

FAITH IN EQUALITY: RELIGION AND BELIEF IN EUROPE

The Equinet Report 'Faith in Equality: Religion and Belief in Europe' highlights recent legal developments that have taken place in the field of discrimination based on religion and belief.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

EU protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief is incomplete. EU law specifically prohibits differential treatment based on religion only in the area of employment (including vocational training). This gap would be covered by adopting the Horizontal Directive, proposed in 2008.



EMPLOYMENT

Discrimination cases have been identified in areas such as recruitment and selection; headgear and religious symbols; religious harassment in the workplace; justified occupational requirement; opting out of certain work tasks; work patterns; and conflicts of rights.

EDUCATION

Consistent with the trend shown in our 2011 report, a majority of the cases reported to equality bodies across the EU which deal with religious freedom in education are connected to the Muslim religion, particularly with Muslim women's dress.



GOODS & SERVICES

In relation to religious discrimination in the provision of goods and services, justifications for discriminatory behaviour towards certain religious groups have to be examined thoroughly, be they health and safety concerns, the need to maintain security or the aim of enhancing integration.



MANIFESTING RELIGION & BELIEF IN PUBLIC

Although the full-face veil and the burkini are not comparable, they are both the subject of the will of politicians to legislate against forms of religious garments. Our report finds that the European Court of Human Rights' 'living together' argument for a blanket ban on the full-face veil does not sufficiently delineate what it means in respect of restricting fundamental rights, including the right to freedom of religion.



PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION & STATE FUNCTIONS

States continue to grapple with the challenges of striking a balance between the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion of an individual or a group against public safety, public order, health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

