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6 February 2006

## Relations between the State, Religion and Individuals

Motion for a resolution  
presented by Mr Platvoet and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

1. One of the Europe's shared values, which transcends national differences, is the State's neutral stance towards all religious groups, generally referred to as separation of Church and State. This is a generally accepted principle, which dominates political and institutional life in democratic countries.
2. However, there are certain exceptions, such as the state-financing of schools, which are based on religion.
3. On the other hand, for some time now, the public sphere has been invaded – again – by religious beliefs. A militant form of communalism, fuelled by the international political context and by immigration is seeking to impose practices that are incompatible with individual rights. Examples include the Islamic family code, excision, forced marriages and honour crimes. At the same time, intervention by Churches, and the Vatican in particular, in fields for which the public authorities are normally responsible has increased over the past few years.
4. European countries react in different ways to this new challenge: some establish multi-faith models, which can lead to a sort of segregation, while others apply the principle of secularism somewhat rigidly, leading to friction within and between the different groups.
5. The Assembly ought to address these issues, taking an overall view of the role of the modern State in a rapidly changing society. It should initiate debate on a genuine separation of Church on State and the relationship between the political sphere and affiliation to a particular religion or community. An expanding Europe that wishes to serve as an example to the world will be judged by how it applies the fundamental values of freedom and equality.

*Signed (see overleaf)*

*Signed*<sup>1</sup>:

PLATVOET, Leo, Netherlands, UEL  
AÇIKGÖZ, Ruhi, Turkey, EDG  
ATEŞ, Abdülkadir, Turkey, SOC  
JACOBSEN, Bjørn, Norway, UEL  
OHLSSON, Carina, Sweden, SOC  
ÖHMAN, Conny, Sweden, SOC  
ØSTERGAARD, Morten, Denmark, ALDE  
PANGALOS, Theodoros, Greece, SOC  
TIMMERMANS, Frans, Netherlands, SOC  
WODARG, Wolfgang, Germany, SOC

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<sup>1</sup> SOC: Socialist Group  
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party  
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
EDG: European Democratic Group  
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left  
NR: not registered in a group