

Commissioner António Vitorino  
DG Justice and Home Affairs  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1047 Brussels

20th January 2004

Dear Mr Vitorino,

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed ban on wearing religious symbols in French schools. I believe that this proposal, which undermines an individual's personal choice to wear clothing they believe their faith requires, is an affront to civil liberties.

The freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs is protected by Art. 10 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and discrimination based on religion or beliefs is further prohibited in Art. 21 I of the same Charter. Does the Commission agree that the proposed French ban discriminates, in contravention of the Charter, against those who have chosen to manifest their beliefs and lifestyle by wearing certain clothing and that this ban, if implemented, would hinder the advancement of a tolerant and multicultural society?

Another consequence of a ban is likely to be that EU citizens from other Member States who practise certain faiths would be greatly deterred from working in France. Is the Commission therefore of the opinion that such a ban could represent a restriction to the freedom of movement for workers, as protected by the Treaty of Rome?

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Caroline Lucas MEP