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Mr Christopher Chope
Chairman of the Committee on Legal Affairs and
Human Rights - PACE
House of Commons
SW1A 0AA – London
United Kingdom

Brno, the 11th April 2013

Dear Sir,

I have been shown a common statement that has been sent to you recently, signed by eminent scholars, regarding the report which is under preparation in the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights on « sectarian influence on minors ».

As a scholar myself, having published dozens of major publications on religious issues, including new religious movements, being recognized as an expert in this field since many years, I would like to join their concern about this report and the way it is done.

I think there is a great danger in addressing such a topics using words as “sects”, “sectarian”, and that it is an indicator of a willingness to discriminate between good and bad religions, most of the time on grounds which are not scientific neither pragmatic, but only following other agendas.

This, in addition to violating European standards on freedom of religion and beliefs and other human rights, has led in the past to many dramatic issues, and moreover when it involves children and family matters. Children and families are the ones who suffer from stigmatization and discrimination when their faith is targeted. History taught us this lesson badly. And I learned it being on the ground, in that very field.

However, I am pretty confident that you, and the Committee, are aware of that and will act accordingly. I wanted to join my voice to the ones of the scholars who sent you this common statement (and I fully support all what they said), in order to let you know that we think it is not a minor issue, and must be given great carefullness. Council of Europe has a great power, and is the one which is counted upon by every people of Europe when human rights are at stake. If you need any expert opinion on this issue I would be glad to help.

Yours faithfully,



Dušan Lužný