European Humanist Federation

UN Human Rights Council, 30th session, 22 September 2015
Item 4: Matters requiring the attention of the Council
Speaker: Keith Porteous Wood

Non Conformity by the Holy See of its obligations under the CRC

Mr President

In our joint written statement with the International Humanist and Ethical Union [A/HRC/30/NGO/40], we drew the Council's attention to the latest Observations on the Holy See by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. They refer to "the sexual abuse of tens of thousands of children worldwide" by Catholic clerics.

The Committee reminded the Holy See of its commitment to implement the Convention "not only within the territory of Vatican City State (VCS), but" importantly also "as the supreme power of the Catholic Church, worldwide through individuals and institutions under its authority". The Holy See formally refuted this, and did not respond to the Committee's questions about its conformity with *ten* Articles of the Convention.

The Committee regretted that

- abusers had been "transferred … in an attempt by the Church to cover-up such crimes"

- "child sexual abuse [has] hardly ever been reported to the law enforcement authorities" … "allow[ing] the vast majority of abusers and [facilitators] to escape judicial proceedings […]", and

- The Holy See "declined to provide the Committee with data on all [any?] cases of child sexual abuse brought to its attention"

In the interests of protecting vulnerable children and of justice, we call on the Council to forcefully urge the Holy See to:

- do everything in its power to enforce the Convention worldwide;

- make all information on Child Abuse held by the Church worldwide (including in the VCS) available to relevant law enforcement authorities;

- instruct the Church worldwide to report all suspected perpetrators and facilitators to law enforcement authorities; and

- instruct the Church worldwide, and its lawyers and insurers, to fairly and expeditiously settle cases and claims for compensation.

Thank you