

EDITORIAL

Religious freedom

In the last century religious freedom has gone imperceptibly from being an important concept towards being an imperious and in the end indispensable concept. Is not at all imperceptible the fact that economy and international politics can be and are influenced by this concept. The particularity of their religious identity assigns states into different categories: most of them are intolerant towards religious options or personal faith, some are tolerant and some are even protecting the concepts of free choice, equality and mutual respect.

Recognized as promoters of religious freedom, the United States favour and even encourage the multi-confessional religious expression both through the laws regulating the rights of the individual and through the multinational mentality of its citizens, a result of migration and of the existent ethnic and religious minority groups that conserve their cultural and spiritual values. The considerable effort of the European Union that, through its legislative implementation initiatives conveys the importance of individual rights in the religious area is also visible. Although legal initiatives are similar to those from the United States, in Europe exists a type of contextual echo, most often creating only a climate of religious tolerance. The idea of tolerance has different shades given by the acceptance of the individual rather than integrating it into an existing system of traditions. If we refer specifically to Romania, its effort to change is admirable, especially if we think about the footprints left by the communism, so religious intolerance cannot be erased so easily from Romanians' life. The appreciations become also real in the process of developing interfaith relations, showing a high level of social and religious maturity.

June 17, 2013, represents an outstanding day marked through the participation of personalities from various academic areas at the International Scientific Conference held in the Romanian Parliament, in partnership with the Committee for Human Rights, Cults and National Minorities Issues of the Chamber of Deputies. The topic of religious liberty is of interest and actual, even if the approaches and views are diverse. Also, the presence of important officials for the social life of Romania and political figures who have made a valuable contribution in this field influencing some historical events gives value to the debates and proves the interest shown to the issue, which seems to become capital in the international relations. The religious phenomenon cannot be ignored, while the importance of a balance between denominations and the need for anti-discrimination laws are not only actual, but also imperative. A modern

society should emphasize the need for individual rights and community development by providing opportunities for religious expression, depending on the deliberate choice of each person while contributing to the development of religious rights through an adequate and enforceable legislation.

A number of papers presented at the Conference were selected in order to be published in the European Journal of Science & Theology. We made this selection trying to have an as large as possible representation of the religious denominations in Romania. Some of them were published, in Romanian, in the conference volume but as told on the first Editorial published by EJST [1], we have accepted them in order to make their ideas known at international level.

We want to express our appreciation to all those involved in organizing this conference, without whose involvement this event would not had been possible.

Dr. Nelu Burcea

Dr. Iulian Rusu

References

- [1] I. Rusu, *Eur. J. Sci. Theol.*, **1(1)** (2005) 1.

Nelu Burcea is the President of the Association 'Conscience and Liberty'. He has acted as guest editor for this issue of the European Journal of Science & Theology together with Dr. Mihaela Popescu from 'Petru Poni' Institute of the Romanian Academy in Iasi .