

European pact for separation of Church and State and for an open society

The "NEUTRUM" Association and the Polish Association of Rationalists (PSR) invite all European non-governmental organizations that support the ideas of separation of Church and State and of the secular character of public life on our continent to form an agreement to work together to this end.

We append below a proposal for the wording of such a Pact which can form the basis for discussion about the final text. The final Pact would then be presented to a Congress of NGOs for acceptance.

It would have a symbolic significance if the place to meet and sign the pact was Poland, as it is an EU country where standards of separation of Church and State and of the openness of society are most often violated. Strategically Brussels - the center of EU - would be the best place for the administrative office.

We are prepared to organize such a meeting in Warsaw in 2006, given enough interest.

Contact: psr@racjonalista.pl

Information about the organizers:

NEUTRUM: <http://www.neutrum.eu.org/index.php/q.en>

PSR: <http://psr.rcjonlista.pl>

Draft of

European Pact for the Separation of Church and State and for an Open Society

Given that equal rights and the right to protection against discrimination are guaranteed by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief*, and by the *Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*, the *United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination*, plus UN conventions on Civil and Political Rights and on Economical, Social and Cultural Rights, and the *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*;

Given that peoples living in the open societies of Europe should have a bigger influence on actions to ensure and protect human rights than are now offered by existing political structures;

Given that there are official declarations to enable easier contacts between citizens and authorities and political institutions;

Confirming our belief in fundamental rights and freedoms, which are the foundations of justice and social order, and the preservation of which depends on equal rights and protection from discrimination;

Recognizing that separation of Church and State is a European standard and part of the set of European values;

We, representatives of European Non-Governmental organizations, the Signatories of this Pact on our meeting in Warsaw, decide as follows.

We deem as vital and necessary closer co-operation between European Non-Governmental organizations working for the separation of Church and State and for an open society.

Organizations which sign this Pact pledge to play their role in implementing a vision of Europe as a home which is equally open for all its inhabitants, and we propose close co-operation in the following areas:

- the exchange of information about all events and activities in particular countries for or against the separation of Church and State;
- meetings and conferences;
- regular reports about the level of separation of Church and State in different European countries and about the level of openness of societies, which would be presented to EU authorities and individual governments;
- presentation of common stands, statements, appeals and opinions;
- development of other forms of co-operation for the separation of Church and State and for the open society.

The Signatories of this Pact will create an administrative office in order to co-ordinate the actions of organizations working for the separation of Church and State and for an open society. The seat of the administrative office will be....

This Pact is open for signatures of non-governmental organizations inside the European Union and for non-governmental organizations from the countries outside EU that are prepared to agree to abide by its rulings and are represented by empowered delegates of the organizations' authority.

This Pact was prepared in Warsaw [date]; one copy of it will be deposited in the archives of the administrative office. The Administrator of the office will deliver one authorized copy to every organization that is a signatory of the Pact.