

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 116 of the Rules of Procedure

by Caroline Lucas, Claude Moraes, Sarah Ludford, Philip Bushill-Matthews
and Alain Lipietz

on religious rights and freedoms in France and throughout the European Union

Lapse date: 21.5.2005

Written declaration on religious rights and freedoms in France and throughout the European Union

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 116 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas religious freedom is one of the most basic and most precious freedoms endorsed by the European Union,
- B. alarmed at the rise of religiously motivated violence in many European countries, especially since 11 September 2001,
- C. deeply concerned at France's ban on what it calls the display of 'conspicuous religious symbols' in schools,
- D. believing this ban on the Christian cross, Jewish skullcap, Muslim hijab, and Sikh turban to be an infringement of human rights, in particular Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights,
- E. considering that gender equality is a fundamental right, and reaffirming the rights of men and women to dress as they wish,
- 1. Calls on Member States specifically to allow within educational and other state establishments the outward expression in a private manner of individual faith;
- 2. Urges the French Government to rethink its ban and investigate ways of improving the opportunities for religious as well as racial minorities to integrate more fully into French society, including through the combating of religious discrimination;
- 3. Considers that a debate on this subject should be held in the European Parliament;
- 4. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to the Commission, the Council and the governments of the Member States.