

19.02.2004 0158

Dear Dr. Lucas, MEP,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 20 January 2004 in which you express your concerns regarding the proposed ban on wearing religious symbols in French schools.

I should note that the relevant draft legislation has not yet been adopted by the French Parliament.

Nevertheless, I would like to note that the Commission is following this debate with great interest. As you are aware, the Commission is only able to intervene in order to ensure that fundamental rights are fully respected in the context of the application of Community law and bearing in mind the principles of non-discrimination between nationals and other EU citizens, subsidiarity and respect for Member States' national identities, (see Article 6 § 3 of the Treaty on European Union), inherent in their fundamental structures, political and constitutional.

In all other cases, if an individual considers that his or her fundamental rights have been violated, he/she has the right to apply to the European Court of human rights, once all domestic remedies have been exhausted.

Yours sincerely
Antonio Vitorino

Dr. Caroline Lucas MEP
European Parliament, Office 8G103
Rue Wiertz
B-1047 Brussels