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**Oral Statement on Denial of Rights of Christian Parents**

**Enhancing Efforts to Prevent and Combat Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians, Focusing on Hate crimes, Exclusion, Marginalization and Denial of Rights**

**Vienna, May 18, 2015**

Mr. Chair,

The *European Centre for Law and Justice* (ECLJ) is a NGO based in Strasbourg, France, committed to the defense of human rights and freedoms. Thus, I would like to intervene today in support of the rights of Christian parents. In Europe, in the recent years, a growing number of denials of parental rights were noted. Some of them are related to the content of the official school curriculum, especially to the compulsory sex education programs in schools. Participating States in Europe adopted or are in the process of adopting legislation based on the controversial WHO’s “*Standards for sexual education in Europe”*, imposing sex education in schools, be it under “*sex education*”, “*health education*”, “*education for citizenship*” or “*equality between men and women*”. Those classes encourage early sexualization of children and exclude information on abstinence, fidelity, education to virtue or sexuality as a gift of self in order to found a family. It is the case in Austria, Croatia, Germany and Sweden, for example, where parents have no possibility to opt out their children from those classes. Other countries, like Poland, Romania, Switzerland, and France, are already taking steps to implement those standards, although the parents did not ask for sexual education for their children and the content of curriculum contradicts their “*religious and philosophical convictions”*. Obliging the parents to accept what the State understands by sexual education deprives them of their right to education of their children. Thus, schools are no longer educating children, but rather indoctrinating them. This phenomenon is not new. In 1919, in the Hungary of Bella Khun, Georg Lucaks, in order to de-Christianize Hungary and to weaken family, introduced radical sexual education in the public schools undermining Christian sexual ethics and family. To prevent such situations, the ECHR established the parents’ right to respect of their religious and philosophical convictions in education which forbids indoctrination of children and imposes on the states an obligation to convey information or knowledge included in the curriculum in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner[[1]](#footnote-1). If this is not the case, the states must grant children full exemption from those classes[[2]](#footnote-2).

In light of these principles and in order to prevent denial of parental rights, the ECLJ invites the participating States to assess sexual education laws so as to respect the rights of parents to teach their children in accordance with their moral or religious convictions, allowing parents to opt out their children from classes conflicting with their religious and philosophical convictions, and avoiding situations where children face a conflict between the education given by the school and the religious or philosophical convictions of their parents. Parents associations should be consulted when drafting and revising such legislation. Finally, ECLJ recommends to OSCE/ODIHR and international governmental human rights institutions to consider adopting a resolution on parents’ rights addressing the denial of Christian parents’ rights.

1. *Kjeldsen, Busk Madsen and Pedersen v. Denmark*, no. 5095/71, 5920/72, 5926/72, judgment of 7 December 1976, § 53; [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Folgerø and Others v. Norway*, GC, no. 15472/02, judgment of 29 June 2007, § 102; [↑](#footnote-ref-2)