICI Liliana, Republic of Moldova, EPP/CD
PINTADO Ángel, Spain, EPP/CD
PLOTNIKOV Oleksiy, Ukraine, SOC
POSTANJYAN Zaruhi, Armenia, EPP/CD
PREDA Cezar Florin, Romania, EPP/CD
QUINTANILLA Carmen, Spain, EPP/CD
RADULOVIĆ-ŠĆEPANOVIĆ Valentina, Montenegro, SOC
RADZISZEWSKA Elżbieta, Poland, EPP/CD
RUDD Amber, United Kingdom, EDG
SANÍN Luz Elena, Spain, EPP/CD
SANTINI Giacomo, Italy, EPP/CD
SHERSHUN Mykola, Ukraine, ALDE
STAVROSITU Maria, Romania, EPP/CD
TAKTAKISHVILI Chiora, Georgia, ALDE
VEJKEY Imre, Hungary, EPP/CD

Total = 32

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1. EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group