

OBSERVATORY ON
INTOLERANCE AND DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN EUROPE

REPORT 2013



Special thanks to
Brenda Winter (United Kingdom) and Rebekah Wallace (United States) as well as Nadja Imhof (Austria)
and many others for making this publication possible through their time and skills.

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Impressum:

Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe

Möllwaldplatz 5

A-1040 Vienna, Austria

www.IntoleranceAgainstChristians.eu

Printed by Kairos Publications 2014.

ISBN: 978-3-9503055-8-6

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Who we are

The Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians is a registered non-governmental organisation in Austria. The Observatory hosts a website which monitors and catalogues instances in which Christians and Christianity are marginalised or discriminated against throughout Europe. The Observatory focuses on Europe (European Union, EU accession countries, and wider Europe).

The Observatory gathers incidents of discrimination against Christians from media sources and individuals who report to us. We brief international government organisations, such as the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Our findings are available to politicians, NGOs, journalists and interested individuals through our website. The Observatory is a member of the Fundamental Rights Platform of the EU-Fundamental Rights Agency.

Our work aims to encourage victims of intolerance and discrimination to tell their stories, and to raise awareness among all people of good will that the phenomenon ought to be taken seriously and is in need of a common response.

Report to us! Have you been discriminated against on account of your Christian faith? Have you been verbally attacked and silenced when stating a Christian position? Do you know someone who has been mistreated in any way because he or she is Christian?



Please email your story to us at observatory@IntoleranceAgainstChristians.eu.



Dr. Kugler presenting the report 2012 at an OSCE high level conference in Tirana on May 21, 2013.

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Introduction

When I mention that I work for the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe, I often get strange looks as if people are surprised that this work is necessary in such a place as Europe.

What is often perceived as random and unrelated incidents of intolerance against Christians does have a pattern. It is our task to show this pattern in order to find a remedy.

We do not speak of persecution. Such a term refers more appropriately to a systematic mistreatment commonly understood to focus on imprisonment, torture, execution, or confiscation of property. Yet public attention is much needed even if the acts of intolerance of which we speak do not amount to the same level of violence found in persecution.

Every year the Observatory publishes a report on intolerance against Christians in Europe. The report presents the most striking incidents of intolerance as well as the response of governmental institutions and experts. In 2013 we published 41 laws in 14 European countries which hinder the free exercise of faith for Christians. In Chapter 2 is found a summary of these laws and we encourage you to consider this matter in detail in the Report on Legal Restrictions Affecting Christians.

(Link: <http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/publications/legal-restrictions-affecting-christians-report-2012.html>)

In this report on the year 2013, you will find over 240 cases of intolerance and discrimination against Christians. We distinguish three main categories: hate-related intolerance, intolerance against Christians in law and politics, and intolerance against Christians in arts and media.

Each chapter offers an explanation of the problems at stake before providing a list of summarised cases. For each case you will find further details and sources on our website. In the second part we suggest possible remedies. Whatever your background or profession, you will find something you can do to join in the efforts to tackle the problem.

One common objection to our work is that what Christians encounter today is not intolerance or discrimination, but a process of losing historical privileges. Privileges which, some argue, are discriminating against other religions. Historical privileges however are not necessarily bad, considering that no community exists void of a past and without its own historically evolved identity and traditions. Full neutrality is impossible since even an empty white wall is a statement, especially after a crucifix has been removed from it.



One religious community holding privileges for historical reasons does not mean that others are being discriminated against – as long as their enshrined rights are protected.

To some extent the withdrawal of privileges from Christianity constitutes an unnatural break with history and identity and is an expression of hostility. This hostility does not end at the removal of privileges. It causes marginalisation and social exclusion, and it leads to the denial of Christian rights. Equal rights for Christians are at stake.

Others have argued that discrimination against Christianity in Europe is an impossibility because the Christian religion continues to be a majority. Some people believe that minorities deserve protection and that it is not possible to discriminate against a majority. In fact, South African blacks were not a minority when they suffered from apartheid. Rocco Buttiglione was rejected as EU commissioner due to his adherence to Christianity, the majority faith. Imagine one person at a microphone insulting a silent crowd. Imagine a small group of CEOs refusing to hire members of a majority religion because they do not like that religion. This is possible! Granted, intolerance and discrimination more often affects minorities. But more essential than numbers is power: who sets the tone, who is listened to, and who creates the agenda. Every day Europe's majority faith is being treated disrespectfully and sometimes its free exercise faces unjust limitations. And yet another thought: as Christianity in Europe goes through a transition today, one might speak of a nominal majority, i.e. with regard to holding baptism certificates. But nominal Christians are not the people who experience intolerance and discrimination. Much rather, it is those who seek to incorporate their faith in their everyday life.

In the matter of intolerance and discrimination against Christians we can see only a small part of something big and uncontrolled which requires awareness, debate, and response by governments and civil society.

This concerns you, too. I am very grateful for the time you take to read this and form your own opinion about the subject matter and its possible answers.

*Dr. Gudrun Kugler,
Vienna, March 2014*



Last years' reports by the Observatory

Executive Summary

1. In this report the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians presents 241 incidents which took place in the year 2013. The incidents are categorised by hate-related intolerance, intolerance against Christians in law and politics, and intolerance against Christians in arts and media.

2. Over the last years the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe has seen a tremendous amount of cases of vandalism against Christian sites and places of worship. However, there is hardly any comparable statistical data on vandalism against Christian sites. European governments generally do not segregate data with regard to Christianity.

3. The limited data that exists suggests that hate-related incidents against Christians in Europe are rising. 133 cases of vandalism against Christian sites in 11 countries are portrayed in this report.

4. Intolerance against Christians in law and politics occurs mainly with regard to limitations of conscientious objection, the curbing of free speech by hate speech legislation, discriminatory equality policies and the limitation of parental rights in the area of sex education, as well as in the area of freedom of assembly. In our last report, we published 41 laws in 14 European countries which hinder the free exercise of faith for Christians.¹

5. Arts and media as well as social media become a new playground of intolerance against Christians. 15 cases from 6 countries were recorded by the Observatory in 2013.

6. Respect is a key term for the understanding of human rights in general and in particular for freedom of religion or belief: Reasonable accommodation ought to be the guiding principle in dealing with faith.

¹ http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/reports/Legal_Limitations



Roman-Catholic Parish Altottakring, Vienna, 2014

1. Hate-Related Incidents Against Christians

Over the last years the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe has seen a tremendous amount of cases of vandalism against Christian sites and places of worship. However, there is hardly any comparable statistical data on vandalism against Christian sites: vandalism is often not reported, or if reported not followed up; and collected data is not segregated on the grounds of the Christian faith. According to OSCE/ODIHR data, bias-motivated offenses are, to the largest extent, committed out of a bias against race or ethnicity. The second largest group to be attacked is religion, followed by sexual orientation.

“

There is a general suspicion of anything religious, a view that faith should be kept out of the public sphere... There is a very strong current of radical secularism“ because of a view that “Christianity dominated unfairly for centuries” and needs to be put in its place.”

*- Gudrun Kugler, Observatory director,
in the New York Times on June 18th, 2013*

1.1. Lack of Data concerning Hate-Related Incidents Against Christians



*The OSCE Ministerial Council concluded that participating States ought to: „... adopt policies to promote respect and protection for places of worship and religious sites, religious monuments, cemeteries and shrines against vandalism and destruction...“*²

- Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, December 6, 2013

The full extent of hate crimes in Europe continues to be obscured by a lack of adequate and reliable data. Although there were improvements to data collection by governments in 2012, there are significant gaps in data collection which remain a major obstacle to understanding the prevalence and nature of hate crimes.

Some states collect hate crime data under the classification of “hate-motivated offences” or “discrimination”, which often include such acts as incitement to hatred, forms of hate speech and other propaganda-related crimes, in addition to hate crimes. Often, data on hate crimes are subsumed into this larger group of bias offences and, therefore, it is difficult to discern exact figures on hate crimes including vandalism.

A UK-based Muslim group laments: “...the figures [of anti-Muslim hate crimes] could be much higher as nearly half of the 43 forces in England and Wales did not reveal how many hate crimes had targeted Muslims. Some forces admitted they did not always record the faith of a religious hate-crime victim.”³ The same is true for hate crimes against Christians. Speaking to Vatican Radio,

Ambassador Baker said that Britain is one

of the countries that is “most assiduous in collecting data on hate crime, crimes against religion.”³ Other participating states need to be encouraged to do the same in order to tackle the issue of intolerance and discrimination against Christians. The EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency published an overview of hate crime documentation in 2012.⁴ While some countries collect and publicise sufficient details, this overview strongly suggests that making hate crime visible and acknowledging the rights of victims entails taking action at three levels: legislation, policy and practice.

At the level of legislation, this means recognising hate crime, the bias motivations underlying it and the effect it has on victims in both national legislation and European law. At the policy level, implementing policies that will lead to collecting reliable data on hate crime which would record, at a minimum, the number of incidents of hate crimes reported by the public and recorded by the authorities; the number of convictions of offenders; the grounds on which these offences were found to be discriminatory; and the punishments served to the offenders. At the practical level, this means putting procedures in place to encourage victims and witnesses to report incidents of hate crime as well as to show that authorities are taking hate crime seriously.

In a press release, the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community (CO-MECE) said: “A lot is being done to fight against anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. However, recent data suggest that it is urgent to complete the picture through an equally vigorous effort to counter hate incidents and crimes against Christians in

² <http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2013/12/28/anti-muslim-hate-crimes-skyrocket-in-u-k-in-2013/>

³ <http://www.news.va/en/news/christians-and-their-religious-freedom-under-the-s>

⁴ http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2012_hate-crime.pdf

Europe. It remains to be seen whether in the coming years the EU institutions will consider the question with the same zeal devoted to other issues or continue with the rather lethargic attitude that seems to prevail at the moment. Ultimately, hate incidents and crimes against Christians in Europe should be subject to the same criteria ap-

plicable to other, perhaps more publicised, phenomena of our times (for example, Islamophobia)."⁵ With regard to vandalism, the problem is similar. The UK produces a Crime Survey for England and Wales with statistics on vandalism, but these statistics include vandalism against Christianity only in "private homes and property".

“

The instances of vandalism against churches, mosques, synagogues, and cemeteries in many European countries have grown manifold in the past years.“

- Archbishop Vsevolod Chaplin, the Head of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for Relations between the Church and Society, at an OSCE human dimension meeting dealing with freedom of religion or belief in Vienna.*

“

The month of Advent saw a disturbing spate of attacks and desecrations of Christian icons and buildings across France; from the burning of a Nativity scene in Savoy, statues decapitated in Frejus and Churches attacked in Mayenne and Soissons. Yet rather than defend the religious liberty of her persecuted people, the French government is pushing ahead with a further curtailment of religious expression.“

- Ben Harnwell,
Dignitatis Humanae Institute, January 6th, 2013

⁵ <http://www.comece.eu/europeinfos/en/archive/issue142/article/4213.html>

* <http://www.christiantelegraph.com/issue6290.html>

1.2. Data on Hate-Related Incidents



Examples of intolerance and discrimination against Christians have not diminished, but rather increased in various parts of the OSCE region despite a number of meetings and conferences on the subject.

- Bishop Mario Toso, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, representing the Holy See at an OSCE High Level Meeting on Tolerance in Albania, 27 May 2013.

In our daily work for the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe, we are alerted to countless cases. We have the impression that the number of anti-Christian incidents are on the rise and are hardly able to research and document all of them. Besides the general problem of incidents being underreported, are there statistics that prove what we experience?

We investigated carefully and, while we did not find comprehensive studies, we found several data which gives to the problem at least some statistical shape:

- In France, 667 incidents of vandalism were recorded in 2012, of which 543 were directed against Christian sites (352 buildings, 191 cemeteries), 40 on Jewish sites (31 buildings, 9 cemeteries) and 84 on Muslim sites (83 buildings, 1 cemetery).

From 2008 to 2012 the attacks on Christian sites were the majority, but declining (from 90.5% in 2008, to 82.3% in 2009, and 84% in 2010, 85% in 2011 and 81.4% in 2012).

Compared to previous years, there has been a small increase in numbers: 543 in 2012 compared to 527 in 2011, that is a rise of 3%. For the most part, these are cases of vandalism, theft and the desecration or destruction of objects.⁶

- In the West Midlands of the UK, hate-fuelled crimes in which victims have been attacked because of their religion have spiralled by an alarming 57.6% over the past two years. All religions are affected.⁷
- Religiously aggravated charges rose by 29% to 897 incidents in Scotland in 2012.⁸
- In the Upper Austrian region, vandalism is steadily growing. Between the first half of 2009 and 2010, the growth amounts to 3,5%. There is no disaggregation of data between public buildings and church buildings, even though vandalism of Churches is a separate crime in the Austrian criminal code.⁹

The likelihood of collective manifestations of religious hatred largely depends on the general climate, and the overall context, of a society. A large number of vandalism against Christian sites backs the perception of a social climate which is rather negative towards Christianity.

⁶ Member of Parliament Marc Lefur (UMP, Côtes d'Armor) asked Minister of Interior Manuel Vals in a written inquiry on the numbers of acts of vandalism against Christian sites in France. In April of 2013, the minister replied giving the quoted numbers. See: <http://questions.assemblee-nationale.fr/q14/14-14282QE.htm>

⁷ <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/local-news/religious-hate-crimes-rise-60-6438132>

⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-18102341>

⁹ <http://www.kirchenzeitung.at/newsdetail/rubrik/vandalismus-und-videos/>

1.3. Cases of Vandalism against Christian Sites in 2013

Find here a selection of the countless incidents of vandalism against Christian sites, desecration of graves and attacks against Christian places of worship in 2013.

Church Vandalised in Duren

[January 2013, Germany:](#)

In Duren (NRW) the St. Cyriac Church was completely defiled and the tabernacle desecrated. The damage was so grave that the church was pronounced unfit for service.

Protestant Churches Vandalised and Burglarised in Hessen

[January 2013, Germany:](#)

In Rödermark (Hessen) and the district of Offenbach Protestant churches were targeted by vandals. Altar clothes, bibles and other things were stolen. Due to these incidents, the targeted churches remain closed during the night.

Protestant Church in Amberg Devastated

[January 2013, Germany:](#)

In Amberg, Hochsauerlandkreis, on the 29th of January the sacred space of the Protestant Resurrection Church was devastated and chalices for communion were stolen.

Church Vandalised in Lyon

[February 2013, France:](#)

At the parish the Name of Jesus in Lyon the parish priest discovered on February 1st that the facade had been vandalised with the statue of Jeremiah removed from its niche and beheaded on the floor.

Christian Graves Vandalised in Bages D'Aude

[February 2013, France:](#)

Right before All Hallows Eve three tombs in the cemetery of Banges D'Aude were vandalised, with their decorations and flowers destroyed. A complaint was placed with the Gendarmerie.

Burglars and Fire at Catholic Church in Dorsten

[February 2013, Germany:](#)

Burglars targeted the Catholic church of St. Boniface in Dorsten. They stole several items as well as cash and set the community centre on fire. According to the police the damages amount to several hundred thousand Euros.

Offertory of Catholic Church in Dieringhausen Stolen

[February 2013, Germany:](#)

Using a scissor a perpetrator pried the offertory off the wall of the Catholic Church on Dieringhauser street in Gummersbach. He also took the container and its contents.

Vandalism and Burglary in the Church of St. Mary in Lünen

[February 2013, Germany:](#)

Unidentified perpetrators broke into St Mary's Church in Lünen, Germany. They also vandalised the youth centre and the parish centre. Much damage was done but hardly anything stolen. In the youth centre one of the billiard tables was badly damaged.

Church Vandalised and Burglarised in Lünen

[February 2013, Germany:](#)

In the night of the 21st of February the registry of the St-Marys church of Lünen was broken into and gravely damaged. The place was left in disarray and the offertory was emptied.

Church Vandalised in Gummersbach, Hessen

February 2013, Germany:

Around 12 pm on the 22nd of February unknown perpetrators broke into the parish of Gummersbach, Hessen and stole the offertory. They pried it off the wall with scissors which seriously damaged the sacral space.

Vandalism and Burglary in St. Joseph's Church in Oberhausen

February 2013, Germany:

The church of St. Joseph's in Oberhausen, Germany was broken into by a burglar who after a failed attempt to enter through a window broke the door to the sacristy. He smashed an old alter relic when trying to open the next door into the church. The police were called and came with their tracking dogs but they lost the trail. All the cabinets in the church were broken and the contents dumped on the ground. Microphone and sound cables were torn out and on his way out the burglar stole gems.

Church Burglarised and Desecrated in Oberhausen

February 2013, Germany:

Unidentified criminals burglarised and vandalised the Catholic church St. Josef in Oberhausen, North Rhine Westphalia. The act included desecration of the tabernacle, the altar and a relic. Several precious stones were taken and the registry was left in disarray.

Satanic Graffiti on Church in Urbino Duomo

February 2013, Italy:

Inverted crosses and 666 were found on two doors of the church. The three doors were dented as well, one whose neoclassical façade was rebuilt by Valadier in 1801, following a strong earthquake in 1789.

Graffiti on Walls of Church in Vigasio

February 2013, Italy:

Two young girls entered the church and using black spray paint made a smiling devil who „hates the Vatican“, a slanderous stylized crucifix and wrote insults in English.

Vandalism and Arson in Two Churches in Cusio

February 2013, Italy:

Within two days there were 4 arson attacks and 6 cases of vandalism in the parish of Saint Catherine and Saint Audenzio Pettenasco. The fire did not spread through the buildings but curtains were burnt and the wooden upper part of the entrance that supports the choir and a precious organ were damaged. A hammer was used to destroy the gate of the Shrine of Our Lady of Boccioolo, an awl was used on other doors and insults were written against the church.

Attempted Arson at Saint-Nicolas Church in Fribourg

March 2013, Switzerland:

On March 11th at around 7pm, the cantonal police were called to the scene at Saint-Nicolas in Fribourg, as an employee restrained two individuals who tried to hang a banner in the cathedral. They had also poured gasoline into the stoup to set it on fire.

Catholic Bookstore Vandalised in Paris

March 2013, France:

The window of a Catholic bookshop, Our Lady of France (former „Bookstore Petit Pont „) was smashed.

Catholic Bookstore Vandalised Once Again

March 2013, France:

Another Catholic bookshop (“Notre-Dame-de-France”) was trashed on the 15th of March in Paris. The windows were broken and books thrown on the floor. There have been 26 reports of similar incidents over the past year.

20 Graves Desecrated in Elne-Cemetery in Pyrenees-Orientales

March 2013, France:

During the night of March 22nd more than 20 graves were desecrated in the Elne-Cemetery in Pyrenees-Orientales. This happened before in 2008 when 248 graves were vandalised, almost all of them Christian tombs.

Saint-Jean Cathedral of Lyon Broken Into

March 2013, France:

On Saturday, March the 23rd, around 6.30 pm, an Iranian citizen aged 28, was arrested and taken into custody. He had broken into the Saint-Jean Cathedral of Lyon and seriously damaged the astronomical clock with an iron bar.

Church of Saint-Similien Nantes Vandalised

March 2013, France:

The church of Saint-Similien Nantes was vandalised on the night of the 23rd of March. Someone hid in the confessional on Friday night and then desecrated the stoup and vandalised the organ. An ermine chasuble, the organ bench and the light of the tabernacle were stolen.

Theft and Desecration in Church in Termoli

March 2013, Italy:

Two youth entered the Church of St. Timothy in Termoli. One pretended to pray and when they were left alone made profane and sacrilegious gestures before stealing wafers and other sacred objects from the tabernacle. The theft was carried out on March 21 which corresponds to the satanic calendar as the „Second night of Tregenda“.

Church Vandalised in Lecce

March 2013, Italy:

Vandals entered the St. Michael's Parish Centre in Lecce and set fire to a holy book that was on the lectern. Fortunately the fire was put out before more damage was done.

Church in Hauture in Fos-sur-Mer Vandalised

April 2013, France:

During the night from April 14th, 2013, a Church in Hauture in Fos-sur-Mer was broken into by vandals. They broke into a window to get inside the church. After forcing open the tabernacle and finding nothing inside they stole money from the donation box for the candles. They left the church after defecating onto the organ, using the altar cloth for wiping.

Attempted Burglary in St. George's Church in Neustadt

April 2013, Germany:

An unidentified perpetrator tried to break into the St. George's church through the door of the sacristy. He used a screwdriver which left visible marks on the door. His attempt of burglary failed but the door was damaged.

Burglary Attempt in Two Churches

April 2013, Germany:

A youth attempted to break a safe in the St. James' church in Saterland, Germany. He tried to escape but in his haste he caused an accident so the police caught him. It turned out he had broken into the St. Jacob's church as well.

Burglary in St. John's Church in Rostock

April 2013, France:

Unidentified perpetrators broke into the St. John's church by forcing their way through a window. Almost every interior door was damaged. The offices were raided and cupboards and containers ransacked. Computer accessories worth several hundred euros were stolen. The case was taken over by the Crime police.

Vandalism in St. Peter's Church in Wesel

April 2013, Germany:

Vandals brutally damaged the parish church of St. Peter's church in Wesel, Germany. They broke their way in and once inside broke more doors, ransacked the cupboards and drawers in the sacristy and tried to open two safes.

Burglary at Church in Dettelbach

April 2013, Germany:

A church in Dettelbach, Germany, was broken into by unidentified perpetrators who stole a case of sacred objects. They entered by breaking the door of the sacristy and then tried to open a safe that was in a closet but they did not succeed. It is believed that the perpetrators escaped through the cemetery because one of the stolen items was found there. The damage caused is of an estimated 1,500 euros.

Three Teenagers Broke Into Church in Crailsheim

April 2013, Germany:

Three teenagers broke into a church in Crailsheim, Germany with the intention of stealing money. They broke through a window and the door of the office. A resident heard the noise and called the police who arrested the teenagers. They caused an estimated damage of 1000 euros.

Vandalism to Church in Riedlhütte

April 2013, Germany:

Significant damage was done to the church of Riedlhütte in Germany. The microphones in the church were damaged and thrown into the holy water, a statue of Jesus on the altar was damaged and the four crosses in the church entrance were damaged. The total damage is estimated at 1,200 euros.

Graffiti and Desecration to Church in Caorso

April 2013, Italy:

In the night of Easter Sunday graffiti was spray painted in the churchyard of Santa Maria Assunta in Caorso. Drawings were made of satanic pentagrams with lots of red candles at both ends. A wafer was stuck on the door with the words „Animate vacuum“ (empty soul).

Anti-Christian Graffiti on Cathedral of St Pölten

May 2013, Austria:

Unknown perpetrators spray painted „We do not want your crosses“ on the outside wall of the Catholic Cathedral of St. Pölten in the night to May 1st. The graffiti included crossed-out signs in cross-shapes, a swastika and a so-called Kruckenkreuz (an Austrian historic sign for the right-wing government between 1934-38). Next to a clearly anti-Christian message, the Christian cross was unfairly paired with the Nazi swastika.

Robbery in the Church in Marburg

May 2013, Germany:

A small amount of money was stolen by unidentified thieves from the church in Marburg, Germany. In early May the thieves stole two loudspeakers from the same church.

Church Building Ransacked in Wolfsburg

May 2013, Germany:

Unidentified perpetrators broke into the Holy Spirit church building at Vorsfelde-Wendschott and ransacked several rooms. All the cabinets were searched and the lamp in the entry way was smashed.

Altar in Catholic Church Set on Fire in Valence, Drôme

May 2013, France:

The altar of the church of Saint-Jean in Valence (Drôme) was purposefully set on fire on May 10. Parish priest Dominique Fornerod deplores the incident and ask the parishioners to pray for the perpetrators.

Vandalism Forces Churches in Breckerfeld to Install Security Cameras

May 2013, Germany:

In a Catholic church in Breckerfeld, vandals left cigarette butts on benches and in the holy water, chewing gum on the organ and broke the Easter candle. A similar incident happened to the Protestant community in Breckerfeld. Both churches are accustomed to leaving the church unlocked so that people can enter at any time to pray or visit. In order to keep out the vandals they have decided to install surveillance cameras and tighten security measures by locking the organ and the loft of the church.

Catholic Church in Esbjerg Vandalised

May 2013, Denmark:

On May 26 the crucifix in front of the church of Esbjerg in Jutland was vandalised for the second time. In the early morning a man of 25 to 30 years passing by the church with a companion, jumped into its front yard and broke the legs of the Jesus figure on the cross. The first time the crucifix was attacked was at Easter 2012 when the figure of Jesus was torn from the cross.

Repeated Urination in the Entrance Area of Church in Traunstein

May 2013, Germany:

The second entrance of the church of St. George and Katharina in the city centre of Traunstein has been repeatedly used as toilet facility a local source reported. In one case our source caught an adolescent by over-hearing the adolescent bragging to his friend about having urinated into the church on various occasions before.

Parish Priest Discovers Desecration in Santa Chantal Church in Dijon

May 2013, France:

After presiding over a funeral, a Parish Priest was shocked to discover a heap of excrement behind the altar of Our Lady at the entrance to the sacristy. In addition, a prayer book in the back of

the church was torn and smeared into. He decided that they can no longer leave the church open during the day but will have to keep it closed for protection.

Anti-Christian Graffiti at Pro Life Manifestation

May 2013, Italy:

On May 12th, about 30,000 people held a manifestation in favour of the protection of life in Rome. Graffiti on the way of the manifestation said: „All Catholics are Bastards.“ „The only Church which illuminates is a burning church.“ A cross turned upside down and the number 666 (for Christians an anti-Christian symbol) were spray-painted as well.

Saint Louis Church in La Roche Sur Yon Spray-painted with Anti-Christian Slogans

June 2013, France:

A wall of Saint Louis Church was spray-painted with blasphemous graffiti saying „Jésus la Tepue“ (Jesus the slut). There was also graffiti found on the pedestal of the statue of the Virgin Mary, reading: „666 Satan reviendra. (Satan will return).

On-going Vandalism, Burglary and Spray Painted Insults in Thomasberg

June 2013, Germany:

Early in June vandals entered St. Joseph's church in Thomasberg, Germany, stole the altar cross and some money and then broke candles for the offertory and damaged the icon of Mary. Several days later it was discovered that the organ had been damaged and candles burned. In mid-June the offertory candles were found to have all been burned down and matches were distributed throughout the church. At the end of June the Church door and showcase were painted with the words: „Kirche ist scheiße, Türken auch - wir wollen euch das Geld klauen.“ - „Church is shit, Turks also - we want to steal your money.“

Attempted Burglary and Vandalism at Church in Frohngau

June 2013, Germany:

Burglars broke the door to the sacristy of the church in Frohngau, Germany and rummaged through drawers and cabinets. They also broke open the door leading into the church. Nothing was stolen but there was property damage amounting to about 400 euros.

Vandalism in Church in Losheim

June 2013, Germany:

Unidentified perpetrators entered a church in Losheim, Germany, broke several doors and ransacked the sacristy. They also searched the gallery and the bell tower. Nothing was stolen but the damages were substantial.

Attempted Burglary in Church in Bad Herrenalb

June 2013, Germany:

Burglars tried to pry open the door to the monastery in Bad Herrenalb, Germany. After the failed attempt they fled. According to police information, an estimated damage of 100 euro was caused.

Anti-Catholic Graffiti on Church in Bourgoin-Jallieu, Isère

June 2013, France:

Insulting anti-Catholic, anti-France, pro-Islam and pro-Bin Laden graffiti were found on two pillars in the morning of the 15th of June by a member of the church "Saint - Jean – Baptiste" in Bourgoin-Jallieu. The sign "GIA" suggests to mean "Groupe islamique armé (Islamic armed group)".

Young Man Set Church in Moulins on Fire

June 2013, France:

The police questioned a young man who had been noticed by a witness coming out of the sacristy of the church in Moulins. Inside the sacristy, a fire had started: a bottle of alcohol had been poured over the candles. The witness managed prevent the fire from spreading.

Anti-Catholic Graffiti on the Entrance Door of Cathedral of Montpellier

June 2013, France:

In the night of June 16th, an unknown person sprayed anti-Catholic graffiti on the main entrance of the door of the cathedral in Montpellier, France. "Filthy fascist. You have killed Clement..." Clément Meric, a left wing activist, was tragically beaten to death by a skinhead – not Christians – in the beginning of June.

Attempted Burglary at a Church in Duisburg-Marxloh

June 2013, Germany:

A 11-year-old boy and 24-year-old men entered a church in Duisburg-Marxloh, Germany and attempted to steal metal from the roof. Someone noticed and called the police. The thieves hid in a false ceiling of the church while fire fighters were searching for them. The thieves were finally found.

Attempt to Break into Church in Osterhol

June 2013, Germany:

During the open hours of Martin Church unidentified perpetrators damaged several doors of different rooms in the church in Osterhol. The damage to the doors was worth several hundred euros.

Church St. Nicolas du Chardonnet in Paris Vandalised

June 2013, France:

The church of St. Nicolas du Chardonnet in Paris was vandalised in the night of June 22nd when someone spray painted the following words on the wall of the church: "Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum." meaning "only religion can lead to such evil" or "so much wrong could religion induce." The graffiti was signed with the anarchy logo.

Church Vandalised and Robbed in Itzum

June 2013, Germany:

The church of St. George in Itzum, Germany was vandalised and robbed when gangsters smashed their way through a window into the church.

They smashed doors and furniture and ransacked offices. They found the key to the sacristy and vault and stole the church's valuables from the safe as well as the studded chalices, communion cups and a gold plated 275 year-old monstrance.

Arrest for Setting Two Churches on Fire

June 2013, United Kingdom:

A young man in Derbyshire, England, was arrested because he is suspected to have set two churches on fire in Allestree and one in Twyford.

Catholic Bookseller Vandalised for the 27th Time in Bordeaux

June 2013, France:

A Catholic bookseller in Bordeaux became a victim of vandalism for the 27th time. The proprietor said that they had been threatened, offended and the shop window was spat upon.

The bookseller has been the object of "attack" of left wing extremists for many years, especially since the debate about gay marriage and the French „Manif pour tous“.

Arrest for Setting Two Churches on Fire

June 2013, United Kingdom:

A young man in Derbyshire, England, was arrested because he is suspected to have set two churches on fire in Allestree and one in Twyford.

Vandalism in Church in Messina

June 2013, Italy:

In the Church of the Good Shepherd in Messina a crucifix was found upside down covered in dirty wax and paint. A Madonna statue was also burned. There were also nails driven into the images, one in the neck of the crucifix.

The Satanists also marred the vessel of the sacristy and engraved an inverted cross, swastika and 666 on the table.

Repeated Vandalism of Chapel in Bergheim-Kenten

June 2013, Germany:

Two volunteers who have been caring for a chapel in Bergheim- Kenten for many years gave up after repeated vandalism when they found the shrine vandalized again, this time smeared with feces.

Church and Graves Vandalised in Grandvilliers

June 2013, France:

The church and 37 tombs in the village of Grandvilliers were vandalised. The vandals stoned the stained-glass windows of the church and knocked over sepulchral items. They also damaged the signs of the tombs and displaced one tombstone.

Protestant Assembly Hall Burned Down in Villiers-sur-Marne

June 2013, France:

In the early morning of the 10th of June, the Protestant assembly hall in Villiers-sur-Marne, France, which had room for 200 people, was burned down. An investigation is in progress but it seems that the action of the burning was done voluntarily.

Church in Ostia Covered in Satanic Graffiti

June 2013, Italy:

During the night the Church of St. Nicholas of Bari in Ostia was covered with satanic graffiti saying, „our dreams are your monsters“, „all human beings are dogs“; „666“, as well as inverted crosses and various satanic references.

Anti-Catholic Graffiti on Walls of Catholic School in Nantes

June 2013, France:

The walls inside of the Catholic school in Nantes were spray painted with anti-Catholic graffiti showing obscene images and messages. The different style of writing suggests that at least two people have done this.

Graffiti on Cathedral of Limoges

June 2013, France:

Suspected "Antifa"-left wing activists spray painted the words: "Canon Law = Sharia". Next to the Church on a construction site fence you could read: "To Clement, who was killed by the brown pest." This is an allusion to the left wing activist Clement Meric, who had been thrashed to death by a skinhead some days before, blaming the Church for the tragedy of Clement's death.

Cathedral of Nantes Vandalised and Desecrated

June 2013, France:

Perpetrators found their way into the Cathedral and spray painted the altar, walls and floor with provoking symbols like 666 and Nazi slogans.

Graffiti on Façade and Square of the Basilica Saint-Sernin in Toulouse

June 2013, France:

On the feast of Corpus Christi, the façade and the square of the basilica Saint-Sernin in Toulouse were spray painted with anti-Catholic graffiti saying "Death to Catholics".

Lutheran Church Burnt Down in Hannover

July 2013, Germany:

In the night from July 29 to 30, the Lutheran church and parish house Willehadikirche in Hannover was set on fire and burnt down completely despite the efforts of 150 firemen. The police concluded the following day that it was a case of deliberate arson. Neighbors reported that they saw a group of youth trying to set the church on fire but thought that they had not succeeded.

Church in Lille Spray Painted

July 2013, France:

A church in Lille was sprayed with graffiti insulting the Catholic Church and the Catholic political movement "Civitas".

13-Century-Church Vandalised in Grafing

July 2013, Germany:

Unknown perpetrators entered St. Leonhard church in Grafing, Bavaria, on the weekend of July 6 and 7. They climbed into the locked main hall of the 13th-century church and broke pieces from a number of wooden statues which they burnt on the altar, thereby also damaging the main painting behind the altar. Some relics were stolen and the damage was severe.

Church Set on Fire Leads to Arrests of Four Young Adults

July 2013, Spain:

Spanish police arrested four young adults for setting the church of Carmen de Vinaroz in Castellón on fire on July 5th. Sacred images and furniture were severely damaged. Spanish Christians deplore frequent threats, for example spray paintings saying: "the only church which illuminates is a burning church" or "remember the year 1936", suggesting a planned repetition of the murder of over 3000 religious people.

Provocative Graffiti on Church of St. Louis en l'Île

July 2013, France:

Unidentified perpetrators spray painted the words: "Essayez les orgasmes" (Try Orgasms) on the church of St. Louis, France. The second phrase was "Omnia sunt Communia", but written in a wrong way: "Ominia comminia". It means "Everything in common" which is generally attributed to Thomas Munzer (1488-1527) a leader of the Peasants' War of 1525 in Germany.

Graffiti Spray Painted on Catholic Church in Brussels

July 2013, France:

Three walls of the church of the Holy Trinity d'Ixelles (Elsenes) near Brussels were spray painted with graffiti.

Cemetery in Cambrai Looted

July 2013, France:

Inscription plates, angel statues, ornaments, solar lights and flowers were stolen from a cemetery in Solesmes Cambrai. Many objects had high sentimental and financial value. Some of the stolen items were found at a market in the neighbouring town of Cantimpre by families of the deceased. The police were informed and an exhibitor was arrested.

(Austria) Posters and Graffiti on Parish Display Cabinet

July 2013, Germany:

Two display cabinets attached to a Catholic parish house in Traunstein, Germany were covered with unauthorised posters on July, 23rd 2013. The posters invited to a pro-choice-demonstration in Salzburg. At least forty of the same poster were also plastered illegally in various places in the city of Salzburg, where the demonstration took place on July. This led to the arrest of 34 radically left wing participants and pro-choice-demonstrators. The mentioned display cabinets were also sprayed with the words "No Nazis" and the surrounding walls were also painted.

Church Burned to the Ground in Garbsen

July 2013, Germany:

A church in Garbsen, Germany was burned down by a group of arsonists from a violent Oriental circle. It is not clear whether it will be possible to retrieve parts of the church. Symbolically, the bronze Christ on the wall behind the altar survived the inferno and still hangs on the wall above the rubble.

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Neighbours reported that they saw a group of youth trying to set the church on fire but thought that they had not succeeded.

Desecration of Madonna in Church in Paratico

July 2013, Italy:

In the church of Oasi Mamma dell'Amore in Paratico excrement and glass bottles were left at the statue of the Madonna.

Theft and Desecration in Church of Serravalle

July 2013, Italy:

Thieves broke into the church of Serravalle, stole items and left excrement and urine beside the altar.

Attempted Burglary at a Church in Dorstfeld

August 2013, Germany:

Police were called to the Barbara Church at Arminiusstraße, Dorstfeld, Germany because of suspicious noises. They discovered a young man on a ladder, leaning under a window of the church. The man was already known to the police as a burglar. The police took him into custody, but had to dismiss him for lack of reasons for detention.

Consultation Centre for Disabled People Vandalised by Left Wing Radicals

August 2013, France:

The Jérôme-Lejeune-Foundation reports that the HIV/Aids – Awareness raising lobby group "Act Up" has vandalised the foundation's premises in the night from August 4th to 5th. Doctors and patients of the foundation discovered insulting posters, red colour on doors, windows and walls and condoms lying around in the morning. Prof. Marie-Odile Rhétoré, director of the public consultations, deplored that the sight was shocking for families and their disabled children who came for appointments and support that morning.

Wooden Cross Stolen From Church in Aushausen

August 2013, Germany:

A large 150 x 150 cm wooden cross with the figure of Jesus was stolen from the church of St. Andrew in Aushausen, Germany. The cross had been fastened with metal studs on the church wall.

Vandalism and Burglary in Church in Lünen

August 2013, Germany:

Thieves broke through the roof into St. Joseph's church in Lünen, Germany. All cabinets and boxes were opened. A large cross in the sacristy was thrown on the floor and a chandelier used as a crowbar. Police estimated a damage of at least 8000 euro.

Burglary at Church in Wesel

August 2013, Germany:

Perpetrators broke through a basement window in the rectory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Wesel, Germany. They damaged several doors including the door to the sacristy and stole two boxes of donated money.

Exhibition in Church Damaged by Fire in Chatellerault

August 2013, France:

An exhibition of pilgrims financed by the Friends of Santiago de Compostela was on display in the St. Jacques church in Chatellerault, France. Several times someone tried to set the laminated panels of the images on fire using a candle. The panels were covered with burn holes from the candle. Police in Chatellerault have opened an investigation.

Church Vandalised Overnight in Loire-Atlantique

August 2013, France:

In the night perpetrators broke down the door and entered the church of Notre Dame in Loire-Atlantique, Bretagne, where they destroyed several more items. A lawsuit was filed and as a conse-

quence the town decided to close and lock the doors of the church, which are normally open.

Satanist Symbolism on Church Property in Traunstein

August 2013, Germany:

Various acts of vandalism with clear anti-Christian symbolism have been reported in Traunstein/Southern Germany: The exterior wall of a small church belonging to a parish in Traunstein (in the South of Germany) was spray painted with anti-Christian symbols and had to be repainted. Close by, the pedestal of a St. John Nepomuk figure was disfigured with the painting of a satanist cross. On a private garage, two big satanist crosses and the letters "GOD free" were spray painted. Local sources suspect radical left wing groups are behind these acts.

Theft and Vandalism in Church in Misson

August 2013, Italy:

The Basilica of San Vittore in Misson was attacked by a vandal who forced open the side window of the sacristy and entered the church. He ripped the golden door off the golden casket and stole the consecrated Host.

Church and Bust of Pope Benedict XVI Spray Painted

September 2013, Germany:

St. Oswald church - the church in which Pope Benedict XVI celebrated his first mass - was spray painted with large letters. Local sources suspect radical left wing forces behind the incident. A bust of the former Pope in front of the main entrance was spray painted twice. In the first case the delinquent was identified, the second case remains unclear.

Two Statues Destroyed at a Church in Haan

September 2013, Germany:

During a fair in Haan (North Rhine-Westphalia), unknown perpetrators tore the cross with the figure of Jesus off the church of St. Chrysanthus

and Daria, beheaded the figure and took the head away. The perpetrators also tore an arm off the figure of a bishop and threw the arm into the garden of the kindergarten next door. In the last ten years, the figure of Jesus has been destroyed three times.

Christian Cemetery Vandalised in Villecien, Yonne

[September 2013, France:](#)

In Villecien an old Christian cemetery was vandalised in the afternoon of September 26th. 61 graves were vandalised and inscriptions and religious statues were destroyed or removed.

Statue Vandalised in Church in Sassari

[September 2013, Italy:](#)

The historic statue of Our Lady of Hope (1934) in Sassari was taken down from its stand and broken into pieces.

Fire Damage in Church in Reggio Emilia

[September 2013, Italy:](#)

The shrine of Our Lady in the church of St. Augustine in Reggio Emilia was set on fire. Fortunately the statue was unharmed but everything around it was destroyed.

Vandalism in Church in Bologna

[September 2013, Italy:](#)

Vandals broke in half the ceramic statue of the Madonna in Caserme Rosse. This statue had been vandalised two years ago as well.

Bomb Planted in Catholic Church in Zaragoza

[October 2013, Spain:](#)

A bomb was set inside the Catholic "Basílica del Pilar" in Zaragoza. It exploded close to the organ and benches. The church and the market square in front of the basilica had to be cleared by the police. Local sources suspect an extreme left-wing group behind the bomb attack. These claims are supported by the fact that the words "This is our offering" and a veiled figure holding a bomb

were spray painted on a wall nearby the basilica. This bomb was the first attack on the basilica of Zaragoza since the Spanish Civil War.

Statue of Our Lady Destroyed in Bordeaux

[October 2013, France:](#)

In the night to October 13, a statue of our lady was destroyed in Bordeaux. The statue had been attached about three meters high on a corner of an apartment building at Rue Neuve. The head of the statue could not be found which indicates a hate motivated act.

Vandalism and Desecration at Church of Carmine in Ascoli

[October 2013, Italy:](#)

Vandals entered the Church of the Carmine in Ascoli using scaffolding positioned for restructuring. They removed some crucifixes, holy objects and candles. The walls and furniture were also covered in paint and at the end they tried to celebrate a black mass.

Graffiti on Church of Casorate Sempione

[October 2013, Italy:](#)

The outside walls of the church and churchyard were spray painted with white paint and with a number of sentences. One of these read: „most priests dead“ ("più preti morti"). About a month before this happened, a symbol of „A“ for anarchy was painted on the walls of the Caritas centre, and there have been acts of vandalism in the same church in the past.

Vandalism in Church in Galazzano, San Marino

[October 2013, San Marino:](#)

Vandals broke a crucifix in a church in Galazzano in San Marino. The church had never experienced vandalism before.

Vandalism at St. Peter's Church in Waltrop

November 2013, Germany:

Considerable damage was caused to St. Peter's Church in Waltrop. The vestry door was broken and the interior devastated. Police are investigating.

Offensive Graffiti on Walls of Catholic College

November 2013, France:

The outside walls of St. Mary's College, a private Catholic institution in Lyon, France, were covered with offensive insults. The spray painters are probably members of a left wing „Antifa“ group.

Church in Vienna Vandalised

November 2013, Austria:

In the church Our Lady of the Martyrs in Vienna's 15th district, candle holders were stolen and a cross was vandalised.

Statue of Our Lady Knocked Over at Open Air Sanctuary in Nitra

November 2013, Slovakia:

Unknown perpetrators have knocked over and severely damaged a statue of Our Lady. Police are investigating for the crime of property damage in the amount of about 1500 Euro.

Political Slogans Spray Painted on Catholic Church Building

November 2013, Austria:

Unknown perpetrators spray painted the famous Vienna church „Votivkirche“ with political slogans such as „Refugees Welcome?“. This is particularly strange as the parish priest and the archdiocese of Vienna did not ask the police to end a months-long occupation of the church by refugees.

Liturgical Objects Destroyed and Fire Set to Chapel in Ozanam

November 2013, France:

Early in the morning the chapel of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul in the region of Ozanam was set on fire. The General vicar of the diocese of Toulouse, Luc

Caraguel, was „shocked“ and stated: „We first thought it was not an act of vandalism, but only liturgical objects along with books, vestures chalice and crucifix appear to have been deliberately destroyed.“

Arson Attempt in Church in Venice

November 2013, Italy:

Unknown assailants set fire to the wooden altar and the tabernacle in the Church of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, in Venice. The flames did not spread far and the damage was limited. The year before two ceramic figures had been damaged.

Crucifixes Damaged in Churches in Prato

November 2013, Italy:

Crucifixes in both the Church of St. Bartholomew and the Church of San Pier Fiorelli in Prato were damaged. In the Church of St. Bartholomew, someone climbed on the structure before the crucifix and „shook it until he pulled both arms off, which were attached to the media.“ This crucifix had survived the bombing in 1944 unscathed, but not this deliberate violent act.

Offensive Graffiti on Church in Imperia

November 2013, Italy:

The front of the Church of Artallo (fraction of Imperia) was desecrated with offensive graffiti.

Two Madonna's Damaged in Imperia

November 2013, Italy:

Two Madonna statues were beheaded in Imperia, and are irreparably damaged. One was located at the centre for the disabled in the square ISAH De Negri. The other was located in the sanctuary near the church of San Sebastiano Via Agnesi.

Vandalism and Theft in Shrine in Mirano

November 2013, Italy:

The Madonna of a shrine at the intersection of two streets in Mirano was destroyed. On the same day, the statue of St. Anthony was stolen as well.

Explosives Thrown at Church Door in Italy

November 2013, Italy:

The newly renovated Church of San Donato (LU) was damaged when a lady threw Molotov cocktails against the door of the church. The village had just raised 40,000 Euro to have the church renovated.

Theft in Church in Rieti

November 2013, Italy:

The monstrance and relic of St Anthony was stolen from the Church of St. Francis in Rieti.

Church Vandalised Causing Considerable Material Damage

November 2013, Germany:

St. Peter's Church in Waltrip, Germany was broken into. The door to the sacristy was broken and the interior ransacked. The Police and Crime investigators were at the scene and a report was made.

Church Covered in Graffiti in Brescia

November 2013, Italy:

During a night raid the walls of the Church of Santa Maria Calchera in Brescia were covered with inscriptions in red paint. The whole length of the façade was covered.

Several Churches in Augsburg Spray Painted with Islamic Phrases

December 2013, Germany:

The main gates of several churches in the city centre of Augsburg were spray painted with the Islamic Phrase „Allahu Akbar“ which means „Allah is greater“. Police reported that the cathedral of Augsburg, the Church of St. Maurice and the Protestant Church Ullrich were affected.

Church in Munich Spray Painted with Islamic Phrase

December 2013, Germany:

The Islamic phrase “Allahu Akbar”, which means “Allah is greater”, was spray painted on the entrance of the Renaissance church of St. Michael in Munich's pedestrian area by an asylum seeker. The 30-year-old man from Jordan attacked bystanders and was finally arrested by the police.

St. Benedict Church in Munich Spray Painted with Islamic Phrase

December 2013, Germany:

„Allah is greater“ and „Holy war“ was spray painted on the doors and the walls of St. Benedict church in Munich. The 30-year-old asylum seeker from Jordan had previously attacked St. Michael's church in a similar way. The police are active on the case.

Offensive Graffiti on St. Mary's College in Lyon

December 2013, France:

The Catholic College St. Mary's, a private institution under contract, run by Marian Fathers was spray painted with insults. Locals suspected that this was done by a left-wing group.

Vandals Damage Nativity Scene in Ravenna

December 2013, Italy:

In the province of Ravenna, Milano Marittimo, vandals caused great damage to a nativity scene.

Vandals Damage Nativity Scene in Vasto in the Province of Chieti

December 2013, Italy:

In Vasto, vandals caused great damage to a nativity scene by destroying the statue of Mary with a shovel. A strong smell of urine on the scene was reported as well.

Vandalism of Nursery of Church in Rennes

December 2013, France:

The nursery of Saint-Germain Rennes was set on fire causing damage to the Church. It was confirmed that the fire was not caused by electric problems.

Nativity Scene Vandalised in Paris

December 2013, France:

The statues of Mary and Joseph were destroyed in St. Séverin Church nativity scene in Paris.

Series of Anti-Christian Vandalism in North Westfalen

December 2013, Germany:

More than forty acts of vandalism against Christian sites were recorded between September and December around Ibbenbüren, Saerbeck, Hörstel, Hopsten, Mettingen, Tecklenburg and Rheine. Especially large outdoor crosses and statues were targeted. Police think it is likely that the perpetrator is the same in all the cases.

Nativity Scene in Church in Hungary Vandalised

December 2013, Hungary:

Vandals destroyed figures of the nativity scene from a Lutheran Church located in Szentendre, Hungary, 20 km north of Budapest. In November, a cross was vandalised in the same church.

Crib Scene Destroyed in Badia

December 2013, Italy:

A crib scene in the village of Badia was destroyed and heads of several of the figures were severed off.

Graffiti on Church of St. Augustine in Trani

December 2013, Italy:

The front of the Church of St. Augustine in Trani was splattered with paint and the stone lion in the courtyard of the church was spray painted.

Figure of Baby Jesus Destroyed in Ceranova

December 2013, Italy:

The figure of Baby Jesus in the manger which was part of a nativity scene in Ceranova was destroyed. The head and the fingers of one hand were broken off. The pieces of the manger and the figures of Mary and Joseph were carried inside to prevent further vandalism.

Nativity Scene in Urbino Set on Fire

December 2013, Italy:

A nativity scene which was part of the „streets of cribs of Urbino“ was set on fire. The fire caused immediate devastation and there seemed to be multiple ignition points. In addition, the fire destroyed a lamp post and caused pieces of the entrance ceiling to fall down.

Graffiti on Faces of Saints in Church in Foggia

December 2013, Italy:

Satanic shapes and writings such as “Satan lives”, was painted on the faces of the saints and a statue of Mary in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Foggia.

Nativity Scene Destroyed in Ello

December 2013, Italy:

Vandals destroyed a nativity scene in Ello during the midnight church service. The figures were all knocked down and some decapitated.

Nativity Scene Vandalised in Ancona

December 2013, Italy:

The nativity of Guasco in Ancona was damaged by vandals who destroyed some figures and severed the arm of one of the shepherds.



Nativity Scene (burnt) in Urbino, Italy, December 2013

Crib Scene Destroyed in Solan

December 2013, Italy:

A crib scene in the St. Peter's Church was destroyed in Solan. The figures were broken and a hole was made in the bottom of a small pond which was part of the scene.

Graffiti on Church in Conegliano

December 2013, Italy:

Graffiti was spray painted along the front of the Church of Campolongo in Conegliano. One sentence read: „3 canonical vode gnanca a porecan home to Papa Francesco quaquaraqua“,

meaning “three empty churches cannot accommodate even a poor man. Pope Francis is one who talks nonsense”.

Nativity Scene Destroyed Outside Church in Milano

December 2013, Italy:

The figures of a nativity scene were seriously damaged and some completely destroyed in Milano Marittima in Milano. All the figures had to be removed.

1.4. Hate Incidents and Hate Crimes against Christians in 2013

FF

Christians are persecuted for their faith. In some countries they are punished by the mere fact of carrying a cross. Today, in the twenty-first century, our Church is a Church of martyrs, those who say like Peter and John: „We cannot silence what we saw and heard.“

And that - he continued - „gives us strength, give us the strength to bear witness to the life and faith that we receive is the gift that the Lord gives to all people.“

- Pope Francis in a Homily on April 6, 2013

A hate incident is an act of disturbance which does not constitute, in itself, a breach of criminal law, but violates rights and freedoms through non-criminal means. Such hate incidents include the blocking off of roads and violence in counter demonstrations during registered manifestations, the hindering of people from participating in events, or the interruption of religious services. Often, radical groups are behind these attacks who claim “zero tolerance” to Christianity in the name of tolerance.

The Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community expressed its concern about “those organisations and minority groups that call for tolerance towards themselves, while in turn showing intolerance vis-à-vis religion (and in particular Christianity) by ridiculing or even insulting the Church during public events.”¹⁰

Sometimes, when the violence goes overboard, a hate incident becomes a crime, generally involving physical violence. When a crime is driven by hate, some criminal law traditions see this as an aggravating circumstance of the crime and call it hate crime. With regard to faith, hate crime is a

crime that is driven by hatred against Christianity or against a person because of his or her Christian faith.

The hate crimes portrayed in the following, are the tip of a social iceberg that needs to be addressed by Western societies.

Bishop of Trieste Barricaded After Reiterating Church Teaching on Homosexuality in Church Newspaper

January 2013, Italy:

In the January edition of the Diocesan newspaper, the Bishop of Trieste had published an article restating the Church's teaching on homosexual unions. Because of this, on the 12th of January about two hundred homosexual activist demonstrated in front of his home effectively barricading him in for the afternoon.

Anti-Christian Images and Posters at Pro-Gay Marriage Rally in Paris

January 2013, France:

The French gay activist lobby groups hosted a pro-gay marriage on the 27th of January. Unlike the pro-family rally of the 13th of January, whose posters and messages focused on images or phrases that reminded onlookers of the traditional family and of children's need for a mother and father, the 27th of January demonstration signs were largely aimed at insulting Christians and the Pope. Some signs were calling for the “Pope to tie his own fallopian tubes.” Others called the Virgin Mary the first “surrogate mother”, while still others stated that gays were „less likely to harm children than priests“.

¹⁰ <http://www.comece.eu/europeinfos/en/archive/issue142/article/4213.html>

Pro-Life Women Attacked By Pro-Abortion Men at Manifestation

March 2013, Poland:

Male pro-abortion protesters physically attacked several pro-life women, pushing and kicking them, during a rally on March 10th in Warsaw. The pro-lifers were part of the organisation Fundacja Pro and were carrying a controversial banner of a woman who died during an abortion.

Archbishop of Brussels Andre Leonard Attacked

April 2013, Belgium:

Four activists of the feminist group Femen disturbed a conference at the university of Brussels. The topless women interrupted Archbishop André-Joseph Léonard's speech by throwing water out of Lourdes bottles at him. Screaming loudly they held up a poster „Stop Homophobia“. On their bare chests they had written blasphemous comments.

Christian Worker Bullied by Muslims at Work

April 2013, United Kingdom:

After defending a Christian colleague at work last year, some of Mrs. Halawi's Muslim colleagues complained to managers with unsubstantiated claims about her conduct. As a result, the management removed her 'airside pass' without properly considering her side of the story. This meant she was unable to keep working at the airport. Mrs. Halawi said that she had frequently been bullied by her Muslim colleagues for her Christians faith.

Monastery Raided by Masked Gunmen

June 2013, Austria:

The Salvatorian monastery of Hörbranz in the Austrian federal state of Vorarlberg was raided by masked gunmen. A monk was threatened at gunpoint. The two men, allegedly in their 30's, escaped with several thousands of Euros.

Fake Priest Personality Posts Blasphemous Comments on Facebook Page

June 2013, Hungary:

A group of Hungarian students created the fake priest Monsignor Tibi's facebook page. Msgr. Tibi is a paedophilic alcoholic who posts blasphemous comments. Since its creation the page has become less aggressive. The fake priest lived in a small village between Budapest and the Austrian border until the people from the village complained about the growing negative attention (the facebook page has over 135,000 likes). The creators then moved the figure into a fictional town.

Encouragement of Violence Against Christians

June 2013, Germany:

During anti-Christian manifestations in Germany, the appeal to rape Christians in an exceptionally brutal way and vulgar language was spread. A slogan invented by a punk band who titled a song with it, is gaining popularity. This call to violence is also spreading as a slogan on t-shirts.

Anti-Christian Incident at Corpus Christi Procession in Lyon

June 2013, France:

On the feast of Corpus Christi as participants of a procession were splattered with water by someone in the building. The archdiocese of Lyon had organized the procession called "march of the witnesses of the faith". No one was hurt.

Gathering Disturbed by Insults and Shouting in Montpellier

June 2013, France:

A gathering of “Les Veilleurs”, a peaceful manifestation group in favour of the traditional family of was disturbed by shouting from students and radical LGBT activists. Anti-Catholic insults were yelled as “Les Veilleurs” gathered to pray and sing together as they do every Tuesday evening before the prefecture in Montpellier.

Old Lady Robbed and Killed in Church in Marche-en-Famenne

July 2013, Belgium:

Marie-Thérèse Deflandre, was found lifeless on the floor of the church of Saint-Remacle in Marche-en-Famenne, Belgium. She was found with severe head injuries and taken to hospital in Liege where she died 10 days later. No personal belongings were found with the lady and her credit card was later used by a third party.

Priest Violently Assaulted in Quimper, Bretagne

July 2013, France:

Father Michel Mazeas, Pastor of the cathedral of Quimper, Bretagne, was attacked by a man at the rectory of Saint Corentin in Rue Toul-al-Laer. He was threatened and received a dozen punches in the face by the stranger. The attacker was arrested by the police, placed in custody and interned in a public mental health facility of Gourmlen.

34 Anti-Life Activists Arrested for Attacks and Violations of Freedom of Assembly against Praying Christians

July 2013, Austria:

A peaceful prayer-manifestation of young Christians in Salzburg was interrupted by aggressive pro-choice activists who blocked streets and insulted the Christian activists. Police officers had to rearrange the walking route of the march and finally arrested 34 pro-choice activists for the violation of freedom of assembly. Two pro-choice activists also attacked a police officer.

Violence Against Peaceful Christian Manifestation

November 2013, Germany:

A Christian protest against the persecution of Christians was interrupted by Muslims in Cologne. The protesters were shouted at with insults. Microphones and loudspeakers damaged. Some individuals were personally attacked and hit. The police did not respond for a long time exposing the participants to serious risks. Only at the end, after an attack on a cameraman did the police take action.

Two Priests Attacked in Paris

December 2013, France:

Two priests were beaten in Paris by five youth after telling them to stop demolishing garbage bins. When the youth did not listen, one of the priests photographed them after which they reacted violently.

Bologna Basilica Intruded by Feminists

December 2013, Italy:

A mob of hooded feminists invaded the Basilica of San Petronio in Bologna, Italy and held a pro-abortion demonstration. They held up a large banner in front of the altar which read: „You Occupy the Counselling Centres - We Invade the Churches“ („Voi occupate Consultori, abbiamo invaso le chiese“) and then chanted in chorus: „Get the Church Out of Our Ovaries.“

Feminist Hate Incident at a Church in Paris

December 2013, France:

Femen, a feminist group, mimed an act of an abortion when a topless young woman headed to the altar and laid down a piece of veal liver supposed to represent a fetus and then urinated on the steps of the altar of the Church of St. Madeleine in Paris. The words: “344 bitches” were written on her belly; a reference to the manifesto of the 343 women who signed a call for the decriminalisation of abortion and the legalisation of abortion in April 1971. On her back was written: “Christmas is aborted.”



Femen's Picture on Facebook, "Cancelling the birth of Jesus", France, December 2013

Aborting to Cancel Christmas Suggested on Facebook

December 2013, France:

A message posted on the facebook page of Femen France calls on "cancelling the birth of Jesus" in order to protest against Christian pro-life campaigns. This message was accompanied by a picture which mimicked a half undressed Mary, the mother of Jesus, having an abortion in front of the Cathedral in Madrid.

Naked Woman on Cologne's Cathedral Main Altar During Christmas Services

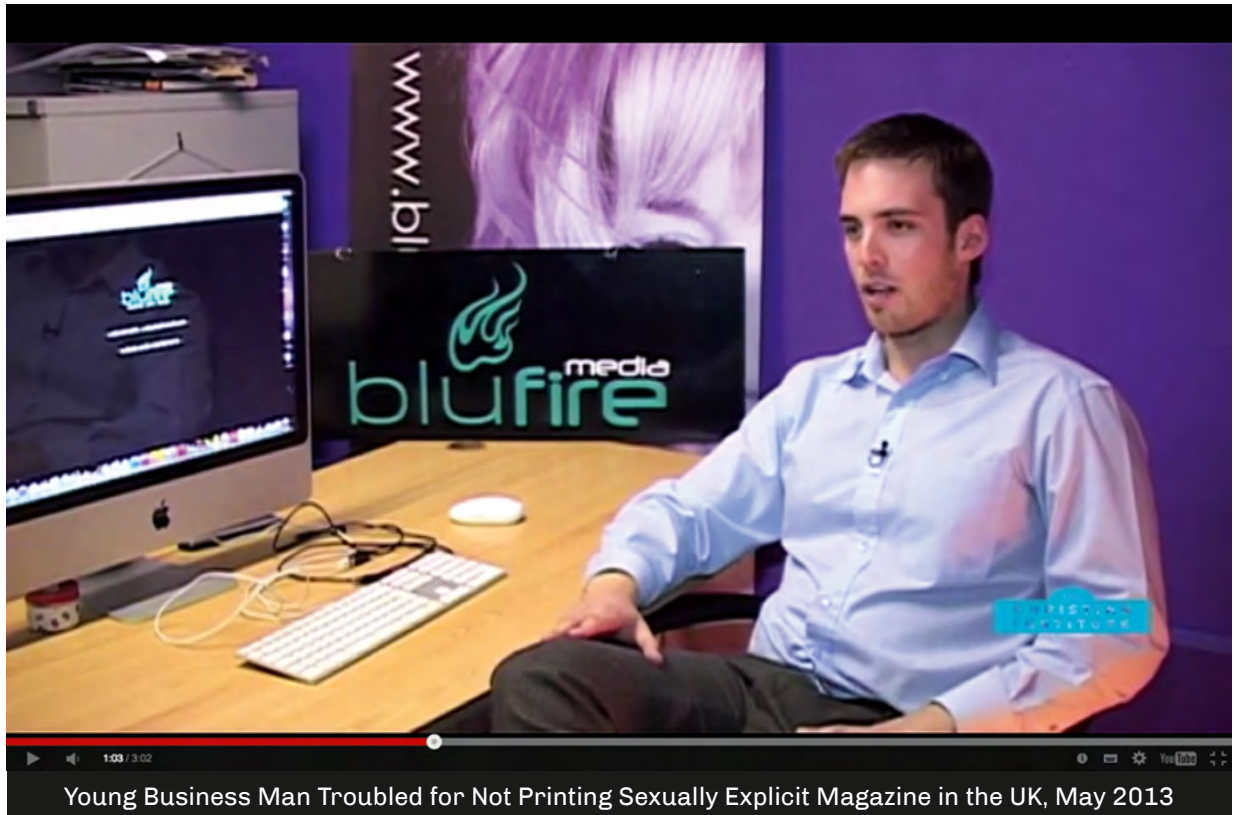
December 2013, Germany:

20-year-old Femen activist Josephine Witt jumped onto the altar of Cologne's Catholic cathedral during Christmas services on December 25th. Her upper body naked and "I am God" was written on her chest. Security staff removed her, and Cardinal Meisner continued the liturgy. Many people commented critically, saying that Ms Witt would have had other possibilities of voicing her opposition to the Church.

Christmas Eve Eucharist Interrupted by Feminists in Barcelona

December 2013, Spain:

A radical group of feminists broke through the midnight mass at the Church of San Felix, Sabadell, Barcelona, with shouts, curses and banners in favour of abortion. They stood at the alter and prevented the priest from continuing celebrating the Eucharist.



2. Intolerance against Christians in Law and Politics

“

The OSCE Ministerial Council concluded that participating States ought to:

“... take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination against individuals or religious or belief communities on the basis of religion or belief, including against non-believers, by public officials in the conduct of their public duties...”

- Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, December 6, 2013

Hardly anyone claims that freedom of religion should be curbed. But when it comes to concrete manifestations, opinions diverge and we see a growing willingness to exert limitations on the way the Christian faith is lived.

Prominent examples comprise the extent to which medical staff may invoke conscientious objection with regard to participating in abortion or euthanasia, or whether a registrar of births, marriages and deaths may refuse to officiate at a same-sex wedding. It includes the question of whether it is legitimate to criticise Islamic practices or to argue publically against

gay adoption, and whether the services of one's business may be restricted to people of one's own faith, such as a faith-based travellers' agency or faith-based online dating.

It raises the question of whether parents should be able to opt out of sexual education programmes if they perceive the contents to be contrary to their faith and if a prayer meeting in a public square or even an abortion facility can be interdicted by the authorities. Similarly, it addresses the issue of whether religious symbols may be displayed in public in the form of a crucifix in the court or a class room, or a Christmas tree downtown, or personally on a necklace at the workplace.

These and more questions are at stake with regard to religious freedom in Europe. We will look at the different areas of the law one by one on the following pages. To start with, here is a detailed definition of freedom of religion:

Freedom of religion and conscience comprises inter alia:

- The right to adhere, or not to adhere, to a religious belief;
- The right to be free from coercion in religious matters (meaning that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs)
- The right to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

The right to religious freedom is not only an individual right, but also applies, as a collective right, to religious communities. For them, it comprises inter alia:

- The right to govern themselves according to their own norms
- The right to honour the Supreme Being in public worship
- The right to instruct their members in the practice of the religious life
- The right to select, educate, appoint, and transfer their own ministers
- The right to communicate with religious authorities and communities abroad,
- The right to erect buildings for religious purposes, and to acquire and use suitable funds or properties
- The right to public teaching and witness to their faith, whether by the spoken or by the written word
- The right to hold meetings and to establish educational, cultural, charitable and social organisations under the impulse of their own religious sense

Today in Europe, we experience that a number of laws, documented by the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in its report of April 2013, show that often state interventions go beyond any reasonable and just limitations.

41 legal restrictions affecting Christians were in effect in 2012 in 14 European countries. We grouped them in the following main categories:

¹² Download the full report here:

http://www.intoleranceagainstchristians.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/reports/Legal_Limitations_Affecting_Christians_as_well_as_Cases_of_2012_Webversion_of_Report_by_OIDAC.pdf

2.1. Limiting Conscientious Objection

“

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe calls on States to “ensure the right to well-defined conscientious objection in relation to morally sensitive matters, such as military service or other services related to health-care and education, in line also with various recommendations already adopted by the Assembly, provided that the rights of others to be free from discrimination are respected and that the access to lawful services is guaranteed; “

- Resolution on the Protection of Religious Communities Against Violence adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 24 April 2013

Freedom of conscience enables believers to live according to the demands of faith giving meaning to life. Limiting or denying an individual the right to freedom of conscience violates personal autonomy which is a main requirement of human dignity. ‘Conscientious objection’ is not a ‘privilege’ the legal order confers on religious believers but it is a moral obligation for everyone to act according to his conscience. Still there are many who, in their workplace or elsewhere, face a conflict of duties between what their own conscience and what their employer (or, in other instances, the law) requires them to do. The most affected groups are medical staff, pharmacists, registrars of births, marriages and deaths, and wedding facility owners.

“

What is quite clear is that once freedom of religion is not thought to be of absolutely fundamental importance in a society, but can give way to current social priorities, freedom of conscience also is challenged. Religious freedom, itself, is very hard to prise apart from the most basic freedoms that make any life worth living. It is regrettable that current European jurisprudence does not appear to take this point seriously.”

- Roger Trigg, in a contribution to the Religious Freedom Project at Georgetown University’s Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, 31 January 2013

2.2. Curbing Free Speech

Freedom of expression or speech is one of the fundamental rights of a democratic society, including the right to publically make declarations however unpopular and unpleasant they may be. This right also applies to public acknowledgement of one's faith and enables people to declare the truth according to their faith, as long as they are not direct instigators of violence. Christians have found themselves in court for quoting the Bible or

arguing in their own words in favour of Christian positions, even though they were far from inciting violence in intention or effect. Frequently, such cases concern topics about Islam or homosexuality. The harmful effects of "hate speech" laws are, however, easy to recognise. They create a chilling effect on free speech: if it is difficult to predict what the result of saying certain things will be, self-censorship is the likely outcome.

2.3. Violations of Freedom of Assembly

Freedom of assembly and association is the right to come together and collectively express, promote, pursue and defend common interests and is a cornerstone of democracy. Christian events, prayer meetings or Church services as well as Christian manifestations sometimes suffer from

attacks and interruptions by people with opposing views. With regard to Christian-inspired manifestations, the Observatory has noticed rising restrictions imposed by authorities, especially with regard to prayer in front of abortion facilities.

2.4. Discriminatory Equality Policies

Equality is a major principle of political and legal thinking. The legal concept of equality before the law, however, is today more and more often invoked, demanding equality of moral choices, and equality of how individuals treat each other. This new understanding mounts in the adoption of harsh anti-discrimination legislation. While this legislation is phrased in a neutral way, practice shows that it is very often Christians who are taken to court. Equal treatment laws can create irresolvable moral conflicts for Christians forcing them to choose between their belief and their business. This is the case when small businesses are required to render their services irrespective of religion or sexual orientation, or when faith-based entities are not free in hiring whom they themselves deem appropriate.



There is a real risk that moral relativism, which imposes itself as a new social norm, will come to undermine the foundations of individual freedom of conscience and religion. ... the rationality of the human conscience in general and of the moral action of Christians in particular requires explanation. Regarding morally controversial subjects, such as abortion or homosexuality, freedom of consciences must be respected. Rather than being an obstacle to the establishment of a tolerant society in its pluralism, respect for freedom of conscience and religion is a condition for it."

- Archbishop Mamberti, commenting on Radio Vatican on the four freedom of religion cases ruled on by the European Court of Human Rights, 16 January 2013

2.5. Limiting Parental Rights



The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe calls on States "while guaranteeing the fundamental right of children to education in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner, respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions; "

- Resolution on the Protection of Religious Communities Against Violence adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 24 April 2013

It is a right of parents to ensure the education and teaching of their children in conformity with their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions. However, schools increasingly promote values which conflict with traditional Christian morality, especially in the area of sexual education pedagogy. More and more Christian parents wish to opt their children out of sexual education, or home school them entirely. In several countries, this is difficult. Several states legislated a partial or entire prohibition of home schooling. In other countries, to opt out of sexual education either in its entirety or its individual parts is forbidden. Another area of concern is the influence certain state regulations might exert on the contents of religious education: Authentic Christian contents might be banned from being taught in a Christian education class.

2.6. Cases of Intolerance against Christians in Law and Politics in 2013

Find here a selection of the countless cases of intolerance and discrimination against Christians through the law and in political debate in 2013.

French Government to "Dissolve Religious Pathology" and "Excesses" in the Church

January 2013, France:

Instead of tackling the enormous number of anti-Christian vandalisms, President Hollande announced the National Observatory of Secularism' to come into being this year, tasked with closely monitoring religious organisations for any potential 'excesses'. French Interior Minister Manuel Valls highlighted various Catholic organisations, stating that „All excesses are being minutely registered in case we have to consider dissolving it.“

ECHR Decides Against Freedom of Religion in Three Cases, in Favour of One

January 2013, European Institutions (EU, ECHR, et.al.):

On January 15th, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in the four UK Freedom of Religion cases: one was ruled in favour and three against. The decision of the Court is not yet final and can be appealed to the Grand Chamber of the Court.

British Airways Banned Employee from Wearing a Cross, ECHR Confirms a Violation of Freedom of Religion

January 2013, United Kingdom:

(October 2006 - January 2013) In October 2006 an employee, Ms Eweida, was banned from wearing a cross on a necklace by British Airways, UK. Court ruling in January 2008 upheld prohibition for Christians, but not for other religions' symbols. On January 15th, 2013, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Ms Eweida's rights had been violated.

Christian Nurse Loses Battle to Wear Crucifix at Work

January 2013, United Kingdom:

The Employment Tribunal found 'No Discrimination' despite the ruling that a Christian nurse cannot wear a cross for religious reasons though a Muslim can wear a hijab for religious reasons. On January 15th, 2013, the European Court of Human Rights confirmed that the hospital could make such policies - if justified by health and safety reasons.

Christian Counsellor's Freedom of Conscience Trumped by Rights of Homosexuals

January 2013, United Kingdom:

The rights of homosexual couples trumped those of Christians, according to a ruling of the Employment Appeal Tribunal. The European Court of Human Rights dismissed the Christian applicant Gary McFarlane and left the balancing out of rights to national appreciation.

Registrar's Wish Not to Register Homosexual Unions Rejected

January 2013, United Kingdom:

Lillian Ladele, a Christian registrar, was disciplined because of her stance on civil partnerships. The European Court of Human Rights dismissed Ladele's application on January 15th, 2013 and left the balancing out of rights to the national authorities.

New Mandatory Sex Ed Programme Violates Rights of Parents

January 2013, Croatia:

Christian parents are outraged over the contents of the government's new sex ed programme. The government insisted and made opting out illegal, until the constitutional court found that the contents were against the law.

Schoolchild Punished for Refusing to Memorise a Verse of the Koran

January 2013, France:

A child at a Catholic school in France was punished for refusing to memorise a verse of the Koran in January 2013. At the school of Notre Dame de St Mihiel in the Meuse, Lorraine, a pupil refused to memorise a verse of the Koran as a part of a class on Islam. Two mothers arranged a meeting with the teacher to explain their disagreement with the punishment. Instead of removing the punishment or allowing the student to opt-out of the class the school director informed the mother of the punished child that she considers removing the child from the school.

Christian Youth Foundation in Dordrecht Accuses Local Government of Anti-Christian Repression

March 2013, Netherlands:

A Christian foundation for working with youth surprisingly lost its license to serve coffee and soda on the grounds that the youth centre was a gastronomical enterprise running on deficit and other permits would be necessary for non-profit activities. This was perceived as a governmental anti-Christian repression and is now debated in court.

Reproach of Police Misconduct at Pro-Family-Manifestation

March 2013, France:

French Christians launched a petition for the resignation of Manuel Valls, French Minister of the Interior, and Bernard Boucault, Prefect of Police, and to sanction all police staff who committed abuses against the peaceful demonstrators at the

Pro-Family-demonstration „Manif pour tous“ in Paris on Sunday 24th of March. According to the organisers, the number of protesters had been greatly underestimated by the police, and in order to try to contain the actual 1,4 million the police employed unnecessary forceful measures.

Catholic Parish Targeted by Government

March 2013, Russia:

As a consequence of a “foreign agents“ law that was signed by President Vladimir Putin last year, Russia caused headlines with its persistent attempt to crack down foreign funded non-governmental organisations such as Human Rights Watch and Transparency International. Now the latest reports state that the government has started targeting churches as well, e.g. fining a Catholic parish in Nowotscherkassk for 450.000 Rubel (11.200 Euro).

(Northern Ireland) Printing Firm to be Sued for Refusing to Print Gay Magazine

April 2013, United Kingdom:

The Christian owner of a printing firm in Northern Ireland faced being hauled to court over his refusal to print a gay magazine. Nick Williamson says printing the material would go against his religious beliefs. But the editor of MyGayZine, Danny Toner, approached a solicitor and referred the matter to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Home-schooling Prohibition Challenged at European Court of Human Rights

April 2013, Sweden:

Alliance Defending Freedom and the Home School Legal Defence Association have asked the European Court of Human Rights to hear the case of a Swedish family heavily fined for home-schooling their daughter. Although the 13-year-old girl flourished in her home-schooling environment, local Swedish authorities fined her family the equivalent of more than \$28,000.

Numerous Human Rights Violations Against Pro-Family Demonstrators

April 2013, France:

The recent attacks on pro-family mass-demonstrations included: tear gas against children, overbearing police force, unconstitutional state action and human rights violations, death threats against organisers on social media and stabbing of a protester, as well as violations of freedom of assembly.

Common Greeting with Reference to God Discouraged in Department of Health

April 2013, Austria:

In the course of a debate on the health care reform in the National Assembly of Austria, the spokesman of physicians of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), Andreas Karlsböck criticised Health Minister Alois Stöger of the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) because he had discouraged or even prohibited the use of the common German greeting “Grüß Gott” (a greeting which literally means “Greet God”) in the Department of Health.

Ban on Christian Teacher from Deptford Green School in London

April 2013, United Kingdom:

A classroom ban on a Christian school teacher who condemned the “homosexual lifestyle” in front of year 11 pupils aged 15 and 16, has been upheld by the High Court. Science teacher, Robert Haye’s appeal against the decision to ban him indefinitely was rejected by the judge. After telling his class that the way homosexual people lived was a “sin”, according to the bible, he was sacked and prohibited from teaching at any school.

Province of Asturias Decides to Eliminate Religious Terms in Schools

May 2013, Spain:

The region’s education minister Doña Ana González Rodríguez asked the schools to remove the words Christmas and Easter from their calendars.

Home-schooling Practically Prohibited

May 2013, Sweden:

According to the Education Act (2010:800) home-schooling is practically forbidden in Sweden. Home-schooling is allowed only when exceptional circumstances apply, which is hardly ever granted. According to the preparatory work of the government bill, permissions should be granted with great restraint, stating explicitly that religious and philosophical reasons are not to be considered as exceptional circumstances.

No Parental Consent Necessary for Minors' Abortion

May 2013, Sweden:

There is no parental consent with regard to abortion. Much attention was drawn to a case where an eleven-year-old girl had undergone two abortions in a very short period of time without parental consent. The Parliamentary Ombudsman held that it had gone too far and concluded that "it is obvious that a child of this age (11 years) does not have the maturity to consider the consequences of an abortion by herself".

Home-schooling Prohibited

May 2013, Germany:

"Home-schooling" is prohibited. Parents' rights are commonly understood to include the right to choose the form of education of one's children, including the possibility of non-institutional education, such as so-called home-schooling. Germany, however, allows home-schooling only in the most exceptional circumstances. In general, parents do not have the option to home-school their children. Offenders have to pay fines, and occasionally prison sentences are pronounced.

Pharmacists Do Not Enjoy an Explicit Right to Conscientious Objection

May 2013, Austria:

In Austria, pharmacists do not enjoy an explicit right to conscientious objection. The so called "morning after pill" may be obtained either by prescription or in case of emergency without a prescription. Besides other functions, the taking

of the morning after pill may result in an early abortion. The Austrian criminal code contains a conscience clause for medical staff with regard to abortion. But for pharmacists there is no such clause. It is therefore unclear, whether pharmacists have a right to conscientious objection or not. The professional representation of pharmacists says there isn't. This body argues that there is a legal obligation to contract; and that not delivering would be an act of non-assistance to a person in danger. Therefore, pharmacists or employees of pharmacies do not dare to withhold the abortifacient drug for conscientious reasons. It is necessary to introduce a law in Austria which explicitly recognises the freedom of conscience of pharmacists.

Duty of Referral Creates Conscience Dilemma for Pharmacists

May 2013, Belgium:

In 2007, a law was passed requiring a pharmacist to sell any type of legal drugs. This position was modified in a pharmaceutical law on the 15th of October 2010. Article 32 now states that without prejudice of the rights of the patient, the continuity of the caring and the execution of the order, the pharmacist has the right to refuse delivery according to his conscience and refer the client immediately to another pharmacist, where the drug will be available, otherwise he needs to deliver the drug himself. Even though these changes constitute an improvement, the duty to refer to someone else who will make the objectionable drug available, is problematic to the objector.

Registrars and Wedding Place Owners Not Allowed to Opt Out of Gay Civil Ceremonies

May 2013, Belgium:

Registrars of birth, marriages and deaths are not entitled to refer to their conscience to refuse to register a gay marriage as a civil act. Owners of wedding locations cannot opt out of facilitating gay marriages in their places.

Pharmacists' Conscientious Objection Limited

May 2013, Czech Republic:

As of November 2011 the so-called "emergency pill" no longer needed a prescription making Postinor-2 and Escapelle available for women over the age of 16. The Czech Pharmaceutics Chamber published a "recommended policy" discussing the ethical view on the issue: "Due to the pill's effects, some pharmacist might have personal reservations to sell it. Those pharmacists whose consciences do not allow to sell abortifacients can deny selling the pill only in such situation when there is not a problem for the buyer to get the pill from another pharmacist. If there is no possibility for the buyer to purchase the pill from another pharmacist in reasonable time and distance, the pharmacist is obliged to sell the pill no matter what his conscience requires."

A group of pharmacists signed a petition against this restriction of their freedom of conscience.

No Conscientious Objection for Pharmacists

May 2013, France:

In French law conscientious objection for pharmacists is merely non-existent. Pharmacists are compelled to stock and sell the so-called "morning-after" or abortion pill. Moreover, in France, in the case of 'passive euthanasia' (i.e. a voluntary interruption of treatment), the physician has the right to be replaced by another doctor, but nothing in the law mentions the case of the other medical professionals, including nurses who often find themselves in very difficult situations. The prospects are not good: the very principle of conscientious objection is at risk. Eva Joly, French member of the European Parliament, recently said: „I am absolutely for France to abolish the clause of conscientious objection for doctors.“

Pharmacists Forced to Sell „Morning-After-Pill“ Despite Conscientious Objection

May 2013, Ireland:

The code of conduct for pharmacists requires that all pharmacists sell everything that is lawfully available in the state. This includes the so-called 'morning after pill'. The Irish constitution has strong religious freedom protections, but if a pharmacist is unwilling to sell the morning after pill he would have to take his employer to court and plead for his constitutional rights. This could be very expensive and therefore most pharmacists with an objection to abortifacients in practice either sell them or quit their job.

Civil Registrars Forced to Officiate Same Sex Ceremonies

May 2013, Ireland:

A civil registrar could go to jail for up to six months for refusing to officiate at the ceremony of, for example, a same-sex couple. While churches are not forced to actually perform such ceremonies directly, they might face fines if they refuse to rent out halls for same-sex couples who wanted to use it for their reception following a civil partnership.

Statutory Protection of Freedom of Conscience for Pharmacists Missing

May 2013, Poland:

Pharmaceutical Law requires public pharmacies to provide medical products and medical devices in the quantity and range needed by the local population. The current law does not provide for the possibility to refuse sale of drugs except in very specific cases, eg. in doubt of authenticity of the prescription. It is found that the type of drug or pharmacological properties do not constitute grounds for refusal. State authorities may revoke the license to operate a pharmacy if the pharmacy does not comply to these demands. There is a list of cases in which pharmacist can refuse to sell the drug. In order to ensure real respect for free-

dom of conscience, the relevant statutory provisions protecting the right to conscientious objection should be introduced in the Pharmaceutical Law.

Marriage Commissioners in Amsterdam Evaluated on Support for Same-Sex Marriage

May 2013, Netherlands:

Marriage commissioners in a district of Amsterdam must undergo annual evaluations to ensure they support same-sex “marriage” after it was revealed that two commissioners had refused to officiate at the ceremonies. Since 2007, the government in Amsterdam’s Nieuw-West district has only employed commissioners who agree to perform same-sex “marriages,” and officials apparently believed the district was free of “conscientious objectors.”

No Explicit Provision for Conscientious Objection

May 2013, Poland:

While the abortion law in Poland is rather restrictive, it does not contain an explicit provision for “conscientious objection” to any of the medical staff involved in legal abortion.

Conscientious Objection Defined Too Narrowly

May 2013, Spain:

The Act on Sexual and Reproductive Health N° 2/2010 regulates the wilful interruption of pregnancy. It grants a right to conscientious objection only to those health professionals who are required to participate directly in an abortion procedure. (Article 12 §2, Article 19).

Registrars Not Allowed to Refuse to Conduct Same-Sex Ceremonies

May 2013, Spain:

Registrars are not allowed to refuse to conduct same-sex union procedures or ceremonies. Caso Judge (Juez de Paz) of the town of Pinto was forced to resign because he refused to officiate homosexual unions.

No Conscientious Objection of Health Care Workers

May 2013, Sweden:

There is no conscientious objection for health care workers in Sweden, in fact there is a total absence of legal statutes that protects the freedom of conscience for health care workers, midwives, nurses, physicians, medical students or pharmacists. Health care workers, who are reprimanded, repositioned or put at disadvantage for refusing to perform procedures such as abortions, claim that their rights under article 9 of the Convention in compliance with the European Council resolution are infringed.

Conscientious Objection Clause Routinely Challenged

May 2013, United Kingdom:

Section 4 of the Abortion Act 1967 provides a conscientious objection to participation in abortion procedures. However, the scope of this conscientious objection clause is routinely being challenged. In 2012, the General Medical Council released its Draft Guidance on Personal Beliefs and Medical Practice, which stated that doctors must “be prepared to set aside their personal beliefs” in relation to a variety of controversial areas, including prescribing contraceptives – including the abortifacient morning-after-pill, referring women for abortions and performing “gender reassignment surgery.”

Hate Speech Legislation Curbing on Freedom of Expression

May 2013, Sweden:

Swedish penal law contains the crime “agitation against a national or ethnic group,” a crime that carries a maximum penalty of 2 years in prison. The Swedish government charged four activists who wanted to “start a debate about the lack of objectivity in the education in Swedish schools” by distributing leaflets on the “homosexual agenda”.

„Insulting Speech Laws“ Cause Legal Problems for Christians

May 2013, United Kingdom:

According to section 5 of the Public Order Act 1986, it is criminal offence to use “insulting words or behaviour” which is “likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress”. Originally enacted to combat football hooliganism, this provision has led to the arrest and prosecution of many Christian street preachers in recent years.

Stalking Law Used Against Freedom of Assembly of Pro-Life Christians

May 2013, Austria:

Anti-stalking legislation is used against side-walk counselling or picketing. On October 25th, 2011, the state court of Graz, Styria, upheld a judgement of the first instance condemning pro-life side-walk counsellors to pay fines on the grounds of “stalking.”

Freedom of Assembly Limited by Court Order in Germany

May 2013, Germany:

Christian-inspired non-governmental pro-life organisations often express their faith and their convictions by protesting in front of abortion clinics, or by simply standing in front of clinics or counselling centres in order to offer conversation and alternatives. In the German cities Freiburg and Munich, this activity has been severely limited. Local courts have given in to the pressure by the targeted locations, which could have been mainly financial ones. Courts have restricted the form of manifestation as well as established a geographical ban. Appeals are on-going.

Pro-Life Manifestations Frequently Prohibited

May 2013, France:

Law 93-121 of January, 27th, 1993, so-called “loi Neiertz” made it a specific offense to obstruct abortions. Therefore manifestations in front of hospitals are frequently not permitted. A well-known doctor and embryologist, Xavier Dor, was condemned and sentenced to prison several times

because he prayed together with a few others in front of a hospital and obstructed legal abortions. At 83, his latest trial is on-going.

Public Funding Restricted for Organisations with Christian Convictions

May 2013, Netherlands:

Organisations may base their work on whatever beliefs or convictions - but to receive public funding, they must not object to current legislation. This creates a problem for Christian organisations especially with regard to objecting to medical procedures.

(EU) Non-Discriminatory Hiring Laws Shown to be Problematic

May 2013, Austria:

In transposition of EU – law, Austria has adopted strict non-discrimination legislation in the employment sector. When a Christian religious official was looking for a secretary, his legal advisor asked the equal treatment commission before publishing a job advertisement: would it be permissible to reject a headscarf-wearing Muslim woman? The answer was no.

Businesses Forced to Deliver Services Against Their Will

May 2013, Ireland:

Without exception, businesses are required under the Equal Status Act to offer goods and services to anyone who asks for them and the business cannot ‘discriminate’ on the basis of sexual orientation, marital status, etc. While churches are not forced to perform same-sex ceremonies, they might face fines if they do not rent out halls for receptions following a civil partnership ceremony.

Public-Private Partnerships Based on the Principle of Non-Discrimination

May 2013, Netherlands:

Public bodies have to break up contracts if a violation of the principle of non-discrimination is established on the basis of the personal convictions of a private partner. A communal administration will therefore not be allowed to maintain a rental

contract with a private house, used for civil marriages, if the owner of the house is found to object to an actual request for a same-sex marriage.

Christianity Portrayed as Judgmental and Dishonest in Government Educational Materials

May 2013, Belgium:

The report “Combattre l’homophobie – pour une école ouverte à la diversité” of the public administration in charge for the French-speaking educational system, imposes on public and private kindergartens from first enrolment until the end of secondary education to address homosexuality, stating that religion stigmatises. The report specifically addresses the Christian tradition as judgmental (mentioning Saint Paul, Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas) and in an ambiguous analysis says that at certain times, the Catholic Church, and even popes, have performed homosexual rituals.

No Parental Consent with Regard to Abortion

May 2013, Belgium:

Parental consent with regard to abortion virtually does not exist. There is no legal requirement to inform the parents of a minor wanting abortion. However, if the minor needs full anaesthesia, the parents will need to give their consent.

Freedom of Association Limited to So-Called Non-Discriminatory Activities

May 2013, Spain:

The law states that “the public authorities shall not provide any assistance to associations in the case where the admission process or its operations discriminate on grounds of birth, race, sex, religion, opinion or any other condition or personal or social circumstance.”

State Claims Political Correctness in Schools

May 2013, France:

The state is very strict with regard to political correctness in schools. It is very difficult for Christian teachers to debate with their pupils

about abortion. One of the most striking cases was Philippe Hisnard, a French Catholic teacher who was revoked and suspended from teaching because he organised a debate about abortion in a class of “civic education”.

Home-schooling Severely Limited

May 2013, Slovakia:

Home-schooling is severely limited in Slovakia. In fact, it is allowed only for pupils of 1st - 4th class in basic schools, for disabled children, or for children in custody and who are not able to go to school for longer than two months for health reasons. Permission for “individual education” must be granted by the director of the district school of the pupil. Another major problem is that the person who teaches the pupils must have a pedagogical university qualification. As a consequence, home-schooling is very rare in Slovakia.

State Educational Programme Angers Christian Parents

May 2013, Spain:

Spanish educational law includes a set of mandatory subjects under the generic category of Education for Citizenship which are indoctrinatory and violate the rights of parents. The Education for Citizenship curriculum is mandatory for primary and secondary education (children ages 10-16), and must be implemented into all Spanish schools (public and private).

No Opt Out of Sex Education

May 2013, Sweden:

In 2011, the Swedish Educational Broadcasting Company, a public service company (UR), launched a sex education campaign in Swedish schools, called “Putting sex on the map” (co-produced by RFSU, a member of the International Planned Parenthood Federation), targeting children of lower secondary school age.

Parents objected to the content of the materials, including explicit images and sex scenes, and scientific information, including physical and psychological risks of early sex debut and many sexual partners or abortion.

Lutheran Church Forced to Conduct Same-Sex Union Ceremonies

May 2013, Denmark:

The parliament of Denmark voted to force the established Evangelical Lutheran Church to perform same-sex “marriage” ceremonies inside their sanctuaries, although one-third of all the denomination’s priests say they will not participate in such rituals. The Danish parliament voted by an overwhelming 85-24 margin to compel churches to carry out unions for same-sex couples that are identical to heterosexual marriage celebrations

Overly Strict Hate Speech Legislation

May 2013, France:

Hate speech laws are very strict in France. Since the law of December 8th, 2004, any discrimination in speech against homosexuals is forbidden. Christians for example are unable to publically say that having a same-sex relationship is a sin. The consequence is that nobody criticizes homosexuality in itself on TV, radio or in newspapers.

Equality Act 2010 Causes Closure of Christian Businesses

May 2013, United Kingdom:

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination on several grounds, including sexual orientation, in the area of the provision of goods and services. While there is a vital exemption to the general prohibition against discrimination for religious organisations when providing goods or services, this can only be relied upon in limited circumstances and is not wide enough to cover many situations.

References to Christmas to be Removed in Asturias

May 2013, Spain:

The Asturian regional government has sent a circular to schools asking for all references to Christmas to be removed from the school calendar and replaced with “winter holidays”.

(Northern Ireland) Young Business Man Troubled for Not Printing Sexually Explicit Magazine

May 2013, United Kingdom:

Mr Williamson from Portadown in Northern Ireland, faces court proceedings for refusing to print materials of a gay magazine. He says the website of MyGayZine contained explicit images, and he wasn’t prepared to print that kind of material whether homosexual or heterosexual.

French Minister of Education Wants to Replace Catholicism

May 2013, France:

The French minister Vincent Peillon wants to replace the Catholic faith by a “Republican religion”. “It is time to change that morality and spirituality have been determined by the Catholic Church”, a land of freedom would never be established when involving the Catholic Church, he said.

Conscientious Objection Impeded for French Medical Doctors and Students

May 2013, France:

The French law says: “A doctor is never required to perform an abortion (...). No midwife, nurse or physician assistant, whoever he is, can be forced to participate in an abortion.” But the reality is different: the organisation of the hospitals, the lack of staff, the schedules of the surgery departments and the pressure on the medical staff make a refusal on the grounds of freedom of conscience difficult.

No Conscientious Objection with Regard to Affirming Homosexuality in the Workplace

May 2013, United Kingdom:

There have been a number of cases in the past few years that have followed a similar pattern in that no exemption will be made where a Christian has a conscientious objection in the workplace because he or she cannot endorse, condone or approve homosexual conduct.

Mother Forces Primary School to Remove Crucifixes

May 2013, Austria:

At a primary school in Vienna crucifixes had to be taken off the walls because a mother felt that they were a “religious paternalism”. This was possible when it turned out that less than half of the pupils are registered as Christians. For the first time since National Socialism crucifixes were banned from class rooms.

Minister Calls Contribution of Church “Inacceptable and Dispensable” in Public Debate

June 2013, Austria:

In the public debate on stepchild adoption for homosexual couples, Mrs. Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek, minister for women’s affairs, calls the contribution of the Catholic Church “inacceptable and dispensable”. In German: “Die Wortmeldungen aus Kirchenkreisen sind in diesem Zusammenhang inakzeptabel und entbehrlich.”

Conscientious Objection Undermined in Ireland’s Proposed Abortion Law

June 2013, Ireland:

The Irish Cabinet has reached a consensus on the draft of the „Protection of Life during Pregnancy Bill 2013“. The law prohibits objections on the basis of one’s conscience: “no institution, organisation or third party shall refuse to provide a lawful termination of pregnancy to a woman on grounds of conscientious objection”. Apart from this clause, the law that will regulate abortion in Ireland is rather restrictive compared to the legislation concerning abortion of other European countries.

Doctors are Denied the Right to Conscientious Objection

June 2013, Norway:

Medical doctors in Norway must be willing to refer their patients to abortion clinics even if this is against their conscience.

Police Brutality Directed Against Pro-Family Demonstrators

June 2013, France:

Tear gas attacks and beatings by the police, arbitrary arrests, solitary confinement, illegal fingerprint storing, and countless other human rights violations were conducted by the French police against a peaceful mass demonstration opposing government policy on gay marriage and adoption.

Street Preacher Arrested For Preaching on Sexual Morality

July 2013, United Kingdom:

The police arrested a street preacher in Wimbledon under suspicion of offences under the Public Order Act. He had been speaking about sexual immorality in general and the importance to abstain from such practices.

European Affairs Minister Forced to Resign

July 2013, Ireland:

Lucinda Creighton, European Affairs Minister of Ireland had to resign after voting against the Government on an amendment to the abortion bill. The so-called “whip” does not permit to deviate from party policy. Mrs. Creighton however felt that she could not compromise on matters of “life and death”.

Government Says No Opt Out of Performing Abortions for Faith-Based Hospitals

August 2013, Ireland:

The Irish government has told a Catholic hospital that there will be no opting out of the new law responding to comments by a board member of Dublin’s Mater Misericordiae University Hospital that the hospital would not be complying with the new abortion law.

Plan to Ditch God From National Anthem

August 2013, Switzerland:

Switzerland is holding a competition to rewrite its national anthem in 2014 because it currently focuses on God. Over £7,000 is being offered as a prize for rewriting the song, which is called the Swiss Psalm. Competitors are asked to include values from the Swiss constitution such as democracy and solidarity.

Government Takes Children From Christian Community

September 2013, Germany:

In the early morning of September 5th, a massive police raid of 100 police and 60 social workers descended on two of the Christian Twelve Tribes Communities of Klosterzimmern and Wörnitz. The police seized 40 children from 16 families and took them away in 25 vans on allegations of physical abuse.

Berlin Bans Public Christmas Celebrations

September 2013, Germany:

Berlin politicians and officials of Berlin-Kreuzberg banned the celebration of Christmas in public places or roads, as well as decorations and Christmas fairs, in order not to discriminate against the Muslim minority. A tree may only be placed in specific places, previously assigned by the authorities.

Dublin Church Bells Silenced After 130 Years

September 2013, Ireland:

Due to complaints, the clock and bells at the Church of St. Bartholomew, Dublin, Ireland are temporarily out of service. The church is required to find a solution to stop the bells from ringing at night, or they will have to be switched off permanently.

Christian Parents Convicted for Home-schooling, Appeal Rejected

October 2013, Germany:

On May 22nd the district court sentenced the parents of nine to pay a fine of 700 Euro each for

their violation of the compulsory school attendance for all children in Germany. The public prosecution department demanded six months in prison for the married couple due to their repeated offense. An appeal was rejected in October.

Push to Eliminate the Christian Element of the Saint Martin Tradition in Nordrhein-Westfalen and Hessen

November 2013, Germany:

The Chairman of the Left-wing party in the Nordrhein-Westfalen region, Rüdiger Sagel, suggested to rename the celebration and remove the religious overtones in the local day-care centres. "In many Nordrhein-Westfalen day-care centres there are an increasing number of children from different religions." ... "the day-care should be an interdenominational space," says Sagel, and claims that the day-cares are influencing the children regarding their religion. After a storm of protests, the Left-wing party withdrew the suggestion.

LGBT-Friendly Guidelines Limit Freedom of the Press

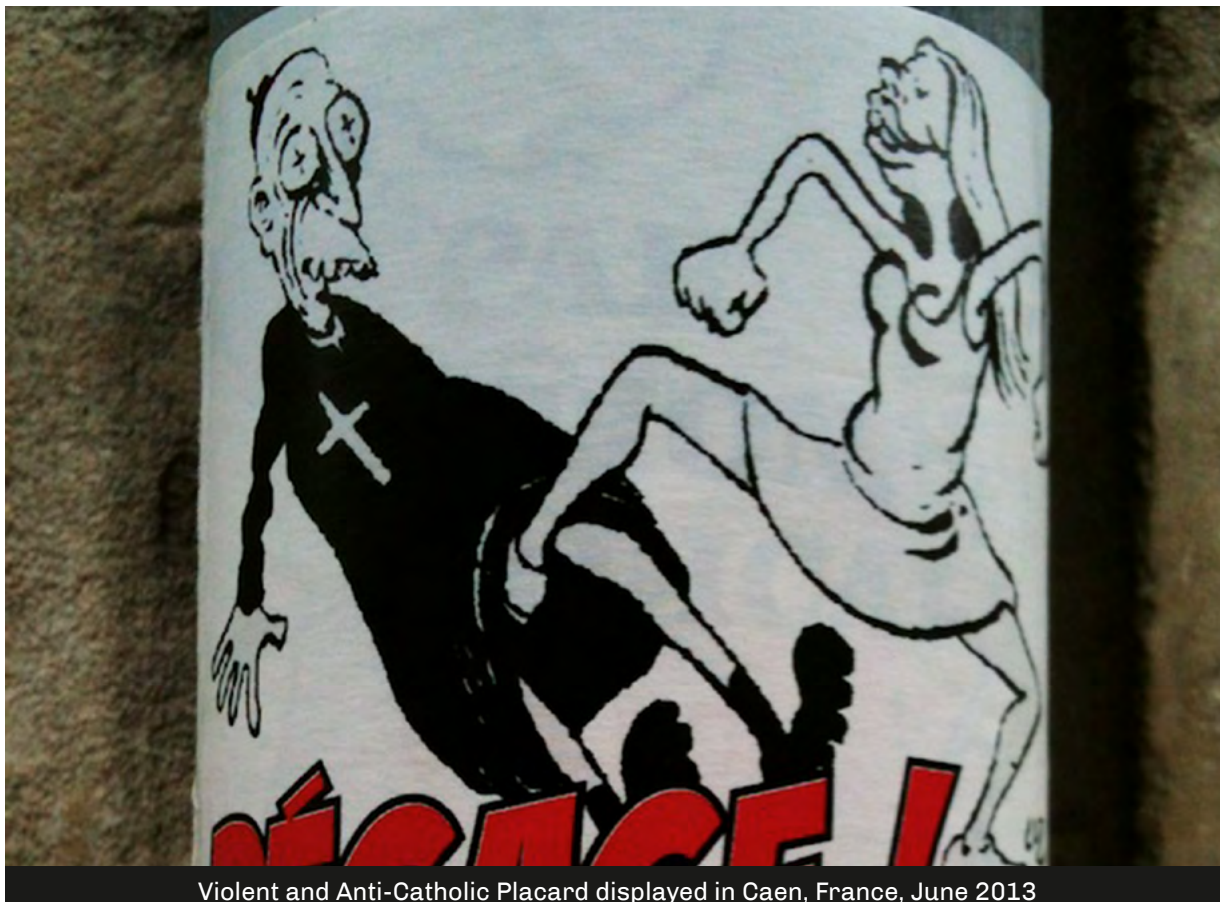
December 2013:

The Italian National Anti-Discrimination Office published guidelines on how to report on LGTB issues. The guidelines restrict freedom of the press and journalists' freedom of reporting by requiring, amongst other things, that they must positively promote homosexuality and gay marriage and must not speak of "the right of a child to a mother or father, e.g. a male or female role model".

„Not a Christian, but a Free Hungary“ Called For by Socialist Leader

December 2013, Hungary:

During the party congress of the leftist Democratic Coalition (DK) of Hungary, former Socialist Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány stated that, in opposition to the present ruling cabinet, they wanted „not a Christian but a free Hungary“. The re-elected chairman of the Democratic Coalition added they did not think „glory belongs to God alone, but to man.“



Violent and Anti-Catholic Placard displayed in Caen, France, June 2013

3. Intolerance against Christians in Arts and Media

The arts have become a playground for anti-Christian activity. Sadly some of the most desecrating and blasphemous acts today are found in art exhibitions varying from defamatory paintings to obscene depictions of what is considered holy by many. The Observatory calls for respect of religious identity and convictions in the art community, including artists as well as gallery owners and hosts. Works of art that are solely directed towards mocking faith, as we sometimes witness with regard to mocking the Christian faith, should not be offered a stage.

“

Journalists define themselves as enlighteners. And the Catholic Church has been regarded as the embodiment of the anti-enlightenment powers since the 18th century. And every time the Church has spoken up against mainstream culture and insisted on outmoded ideas, this effect is mobilised again. There have been two groups during the last months upon which one has declared war: the Catholic Church and the Liberal Party (FDP). By now there are no taboos left. “

- Norbert Bolz, media analyst, February 8th, 2013

“

Across the OSCE region a sharp dividing line has been drawn between religious belief and religious practice, so that Christians are frequently reminded in public discourse (and increasingly even in the courts), that they can believe whatever they like in their own homes or heads, and largely worship as they wish in their own private churches, but they simply cannot act on those beliefs in public. This is a deliberate twisting and limiting of what religious freedom actually means, and it is not the freedom that was enshrined in international documents. “

- Bishop Mario Toso, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, representing the Holy See at an OSCE High Level Meeting on Tolerance in Albania, 27 May 2013.

While the Observatory does not advocate prohibitions or censorship, it advocates mutual respect and common sense. Public locations and public funds should take the feelings of the faithful into consideration.

The media as the public square must be particularly careful not to create stereotypes and scapegoats. The so-called “mainstream” does not allow deviations, but it is the responsibility of journalists to give space also to minority opinions. Today, in some issues, the Christian opinion is such a minority opinion.

Journalists are called to remember their ethos - not to create opinion but to report facts. Not to use biased or tendentious words or reinforce prejudice and stereotypes, even if one feels strongly about an issue. A famous communist saying goes: “We do not fight arguments, we fight people.” A righteous journalist ought to be abhorred by such a thought. We must be wary of a new form of persecution, said John Paul II in 1983, namely a “social death”. It is the duty of a journalist, not to let this happen.

Journalists ought to be more aware of the marginalisation of Christians when they are selecting information and choosing how it is presented. Opinion leaders must also be aware of their responsibility in shaping a tolerant public discourse, and should refrain from negative stereotyping of Christianity.

In social media the people become reporters through comments under news articles or in discussion fora, tweets and Facebook updates, etc. The natural barriers of slandering and defamation seem to be lower in social media than in direct confrontation. It does not take much courage to attack another person when the people involved are hiding behind their computer screens. On several occasions we have witnessed Christians who, having an opinion different from the current mainstream, experienced a kind of cyber mobbing which can have detrimental effects also in the off-line world. Moral courage demands of each and every social media user not to let such defamation campaigns happen, no matter what is the opinion of the attacked person.

3.1. Cases of Intolerance against Christians in Arts and Media in 2013

Find here a selection of the countless cases of intolerance against Christians in arts and in the media in 2013.

TV Host Suspended for Critical Show on Government's Sex Ed Programme

January 2013, Croatia:

Ms Karolina Vidovic-Krišto, a well-respected journalist with HRT/HTV, was the editor and host of a popular program "Slika Hrvatske", produced specifically for Croatians living overseas. She was suspended after editing and hosting a show which criticised the government's sex ed programme on December 29, 2012.

YouTube Video Calls For Violence Against Priests

February 2013:

On February 10th a youtube video was uploaded by user "Porco Dio" containing several blasphemous pictures and comments such as „God Swine“, „Our Lady the Pig“, „Bastards in white“ (referring to priests) and "I would like to cook a nice plate of mixed things with that saint Joseph". They also ridicule the Lord's Prayer.

Catholics Insulted by Depiction of Key Shrine Lourdes

February 2013, France:

French Catholics were insulted by an historically inaccurate article published in the French weekly, Le Point, on the 155th Anniversary of the pilgrimage site, Lourdes.

Magazine Front Page Caricature Upsets Christians

February 2013, France:

On the occasion of the resignation of pope Benedict XVI and the conclave in which a new pope ought to be elected, the French magazine, Charlie Hebdo, featured a caricature on its front cover which shows the cardinals engaging in group sex. The words suggest that it is their sexual pleasure which the cardinals mockingly call the Holy Spirit.

Magazine Defames Benedict XVI and His Secretary

March 2013, Germany:

Due to the Pope's resignation, in a caricature on its title page, the German magazine, Titanic, implied Pope Emeritus Benedict and his secretary, Archbishop Gänswein to be engaging in homosexual sex, uttering „Finally - sex!“. This hurts religious feelings of the faithful, defames both and deepens a negative stereotype against church hierarchy.

Homosexual Activists David Berger Claims „Gay Haters Get Out of Talk Shows“

April 2013, Germany:

In an appeal to the media in Germany, Mr Berger, writer and theologian, claims that people critical of the homosexual life style must not be allowed to voice their thoughts in talk shows any more. In the name of human dignity and human rights, critics ought to be silenced.

Condom Present as Eucharist on Festival Stage

May 2013, Italy:

At the annual "First of May" concert on Piazza San Giovanni in Rome the lead singer of the band "Management Post Operatorio" lifted a condom with both hands simulating the consecration of the Eucharist. While doing so, he said: "Take this all of you, and use it" before continuing with his song "Pornobisogno". The concert was also broadcasted on Italian Television. The organisers of the "First of May" dissociated themselves from this incident.

Music Video to David Bowie's Song The Next Day Insults Christians' Religious Feelings

May 2013, International:

The video presented Bowie singing in an outfit

representing Jesus. The scene takes place in a dark and bloody brothel. It begins with a priest entering the brothel after having beaten down a beggar. The priest then seduces a nun inside the brothel while Bowie performs. In the end the nun's hands develop stigmata.

Violent and Anti-Catholic Placard Displayed in Caen

June 2013, France:

A placard by the "Confédération Nationale du Travail" (National Confederation of Work) was displayed in Caen, France. The placard shows a picture of a woman kicking a priest in his genitalia and the corresponding text says: "Buzz off! My body belongs to me".

Pope Demeaned by Headline "Junta Buddy Replaces Nazi Boy"

June 2013, Germany:

The German daily "taz" commented on the inauguration of the pope with the headline "Junta buddy replaces Nazi Boy" (Juntakumpel löst Hitlerjungen ab). After about 50 individual complaints to the German press council it ruled that the headline constituted an offence against the duty to take care (Sorgfaltspflicht). The Central Committee of the German Catholics (ZdK) sharply criticised the statement and the fact that the press council refuses a reprehension concerning the violation of religious feelings. The press council states that "assessments" on the Catholic doctrine such as "Old geezer I. followed old geezer II" are provocative but are covered through the right to freedom of opinion.

Theatre Play Mocks Christianity at a Metz Street Festival

July 2013, France:

The Belgian theatre group Compagnie d'Outre Rue, mocked the Christian faith and the Catholic Church in a public display of their program Petites Prophéties Urbaines. The play featured actors in liturgical clothes who, among other things, celebrated a "mass with snacks". The Pope, the Church and its most sacred rituals were mocked and made fun of.

Crucified Chicken Hurts Feelings of Believers

August 2013, Austria:

Christians in Austria were hurt by the depiction of a crucified chicken as a work of art by Deborah Sengl. The image was displayed in Wiener Neustadt in the late summer, ironically in a former church building.

Christians Hurt by Theatre Performance in Former Church Building

August 2013, Germany:

Local Christians reported to the Observatory that they felt offended by a play with the title, "Empathy to the Devil" which was performed in a secularised church in the south of Germany. The poster of the event featured a silhouette of the devil. Earlier productions from the same theatre-group have shown a big red cross being used as a hat stand on stage.

Video of Sexual Act with Cross Hurts Feelings of Believers

November 2013, Poland:

An exhibition in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Warsaw displayed a video „Veneration of Christ“ in which the artist rubs himself in a blasphemous way against a crucifix, imitating a sexual relationship. The exhibition was showing from September to November 2013. The artist Jacek Markiewicz claims that it was not his wish to vilify any religious feelings. By his own statements he is a non-believer. Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz of Warsaw calls the video a „desecration of the Cross“ that exceeds the boundaries of artistic expression and basic ethical standards“.

LGBT-Friendly Guidelines Limit Freedom of the Press

December 2013, Italy:

The Italian National Anti-Discrimination Office published guidelines on how to report on LGTB issues. The guidelines restrict freedom of the press and journalists' freedom of reporting by requiring, amongst other things, that they must positively promote homosexuality and gay marriage and must not speak of "the right of a child to a mother or father, e.g. a male or female role model".



4. Remedies

Intolerance and discrimination against Christians – as scattered and intangible as it might seem – touches upon the fabrics of society and the implicit consensus on which we rely in our lives. It concerns everyone, and only through increased awareness and appropriate responses at all levels of society, will the situation move towards more tolerance and accommodation instead of clashes. We take the occasion, therefore, with this publication, to enumerate a number of possible steps towards a remedy, by no means exhaustive, but certainly a beginning.

Respect is a key term for the understanding of human rights in general and in particular for freedom of religion or belief: reasonable accommodation ought to be the guiding principle in dealing with faith.

WE ASK ALL PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL:

- To respect and tolerate Christianity, Christians and Christian positions in private and in public.
- Not to tolerate hate incidents against Christians, just as hate incidents against anyone else are not being tolerated.
- To keep vigilant for vandalism against Christian sites and intervene wherever possible.
- As an employer, to accommodate the Christian belief of your staff wherever possible, especially with regard to Sunday observance, the wearing of religious symbols and the expressions of faith and values, in the workplace or in private, as well as to make an objection of conscience possible.
- As a member of a political lobby group which disapproves of Christian values or the Christian faith, employ the same standards with Christians which you would like to see employed with yourself; to be tolerant and fair; and to employ only democratic means in achieving your goals.



WE RECOMMEND TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS:

- To ensure the exercise of freedom of religion, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and the right to conscientious objection.
- To refrain from interferences and to modify legislation that discriminates against Christians or interferes with freedom of religion.
- To recognise and condemn intolerance and discrimination against Christians and ensure the right of Christians to participate fully in public life.
- To monitor carefully the growing phenomenon of intolerance against Christians and take appropriate measures in response.
- To collect data with the specific aim at monitoring intolerance and discrimination against Christians.
- To brief and train police to enable and protect Christian activities adequately within the framework of the law.

WE ASK JOURNALISTS AND ARTISTS:

- Journalists ought to be more aware of the marginalisation of Christians when they are selecting information and choosing how it is presented.
- Opinion leaders must also be aware of their responsibility in shaping a tolerant public discourse, and should refrain from negative stereotyping of Christianity.
- Journalists are called upon not to exclude the Christian position where appropriate.
- Artists should bear in mind the feelings of the faithful for whom the object of their mockery might be most holy. Respect is not a sign of weakness but of strength.
- We call on journalists and artists to remember that it is no longer a brave act to oppose or ridicule Christianity, as it might have been some years ago when Christianity was a major cultural player. Rather, it is braver and more innovative to defend Christian principles which often clash with today's convictions of the masses.

WE RECOMMEND TO THE EUROPEAN UNION:

- Not to adopt the proposed 5th equal treatment directive.
- To respect, without prejudice, the protection of the autonomy of churches in accordance with Article 17 (1) of the Lisbon Treaty and to promote more dialogue with church leaders on the issue of intolerance and discrimination in accordance with Article 17 (2).
- To examine European Union legislation with regard to direct or indirect discrimination against Christians.
- Especially to Fundamental Rights Agency: to make freedom of religion, expression and conscience a priority of their work.
- Especially to Fundamental Rights Agency: to report on freedom of religion with special attention to the situation of Christians.



WE RECOMMEND TO INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS:

- To report on intolerance and discrimination against Christians and recommend appropriate action to their member states.
- To encourage governments to monitor the situation of Christians carefully and to collect segregated data on hate incidents and crimes, including vandalism, against Christians.
- To examine their own documents and recommendations with regard to indirect discrimination against Christians.
- We recommend to the participating states of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe to follow up its Parliamentary Assembly resolution of July 2011, in particular:
 - That “public debate on intolerance and discrimination against Christians be initiated and that the right of Christians to participate fully in public life be ensured”
 - That “in view of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, legislation in the participating States, including labour law, equality law, laws on freedom of expression and assembly, and laws related to religious communities and right of conscientious objection be assessed”
 - To “encourage the media not to spread prejudices against Christians and to combat negative stereotyping”
 - To “encourage Christian churches to continue their participation in public life contributing to the defence of the dignity of all human beings and to freedom and social cohesion.”



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ISBN: 978-3-9503055-8-6

Printed by Kairos Publications 2014.

