

RELIGION, HUMAN RIGHTS and a SECULAR EUROPE

Can faith and freedom co-exist?

1 October 2015 · 9:00 – 17:00

European Parliament · Altiero Spinelli 5 G 1

#SecularEurope

A forum by the Global Interfaith & Secular Alliance



Co-organised by Catholics for Choice and ILGA-Europe

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, **extreme religious groups in Europe and beyond seek to impose their religious views on others through law- and policy-making.** These groups want to eliminate many of the human rights guaranteed under European law, especially those safeguarding reproductive health and rights, the rights of LGBTI people, women's rights, and genuine freedom of religion and belief.

This forum gathers MEPs, staff from institutions, journalists, and civil society to discuss the rise of anti-human rights extreme religious lobby groups in European institutions.

Four panels will present faith-based and secular arguments against extreme religious perspectives, examine the activities of anti-human rights groups active in EU institutions, and emphasise the importance of equal protection for sexual and reproductive health and rights, LGBTI rights, women's rights, and real freedom of religion and belief.

BACKGROUND

The **Global Interfaith and Secular Alliance** envisions a world in which access to quality reproductive health and rights and the human rights of LGBT people are guaranteed under law. We advocate for freedom *of* religion as well as freedom *from* religion and call on policy-makers to protect the individual conscience rights of the many people of faith—as well as those of no faith—who, like us, support sexual and reproductive health and rights and the rights of LGBT people.

SOCIAL MEDIA

You can use the hashtag **#SecularEurope** to discuss today's event online.

PROGRAMME

9:10 Welcome



JON O'BRIEN PRESIDENT
CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE

Jon O'Brien heads the leading prochoice organization that addresses sexual and reproductive rights from a standpoint of culture, faith and morality. With more than 25 years in the field, Mr O'Brien has worked on five continents with local advocates and activists on policy development, advocacy and communications. A life-long Catholic born and raised in the Republic of Ireland, Mr O'Brien's initial involvement in reproductive rights was sparked by his reaction to the great injustices that women face as a result of the Catholic hierarchy's influence over public policy in the country.

EVELYNE PARADIS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ILGA-EUROPE

Evelyne Paradis is the executive director of ILGA-Europe. She is responsible for providing overall leadership, strategic direction and management for the organisation. Evelyne joined ILGA-Europe in 2005. Before becoming ILGA-Europe's executive director, she held the position of policy director, coordinating the organisation's advocacy work with the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Prior to joining ILGA-Europe, Evelyne worked with the UN High Commission for Human Rights, the Council of Europe and human rights NGOs in Canada.



9:15 Opening remarks



SOPHIE IN 'T VELD, MEP VICE-CHAIR, ALDE
CHAIR, PLATFORM FOR SECULARISM
IN POLITICS

Sophie in 't Veld is a Dutch Member of the European Parliament for D66, the Dutch social-liberal party, since 2004, and was been re-elected to her third parliamentary term in 2014. Currently she is the Vice-chair of the ALDE Group (Liberals) in the European Parliament and a member of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, of which she is the ALDE spokesperson, and substitute for both the Economic and Monetary Affairs and Gender Equality committees.

9:25 Keynote: Freedom of and freedom from religion—Can faith and freedom coexist?

Jon O'Brien, President, Catholics for Choice

Numerous anti-human rights groups are active in Europe today, mostly with European or North American origins. This panel will present a short history of the extreme religious lobby in Europe, and discuss recent developments, including in the European Parliament.

LORENZO ZUCCA PROFESSOR OF LAW AND PHILOSOPHY
KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

Lorenzo Zucca is Reader in Jurisprudence at the Dickson Poon School of Law at King's College London. His special interests are in jurisprudence, constitutional theory, EU constitutional law and human rights. He is the author of *Constitutional Dilemmas: Conflicts of Fundamental Legal Rights in Europe and the USA* (OUP, 2007), *A Secular Europe: Law and Religion in the European Constitutional Landscape* (OUP, 2012), and articles on European human rights law and theory. He holds the degrees of Maitrise from Paris 2 Assas, DEA from Paris 1 Sorbonne, Master of Jurisprudence from the University of Oxford and a PhD from EUI, Florence.



AMIR HODŽIĆ INDEPENDENT RESEARCHER

Amir Hodžić holds a BA in Sociology from the University of Zagreb, Croatia, and an MA in Gender and Culture Studies from the Central European University, Budapest, Hungary. For the past 19 years Amir has been involved in research, education and activism related to sex/gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights and LGBTIQ issues. Amir works with and for various local, regional and international stakeholders. You can find more about Amir at www.policy.hu/hodzic.



GORDAN BOSANAC CHIEF POLICY ANALYST
CENTRE FOR PEACE STUDIES

Gordan Bosanac has been involved for the last 20 years in many citizens' initiatives related to human rights, combating discrimination, LGBT rights, migration policies, etc. From 2005 to 2011 he was appointed programme director of the Centre for Peace Studies (CPS) in Zagreb. Since 2012 he has worked as a chief policy analyst in CPS on topics related to development cooperation, human security and human rights, and public policy. He also teaches 'Human security' as a part of Peace Studies in Zagreb. In 2014, he was elected president of the Management Board of the Croatian Platform for International Citizen Solidarity (CROSOL).



PIERRETTE PAPE POLICY AND CAMPAIGNS DIRECTOR
EUROPEAN WOMEN'S LOBBY

Pierrette Pape is Policy and Campaigns Director at the European Women's Lobby (EWL). She has been at the EWL since 2009 where she has led EWL's work on violence against women, and sexual and reproductive health and rights, including the EWL campaign 'Together for a Europe free from prostitution'. She is in charge of EWL advocacy work at United Nations level, acting as an EWL representative at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York every March. She coordinates the work of the EWL on the Beijing+20 Platform for Action and the post-2015 development agenda.



Moderator

KATRIN HUGENDUBEL ADVOCACY DIRECTOR
ILGA-EUROPE

Katrin Hugendubel is in charge of the overall coordination of the policy and advocacy work of ILGA-Europe. Katrin's tasks include managing the policy team and leading the advocacy work of ILGA-Europe towards the EU institutions, EU Presidencies, the Council of Europe and the OSCE. Katrin holds a master's degree in political science and English language and literature from the University of Freiburg, Germany. Since 2002, Katrin has worked as a political advisor and assistant to a member of the European Parliament, as well as with several NGO networks at the EU level and in Uganda. The main focus of her studies and work life has been antidiscrimination policies and feminist politics, as well as European social and labour market policies.



Respondent



TANJA FAJON, MEP VICE-CHAIR, S&D
CHAIR OF THE S&D WORKING GROUP
ON EXTREMISM, POPULISM, NATIONALISM
AND XENOPHOBIA

Tanja Fajon, MEP, is Vice-chair of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) in the European Parliament. Tanja graduated in journalism at the University of Ljubljana and also holds a master's degree in International Politics from the College of Interdisciplinary Studies in Paris. In 2001, she became a correspondent for Radio Television Slovenia in Brussels and kept this foreign post for almost 8 years. Mrs Fajon was elected to the European Parliament for the first time in 2009 and has been actively involved in the politics of the Western Balkans, and as the European Parliament's rapporteur on visa liberalization for the Western Balkans. On 25 May 2014 she was re-elected as a Member of the European Parliament for her second term. She again serves as a full Member of the LIBE Committee as well as of the Delegation for relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, and as a Substitute Member of the AFET Committee and the Delegation to the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Cooperation Committee.

Followed by questions and answers

While religious extremist groups often make it a priority to oppose LGBTI people's human rights, this panel will examine how freedom of religion and belief and the human rights of LGBTI people support one another. Featuring new research on the intersection of these rights, this panel will present the experiences of LGBTI people of faith and the views of supportive faith leaders.

ERICA HOWARD ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF LAW
MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY

Dr Erica Howard is Associate Professor of Law at Middlesex University, London. She obtained her PhD in European discrimination law at the University of London. She has conducted extensive research in the areas of freedom of religion and religious discrimination, publishing a book and a number of articles on these subjects. With Dr Alice Donald, Dr Howard co-authored "The right to freedom of religion or belief and its intersection with other rights" for ILGA-Europe, published in January 2015. Her most recent article, published in *Religion and Human Rights* (2015, 10, 2, 128-159), addressed religious rights versus sexual orientation discrimination.



FLORIN BUHUCEANU PRESIDENT
EUROPEAN FORUM OF LGBT CHRISTIAN
GROUPS

Florin Buhuceanu is a Romanian human rights activist, coordinating advocacy programs for the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups. He is also the founder and executive president of ECPI-Euroregional Center for Public Initiatives, a human rights foundation defending and promoting sexual and reproductive rights in Romania. Trained as a theologian, Florin's leadership ensured the success of many of civil society legal advocacy projects in Romania: from the adoption and implementation of anti-discrimination legislation and hate crime legislation, to the blocking of discriminatory and harmful provisions against women in the field of sexual and reproductive rights. Mr Buhuceanu is a former Executive Director of ACCEPT and President of the Centre for Legal Resources. He is the author of the 2014 report 'Traditional values, Religion & LGBT rights in Eastern Europe'.

THE REVEREND DR JURIS CALITIS

Juris Calitis, from Latvia, has lived in Germany, Scotland, England, the U.S.A., Aruba and Canada. He holds degrees in psychology, philosophy and theology from the Universities of Maryland, Harvard and Latvia. He is a priest of the Lutheran and Anglican Churches, Associate Professor for Systematic Theology at the University of Latvia (where he was Scholar of the Year in 2014), Coordinator of a new translation of the Bible into Latvian, and founder of a family home for abused children in Latvia, 'Zvannieku mājas'. He is married with a family of six children.



Moderator



BRIAN SHEEHAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GLEN
BOARD MEMBER, ILGA-EUROPE

Brian Sheehan is the Executive Director of GLEN—Gay and Lesbian Equality Network, one of Ireland's leading LGBT advocacy organisations—since 2007. He was the Co-director of the 'Yes Equality' campaign for the successful marriage referendum in Ireland this year. He is also a board member of ILGA-Europe. He has been involved with a range of advocacy, community and cultural LGBT organisations over many years. His background in the corporate sector is in technology and banking, and in the non-profit sector and as a consultant on strategic planning and evaluation.

Respondent

CECILIA WIKSTRÖM, MEP CHAIR
COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

Cecilia Wikström was born in 1965 and raised in Kalix, but has lived in Uppsala since the 1980s. She holds a bachelor's degree in theology from the University of Uppsala and has been a practising priest in the Swedish Church since 1994. Cecilia has written several books, including *När livet går sönder* (When life falls apart), which was awarded book of the year in its genre in 2004. In 2002, Cecilia Wikström was elected to the Swedish Parliament. She was re-elected in 2006, representing the liberal party, Folkpartiet Liberalerna. Since 2009, Cecilia Wikström has been a Member of the European Parliament.



Followed by questions and answers

12:20 Lunch buffet

13:30 Keynote: The strongest response to religious extremism: Human rights
Evelyne Paradis, Executive Director, ILGA-Europe

The extreme religious lobby increasingly seeks to limit access to reproductive health services, including abortion, in European countries where these debates were settled long ago and have been regarded as a public health matter. This panel will discuss the numerous ways these groups create barriers to access, including refusal clauses, new restrictions on abortion and the European-wide 'One of Us' initiative.



ESZTER SZUCS PROGRAM COORDINATOR
OPEN SOCIETY INITIATIVE FOR EUROPE

Eszter Szucs has been a program coordinator with the Open Society Initiative for Europe since 2012. Her responsibilities are divided between the OSIFE Hungary Project and the Reclaiming Family Values portfolios. Szucs worked for a Budapest-based law firm for a number of years before returning to graduate school and earning her master's degree in women's and gender studies in 2010. While completing these studies at Georgia State University in Atlanta, she worked for the Women's Studies Institute as a research assistant and participated in numerous academic projects.

AILBHE SMYTH COALITION TO REPEAL THE 8TH AMENDMENT

Ailbhe Smyth is a former academic and has been active in feminist, LGBT and radical politics for many years. She co-founded the Women's Research and Resource Centre and was head of Women's Studies at University College Dublin from 1990 until 2006, when she left the university to work with women's organisations in the NGO and Community sectors. Ailbhe has written extensively about feminism, politics and culture in Ireland. She chairs the Coalition to Repeal the Eighth Amendment, campaigning for the right to abortion for women in Ireland. A founding member of 'Marriage Equality', she was centrally involved in the recent victorious 'Yes Equality' campaign.



MARÍA SAHUQUILLO JOURNALIST
EL PAÍS

María R. Sahuquillo is a journalist and reporter based in Spain. She was born in Madrid and holds a master's degree in Journalism and Communication. She has worked in media in Spain, Belgium and Romania. Since 2007, she has been working at the newspaper *El País*, where she has specialized in social affairs, health policy, gender and sexual and reproductive rights. Now she writes for the Foreign Affairs news desk. María has received various journalism awards, such as the Journalism Prize of the Young Institute for her articles about gender-based violence. She participates as a media expert in the European Institute of Gender Equality's network.

Moderator

ANN FUREDI CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
BRITISH PREGNANCY ADVISORY SERVICE

Ann Furedi joined the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas) as Chief Executive Officer in 2003 and is responsible for 52 clinics throughout Britain providing specialist abortion up to 24 weeks gestation. At bpas most of the 75,000 clients a year are British residents, whose treatment is paid for by the state, but bpas also sees women from overseas who can't obtain care at home. The charity will never turn away a woman in need that it can lawfully treat. Ann is a proud and outspoken advocate of reproductive choice.



Followed by questions and answers

14:45 Coffee break

Although most believers support the rights of women and LGBTI people, anti-human rights religious groups seek to impose their narrow views on believers and non-believers alike. This panel will argue in favour of real freedom of religion and belief from both secular and religious perspectives.



DANIEL A. DOMBROWSKI PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

Daniel A. Dombrowski is Professor of Philosophy at Seattle University, Washington. He is the author of 18 books and over 150 articles in scholarly journals in philosophy, theology, classics and literature. His books include *Rethinking the Ontological Argument: A Neoclassical Theistic Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); *Contemporary Athletics and Ancient Greek Ideals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); and *Rawlsian Explorations in Religion and Applied Philosophy* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2011). He has also co-authored a book titled *A Brief, Liberal, Catholic Defense of Abortion* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000). He is Editor of the journal *Process Studies*.

RANIA HAFEZ SENIOR LECTURER IN EDUCATION & COMMUNITY STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH
FOUNDER, MUSLIM WOMEN IN EDUCATION

Rania Hafez is Senior Lecturer in Education & Community Studies at the University of Greenwich and visiting Research Fellow at the University of Derby. Rania has researched and published on professionalism, cultural identity and Islam and education. Her current research is on the intersectionality of modern British Muslim Identity. In 2008 Rania founded 'Muslim Women in Education,' a professional network for educationalists and researchers. In addition to her academic work, Rania is a regular political and cultural commentator whose media credits include the BBC, Levant TV, and the Islam Channel.

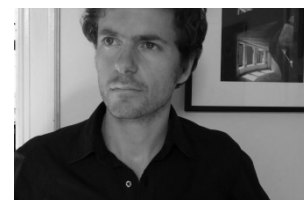


NADINE IARCHY ANTISEMITISM AND RACISM COMMITTEE CHAIR
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN

Nadine Iarchy is the current Chair of the Antisemitism & Racism Committee for the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW). As a life member of ICJW, Mrs Iarchy has served as the European representative and held the position of Chair of the Interfaith Intercultural Committee for over 12 years. She is ICJW's delegate to World Religion of Peace, where she also held the position of Jewish partner of the European Network of Women of Faith. For the last 25 years she has been talking in schools, community groups and other organisations, educating people in Belgium about Judaism.

PIERRE-ARNAUD PERROUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
EUROPEAN HUMANIST FEDERATION

Pierre-Arnaud Perrouy is Executive Director of the European Humanist Federation, the leading secular organisation in Europe. He has led campaigns to promote secularism in European institutions, with a special focus on freedom of—and from—religion and belief, LGBTI rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights. He holds law degrees from Brussels and Oxford universities and specializes in human rights, equality laws, migrations, freedom of expression and civil liberties in general. Pierre-Arnaud is also Secretary General of the Belgian Human Rights League and appointed Member of the Belgian Journalistic Deontology Committee.



Moderator



TESSA MAULHARDT INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM SENIOR ASSOCIATE
CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE

Tessa Maulhardt coordinates CFC's activities outside the United States with prochoice Catholics, policymakers, reproductive health providers, advocates and collegial organizations. Ms. Maulhardt's experience includes working on a range of development and sexual and reproductive health issues both domestically and internationally, including in Latin America and Asia. She also served as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in Paraguay. Ms. Maulhardt holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of California at Los Angeles and a master's of public affairs from Indiana University in Bloomington.

Respondent

DENNIS DE JONG, MEP CO-CHAIR
INTERGROUP ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION
AND BELIEF

Since July 2009, Cornelis (Dennis) de Jong has been a Member of the European Parliament, representing the Dutch Socialist Party. Before he entered the EP, he was Special Advisor on Human Rights and Good Governance in the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2000, he received his doctorate in international law at the University of Maastricht, the Netherlands, on the basis of his thesis: 'The Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion or Belief in the United Nations (1946-1992)'.



Followed by questions and answers

16:35 Closing remarks: Countering religious extremism in Europe



HEIDI HAUTALA, MEP CO-CHAIR
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WORKING GROUP ON
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, HIV/AIDS &
DEVELOPMENT

Heidi Hautala, previously the Minister for international development and state ownership steering in Finland, has been elected three times as an MEP. She is also a vice-president of the Greens/EFA group and a co-president of the Euronest parliamentary assembly. She has complemented her extensive political career at the national and European levels with other professional activities (journalist, founder of a restaurant) and combined it with her various voluntary work commitments related mostly to human rights. As a strong advocate for girls' and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights she has been invited to co-chair the European Parliament Working Group on Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS and Development (EPWG).

16:45 Closing remarks: Next steps for the Global Interfaith & Secular Alliance

Jon O'Brien, President, Catholics for Choice

Evelyne Paradis, Executive Director, ILGA-Europe

17:00 End

