

To the attention of:

- > Spanish Presidency to OSCE
- > All State Missions to OSCE
- > Participants of OSCE Chairmanship Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims
- > Participants of NGO Preparatory Meeting in Jaen
- > Office of UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Other Forms of Discrimination

Córdoba, 9th October, 2007

Your Excellences,

We are writing to you on behalf of several non-governmental organisations that have been participating in the NGO Preparatory Meeting pertinent to the OSCE Chairmanship Conference on Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, organised by the *Fundacion Tres Culturas* in Jaén, on 8<sup>th</sup> of October, 2007.

We wish to draw your attention to the fact that the pre-final draft of **Civil Society Declaration** has contained several references of **particular importance** for the civil society views on discrimination and intolerance against Muslims and as such have been **unanimously endorsed** by the participants of the Meeting. These issues, however, have been **left out** from the final draft of the Declaration, allegedly due to the lack of space.

In spite of this move, which has not been approved by the representatives of the civil society organisations, we feel that it is extremely important to mention those issues in this global arena and thus add in to the more **comprehensive understanding** of discrimination and intolerance against Muslims.

Apart from a variety of concerns expressed in the actual text of the Declaration, the civil society organisations gathered at the Preparatory Meeting in Jaén have also agreed that the following aspects should be taken into consideration at this Conference:

- **Pluralism and diversity** which exist within Muslim communities;
- Discrimination and intolerance against **sexual and gender minorities** that occurs within the context of certain Muslim communities;
- **Pluralism of gender concepts** that exists in various Muslim discourses and communities;
- **Patriarchal system** as a clear ground of gender-oriented discrimination in certain Muslim communities.

These issues have been **repeatedly mentioned** by several NGOs who work in the Islamic contexts and had faced **no explicit opposition** whatsoever from the other representatives of the civil society. We therefore find it surprising and alarming that they have been intentionally left out from the final version of the Declaration. It is also surprising that seven persons from the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs surrounded a single member of the civil society during the final redaction of this document.

We hope that these few remarks will help us all achieve a more comprehensive understanding and dialogue around issues pertinent to the discrimination and intolerance against Muslims, whether or not it is happening within or outside of Muslim communities.

Thank you very much indeed for your attention.

With best regards,

The representatives of the following organisations/institutions:

1. Movimiento contra la intolerancia
2. Junta Islámica Catalana – Catalan Islamic Board
3. FELGTB
4. Canadian Council of Muslim Women
5. COLEGA Jaén
6. Non-patriarchal Inter-faith Organisation LOGOS, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
7. Galina Korhernikova, SOVA Center Moscow (Russia)
8. Elham Manea (Civil Society Switzerland)
9. Yasser Auda (Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism – United Kingdom)
10. Magenta Foundation, Netherlands