RELIGARE, “Religious Diversity and Secular Models in Europe: Innovative Approaches to Law and Policy”, is a 3 year EU 7th Framework Program (2010-2013). This project addresses the challenges of religious pluralism in contemporary Europe. It starts from the idea of equality and the ways in which it is challenged by the increasing diversity of religions and other convictions that are transforming Europe into a new type of entity. The focus is on ten target countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

For further information on RELIGARE, see: www.religareproject.eu

This event is co-organized by PRISME-SDRE (CNRS, University of Strasbourg, France) and the Centre for European Islamic Thought (Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen).

PRISME (Policies, Religions, Institutions and Societies: European Transformations), a joint research unit of the University of Strasbourg and the CNRS, combines two research teams studying contemporary Europe in its political, legal and social dimensions: the SDRE (Society, Law and Religion in Europe) and the GSPE (Centre for European Political Sociology). Research at the SDRE focuses on law and religion, canon law, the social sciences of religion and European law on human rights. Within RELIGARE, SDRE is in charge of one of the thematic work packages, dedicated to State Support, in this context of increasing religious and cultural diversity. The Center ensures the supervision of the thinking on the legitimacy for the State to continue the financial support of Churches, religious and faith-based organizations in present-day context. Furthermore, the research will be completed with a study of the relevance of the various methods of financial support and a prospective thinking on possible new models.

The Centre for European Islamic Thought (CEIT) of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Copenhagen is funded by the DNRF and has 5 staff, two of which are PhD fellows. Its brief is to research in the field of Islam in Europe with a focus on the development of Islamic theology and Muslim intellectual engagement with the European context. CEIT works with a network of colleagues in Copenhagen, especially in the faculties of law, theology and the humanities, as well as with academic colleagues in research institutions in Europe, North America, the Middle East and Malaysia. CEIT is leading an international team compiling the new Yearbook of Muslims in Europe.

Venue:
Københavns Universitet,
Anneks B, Studiegården
Studiestræde 6, København K.

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PROGRAMME

The meeting on the current systems of Church and religious organisations funding will concentrate on the various mechanisms put in place by the domestic legal systems (direct / indirect funding; State/local public bodies funding; faithfuls tax…).

A particular attention will be paid to the merging practices in all fields of the State support issue. Indeed, emergency or the political difficulty for modifying the status of religions can lead to administrative practices enabling to get round or complete the existing law. Now, this merging law could be the core of a new financing model.

In addition, this seminar will highlight the public authorities role in managing and using the subsidies granted to religious denominations. Indeed, there can be tensions between the religions free organisation principle and the control of the use of the public funds or, if the need arises, between the freedom of organisation and the public accountancy. What is the margin of appreciation of the religious communities in this field? Will the control over certain religions be deeper than for others? Is there an obligation for Churches and funded religions to provide their account and to justify their expenses?

Lastly, in the light of those specific issues, every country overview will more particularly address the following topics: the training and remuneration of religious leaders, maintenance of Church heritage and religious media.

This conference brings together a number of scholars from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

COPENHAGEN  May 12th, 2011

9.00-9.15 Coffee and registration

9.15-9.30 Welcome
Jørgen S. Nielsen (University of København)
Marie-Claire Foblets (Catholic University of Leuven, Religare project manager)
Francis Messner (University of Strasbourg, CNRS-PRISME)

9.30-12.00
Chair: Jørgen S. Nielsen
State support to religions: European regulation
- Françoise Curtit and Anne Fornérod (University of Strasbourg/CNRS-PRISME)
The Netherlands - Paul van Sasse van Yssel and Adriaan Overbeeke (Free Univ. Amsterdam)
Belgium - Louis-Léon Christians (Catholic University of Louvain)
Alsace-Moselle - Francis Messner (University of Strasbourg/CNRS-PRISME)
France – Pierre-Henri Prélôt (University of Cergy-Pontoise)

Discussion

12.00-13.00 Lunch break

13.15-14.00
Chair: Hanne Petersen
Niels Kægaard (University of København)
“Economical arguments to religious communities public funding”

14.00-16.30
Denmark - Lisbet Christoffersen (University of Roskilde)
Germany - Heinrich de Wall (Friedrich-Alexander University)
Italy – Vincenzo Pacillo (University of Modena)
United Kingdom - Frank Cranmer (Cardiff Law School)
Turkey - Zana Çitak (Middle East Technical University)

Discussion

16.30-16.45 Coffee Break

16.45-17.45 Conclusion and debate by
Rik Torfs (Catholic University of Leuven)
Hanne Petersen (University of København)
Jean-Marie Woehrling (University of Strasbourg/CNRS-PRISME)
“Legitimacy of state support to religious communities – reflections for the future”