

**CSCE IN EUROPE: CONCLUDING DOCUMENT FROM THE VIENNA  
CONFERENCE  
(4 NOVEMBER 1986 – 17 JANUARY 1989)**

**LMXXVIII (March 1989)**

**16**

In order to ensure the freedom of the individual to profess and practise religion or belief the participating States will, inter alia,

**16a**

take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination against individuals or communities, on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of civil, political, economic, social and cultural life, and ensure the effective equality between believers and non-believers;

**16b**

foster a climate of mutual tolerance and respect between believers of different communities as well as between believers and non believers;

**16c**

grant upon their request to communities of believers, practising or prepared to practise their faith within the constitutional framework of their states, recognition of the status provided for them in their respective countries;

**16d**

respect the right of religious communities to establish and maintain freely accessible places of worship or assembly, organize themselves according to their own hierarchical and institutional structure, select, appoint and replace their personnel in accordance with their respective requirements and standards as well as with any freely accepted arrangement between them and their State, solicit and receive voluntary financial and other contributions;

**16e**

engage in consultations with religious faiths, institutions and organizations in order to achieve a better understanding of the requirements of religious freedom;

**16f**

respect the right of everyone to give and receive religious education in the language of his choice, individually or in association with others;

**16g**

in this context respect, inter alia, the liberty of parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions;

**16h**

allow the training of religious personnel in appropriate institutions;

**16i**

respect the right of individual believers and communities of believers to acquire, possess, and use sacred books, religious publications in the language of their choice and other articles and materials related to the practice of religion or belief;

**16j**

allow religious faiths, institutions and organizations to produce and import and disseminate religious publications and materials;

**16k**

favorably consider the interest of religious communities in participating in public dialogue, inter alia, through mass media;

**17.**

The participating States recognize that the exercise of the above-mentioned rights relating to the freedom of religion or belief may be subject only to such limitations as are provided by law and consistent with their obligations under international law and with their international commitments. They will ensure in their laws and regulations and in their application the full and effective implementation of the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.

**18.**

The participating States will exert sustained efforts to implement the provisions of the Final Act and of the Madrid Concluding Document pertaining to national minorities. They will take all the necessary legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures and apply the relevant international instruments by which they may be bound, to ensure the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons belonging to national minorities within their territory. They will refrain from any discrimination against such persons and contribute to the realization of their legitimate interests and aspirations in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

**19.**

They will protect and create conditions for the promotion of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities on their territory. They will respect the free exercise of rights by persons belonging to such minorities and ensure their full equality with others.

Quelle: Thornberry, Patrick: *International Law and the Rights of Minorities*, Oxford 1991;