

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON 'ISLAM (INSTRUCTION) IN EDUCATION'

(Antwerp, 9-11 February 2012)

RELEDU researchers focusing on 'Islam (instruction) in State Funded Schools' organised a European conference for inspectors, policymakers, judges, representatives from European networks of equality bodies, and stakeholders in education in Antwerp on 9th-11th February 2012.

No question of public policy in Europe today is more pressing than the successful integration of that portion of the population deriving from migration. For millions, a continuing or revived identification with their own beliefs and practices may serve as a means of walling themselves and their children off from the host society. Or, more positively, it could serve as a bridge to participation in that society. Whether the outcome is separation or integration will depend to a significant extent on how non-Christian beliefs and their relation to European life are presented in both state and non-state denominational schools.

During the international conference, researchers explained their research findings on Islam in education while stakeholders in education commented on the difficulties they experience, and judges, inspectors and policymakers reflected on the research findings and the comments of stakeholders. The themes discussed during the sessions are religious instruction organised during the school hours in state funded schools; founding and steering state funded denominational schools and state supervision; confessional schools and refusal or limitations on the number of pupils of another conviction/belief by the governing board of a confessional school; Islam instruction or instruction on other convictions/beliefs in denominational schools and alternative ethical course; religious symbols in public schools.

The LLP AM Comenius RELEDU project addresses the teaching and learning challenges and the need for successful integration through education of that portion of the population in Europe deriving from predominantly Muslim countries, as well as the need of officials who supervise schools, of directors and teachers to acquire an understanding of international norms for freedom of religious expression within the framework of respect for human rights.

<http://www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=.ELA&n=96055&ct=86719>



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