



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 123 of the Rules of Procedure

on the freedom to display religious symbols representative of a people's culture and identity on public premises

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Written declaration on the freedom to display religious symbols representative of a people's culture and identity on public premises

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 123 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas it is customary and traditional in many European countries to display crucifixes and other religious symbols in classrooms, courtrooms, public offices, the seats of institutions and town halls,
 - B. whereas the displaying on public premises of Christian symbols, or of images evoking other religions, is not meant either to impose on the free religious choice of the individual or to serve as a religious or catechistic point of reference,
 - C. whereas, in this regard, a recent ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg qualified the presence of crucifixes in classrooms in Italy as a violation of ‘the right of parents to educate their children in conformity with their convictions’, and whereas this seemed to conflict with an Italian cultural identity strongly influenced by Christian roots that are fundamental to the history and tradition of certain peoples,
1. Calls for recognition of the full right of every Member State to display religious symbols, among others, on public premises and at the seats of institutions, wherever such symbols are representative of the traditions and identity of the country as a whole, and are therefore factors unifying the nation as a community while respecting the religious orientations of the individual citizen;
 2. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to the Council, the Commission and the parliaments of the Member States.