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Towards a Recognition and Dialogue
Secularism in Europe¹

Jean-Paul Willaime*

I. INTRODUCTION

In Europe, there are various forms of secular recognition of religions, which combine mutual independence of the state and religion (secularism) and an explicit consideration of the place and role of religions within society (recognition). Exploring the features of religion-state relations in several European countries will allow us to both better identify each country’s own logic and avoid the risk of analysing them through the prism of French secularism. In doing so, the latter, recognition, will probably appear in its singularity since European schemes combine both orientations, “secularism” and “recognition,” which, from the French point of view, appear not to be easily compatible.

Though Europe has a history of violence associated with religion or its negation,² it also has a history of the pacification of religious and anti-religious violence.³ In other words, there is a history of the emergence of democratic societies who respected freedom of conscience and thought and who gradually built religious pluralism.

This historical construction of peace and civil tolerance allows countries to organize themselves as political communities while recognizing that the plurality of religious and philosophical choices

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1. A French version of this paper is published as follows: Jean-Paul Willaime, La prédominance européenne d’une laïcité de reconnaissance des religions, RECONFIGURATIONS ET NOUVEAUX DÉFIS 101–22 (Jean Baubérot, Micheline Milor, & Philippe Portier eds., Paris, Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme 2014). We thank the Publishing House of Human Sciences [Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme] for authorizing this publication in English.


of their people was neither built in a day nor without conflict. In several European countries, this historic process is not very old: for example, the democratic transitions of the former communist bloc countries, or Spain and Portugal.⁴ Autonomy of politics and law from religion was an essential element of these developments.⁵ For each country, the philosophical, political, and religious genealogy of this process can be established. For some, this evolution was essentially made against religion in general or against a particular religion; others emphasized the contributions of the religions themselves to these changes.⁶ Be that as it may, thanks to the secularization of politics, religious renunciation of political power and political renunciation of spiritual power became essential features of democracy in Europe.⁷ Because political power has learned to renounce spiritual power and religious power has learned (and continues to learn every day) to give way to temporal power, a recognition of and dialogue about secularism in Europe is possible today. This new sharing of power creates tension and conflict that is not only normal, but essential. Indeed, an absence of tension and conflict would cause an imbalance in favour of either a religious view or, conversely, a secularist view of man and the world. It is a hallmark of democracies to leave these differences to express themselves.⁸

The institutionalization and practices of various forms of secular recognition do not eliminate any conflicting dynamic either between the various religious and philosophical convictions, or between religious normativity and secular normativity.⁹ Many national identities in Europe have been and remain marked by religious dimensions; this is particularly clear in countries where a large majority of the population identifies with a religious tradition that is related to the affirmation of national sentiment (e.g. the Orthodox

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⁶ Id. at 783.
⁷ RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE 64 (Gabriel Motzkin & Yochi Fischer eds., 2008).
⁸ THE FEDERALIST No. 10 (James Madison).
⁹ For example, see RELIGIOUS AND GENDER NORMS: CHANGES, RESISTANCE, AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY RECONFIGURATIONS [NORMES RELIGIEUSES ET GENRE: MUTATIONS, RÉSISTANCES ET RECONFIGURATIONS XIXE-XXIE SIÈCLE] (Florence Rochefort & Maria Eleonora Sanna eds., 2013) for issues relating to gender.
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Greece, the Lutheran Denmark, and the Catholic Ireland). Even if, in each national society, there is a real religious and philosophical pluralisation of people and acceptance of the convictional options at the individual level, the national and European levels themselves are less secularized than we might think. This lack of secularization was recently demonstrated in the Swiss vote on minarets in 2009 as well as the Lautsi case concerning the presence of crucifixes in classrooms in Italy in 2011.

The state-religion relations, as they were historically constructed in each country, have become significant elements of each state’s national identity. The way the states related to their gods, or rather those who claim to represent them, became an essential part of their political identity. Of course we think of France as a prototypical secularist country, but we also think of the United Kingdom and its two established churches (the Anglican Church in England and the Presbyterian Church in Scotland), Germany with its separation of church and state that incorporates partnering relationships between churches and public authorities, and Poland with its exodus from the communist bloc. The political and religious stories of every European country, and the very ways each of these stories has interfered in the processes of state-building and nation-building, are national peculiarities that establish the various forms of religion-state.

13. Rogers Brubaker, Religion and Nationalism: Four Approaches, NATIONS AND NATIONALISM 2, 6 (2012); see generally Zachary D. Smith, Commandments, Crosses, & Prayers: The Roberts Court’s Approach to Public Religion, 2015 BYU L. REV. 845, 846 (arguing that the current U.S. Supreme Court’s approach to public religion helps build a national identity).
14. 1958 CONST. art. 1 (Fr.) [hereinafter FRENCH CONSTITUTION].
relationships. This is particularly true in countries where national identity is closely linked to a religion, and in the formally denominational states. This is the case in Greece—whose Constitution of 1975 was enacted “in the name of the Holy and Consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity”; 18 Bulgaria—whose Eastern Orthodox Religion is recognized as the “traditional religion of the Republic”; 19 Denmark—where, according to the Constitution of 1953, “[t]he Evangelical Lutheran Church shall be the Established Church of Denmark, and as such shall be supported by the State,” and where “the King shall be a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church”; 20 and Malta—whose Constitution of 1964 states that “[t]he religion of Malta is the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion” and that “the authorities of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church have the duty and the right to teach which principles are right and which are wrong.” 21

II. “LAÏCITÉ”: A MATTER MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE WORD

This Part starts by addressing the different approaches between Catholic and Protestant countries as seen in the term Laïcité. It then describes how both these religious separationist and partnership countries have started to move closer to one another in a regime of separation-recognition. Finally, it finishes by discussing the two different types of secularism, the implications of those differences, and the ability of any country to adopt the more religiously accepted version of secularism.

Laïcité, as a movement for emancipation of public institutions and people from any religious influence, appears to be a more operative concept in Catholic countries than in countries marked by Protestantism. 22 This is not surprising since the term “laïcité” itself is found more often in Latin languages (i.e. Catholic countries) than in Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, and Scandinavian languages (i.e. Protestant, Orthodox, or bi-denominational countries). “Laïcité” appears as an emancipation movement in comparison to the former influence of the Catholic Church in and on some national societies. Comparing

20. 1953 CONSTITUTIONAL ACT OF DENMARK, §§ 4, 6.
France and Germany, the philosopher Jean-Marc Ferry noted that “the secularization of French society is not the secularization of German society. These are two different ways of political neutralization of religions: the Catholic or post-Catholic way is carried out in the mode of separation, while the Protestant way proceeds by internalizing or absorbing originally religious elements.”

The Enlightenment was modulated differently in different countries and has not maintained the same relationship to religious matter. While aiming at the emancipation of individuals and the achievement of a just society, the emphasis, specifies Jean-Marc Ferry, has not been placed on the same levers of development. “In practice, the French Enlightenment would rather emphasize the importance of the state and politics; the Scottish Enlightenment, the market and civil society; the Prussian Enlightenment, the University and culture.” In other words, all European countries did not enter political agnosticism in the same way or for the same reasons.

After opposing both the denominational model that prevailed in countries with a protestant and orthodox culture and the separation models that prevailed in predominantly Catholic countries of Europe, Philippe Portier described a crossover movement: “Denominational states have opened to the separatist logic, separatist states to the partnership logic. Hence, we have seen a shared model of secularism emerge in Europe, which meets the criteria of both equality and recognition of memberships, specific to the regime of flexible separation.” Indeed, a regime of separation-recognition prevails in Europe, a regime which, while based on the respective autonomy of the state and religions, explicitly recognizes the place and role of religious groups by giving them a specific legal framework.

24. Id. at 163–64.
25. Id. at 164.
26. Id.
28. Id. at 98.
However, before showing how this separation-recognition is expressed in the various European countries, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by secularism. There are two dimensions of secularism: 1) a general principle for state-religion relationships in pluralist democracies that respect the freedom of conscience, thought, and religion and all that is implied by such freedom (secularity); and 2) a philosophical, free-thinking, and agnostic concept that promotes a secular vision of man and the world as an alternative to religious concepts (secularism). How states define secularism impacts their acceptance of the term as applied to their own national identity. In Belgium, for example, secularism is recognized as the concept of being free-thinking, comparable to various religions. The sociologist Jean Rémy was keen on emphasizing that the Belgian State is pluralistic and non-secular. In some respects, however, Belgium is more secular than France, which sometimes allows itself to be penetrated more by a philosophical secularism as a criticism of religion than by a genuine secular neutrality. As emphasized in the Strasbourg Consortium, the distinction between secularity and secularism is fundamental:

There is an important, perhaps critical, distinction between secularity and secularism: One concept is a fundamental component of liberal pluralism and a bastion against religious extremism, and the other is a misguided, even dangerous, ideology that may degenerate into its own dystopian fundamentalism. Secularity is an approach to religion-state relations that avoids identification of the state with any particular religion or ideology (including secularism itself) and that endeavors to provide a neutral framework capable of


33. *Id.*
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accommodating a broad range of religions and beliefs. Secularism, in contrast, is an ideological position that is committed to promoting a secular order.³⁴

In other words, secularism is not the secularist state. The secular state, in democratic societies, is a neutral and impartial state regarding the religions and beliefs of its nationals; in other words, a state which, when functioning as a state, does professes neither a particular religion nor any atheistic philosophy of life. This secular state, which also involves the secular character of public institutions and services (and their agents), does not mean that the society itself is secular. The people who comprise the populous may have very diversified religious affiliations or none at all, and the states may consider this component of civil societies by integrating their contributions to public life. Whether the word “secularism” is employed or not, this principled secularism (corresponding to English “secularity” and the notion of the secular state) is based on the following three elements:

1) Freedom of conscience, thought, and religion, which includes the freedom to have or to not have a religion, the freedom to change religion, and the freedom to practice or to not practice the religion of one’s choice (within the limits of law, democracy, and human rights);

2) Equality of rights and duties of all citizens regardless of their religious or philosophical identifications, i.e., non-discrimination of persons by the State and public authorities based on their religious or philosophical affiliations;

3) The respective autonomy of the State and religions, which means both the freedom of the State in relation to religions and the freedom of religions in relation to the State (while complying with the laws and principles of human rights within a democracy).³⁵

³⁵. Id.
In Europe, compliance with this principled secularism does not appear incompatible with various forms of recognition of religions. This is why support for the idea of “secularism of recognition,” even if this expression may mirror church-state separation in France, resonates strangely in French secular ears. Indeed, in France, interference was very prevalent between secularism as a principle of regulating pluralism by a neutral state and as a critical view of religion. In fact, the tradition of an emancipatory state exercising a sort of philosophical magisterium on the population weighed in relation with the religious was often more prevalent, as the “true” freedom was only to be found in the emancipation against religions. Thus, as soon as public recognition is manifest with regard to a religious matter, it quickly gives rise to reactions from those who confuse secularism and privatization of religious matters. Despite the weight of this tradition and its reactionary response to Islam, developments have nevertheless taken place. Philippe Portier, in a contribution in which he distinguishes different variants of “recognition plans” (“restricted,” “positive,” and “negative”), observes that, had France started from a negative recognition regime, it would have evolved towards a recognition and dialogue secularism. Having developed this thesis in 2005 myself, I note today that the trend predicted then is confirmed now, especially in

36. Whitman, supra note 29.


38. Id. at 47–49.


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certain areas of public action, even if there are some secularist tensions facing Islam. The next Part will develop this idea of “recognition secularism” and then demonstrate its prevalence throughout many major Western and Eastern European countries.

III. THE EUROPEAN PREVALENCE OF A RECOGNITION SECULARISM

Focusing on Europe allows specificity and refinement of the concept of recognition secularism by 1) providing additional elements of empirical validation and 2) showing how this is a suitable phrase to describe the reality of religion-state relations as can be observed in most European countries (although, as mentioned previously, a few countries are still denominational states). As used in this Paper, the term recognition secularism refers to the social recognition of religious communities. This recognition is certainly reflected in legal terms by specific legal frameworks available to religious groups, but it is the aspect of social recognition that I would especially like to emphasize. Legal recognition is only the translation, at the legal level, of a socio-cultural consideration of religions and their contributions to community life. There is a social recognition of religions as specific social and cultural realities—associative groups. Particular associative groups generate specific modes of consideration, including within the legal framework extant in each country. States recognize religions across five dimensions:

1) a strictly legal dimension when providing specific legal frameworks to carry out religious activities;

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42. This is especially true in the prison and military chaplaincies. With regard to the first, the research carried out by Céline Béraud, Claire de Galembert and Corinne Rostaing discusses the consideration of the social utility of religion inside the prison environment in terms of “the religion that appeases.” Religious connections offer opportunities for a spiritual escape from the rigors of confinement. Céline Béraud, De Galembert Claire & Corinne Rostaing, GODS AND MEN IN PRISON [DES HOMMES ET DES DIEUX EN PRISON] (2013). The authors characterize the prison secularism as recognition secularity. Id. at 34.
43. Id. at 166.
44. See supra text accompanying note 18–21.
2) a strictly social dimension when taking into account religious contributions in the areas of social solidarity and education;\textsuperscript{46}

3) an ethical dimension when consulting on issues involving conceptions of the human person;\textsuperscript{47}

4) a more political dimension when States provide for partnership and cooperation with religious groups to work towards common goals;\textsuperscript{48} and

5) a more symbolic dimension when States mobilize religions, often the majority religion, to celebrate the national communion on particular occasions (e.g., deaths, disasters, etc.).\textsuperscript{49}

Consider how that recognition has taken shape in several countries, including those that have recently adopted new state-religion relationships either by abolishing a non-separation scheme,\textsuperscript{50} or, for the countries of the former communist bloc, creating a new scheme within the construction of a democratic system.\textsuperscript{51} The fact that these various forms of recognition secularism are recent creations in several countries shows that it is not a scenario resulting from potentially obsolete historical and traditional legacies. No, these recently established religion-state relationships are considered appropriate arrangements for relations with religions in democratic societies that respect human rights.\textsuperscript{52}

Before analyzing four countries of the former communist bloc, let us examine seven countries in Western Europe and their relationship with religion: three predominantly Lutheran Protestant (Sweden, Norway, and Germany) and four predominately Catholic (Portugal, Spain, Belgium, and Austria).

Sweden and Norway\textsuperscript{53} chose a separation-recognition scheme, far from a separation “the French way.”\textsuperscript{54} In Sweden, after having

\textsuperscript{46.} Id.
\textsuperscript{47.} Id.
\textsuperscript{48.} Id.
\textsuperscript{49.} Id.
\textsuperscript{50.} See, e.g., BOLIVIA’S CONSTITUTION OF 2009.
\textsuperscript{51.} Borowski, supra note 17, at 391.
\textsuperscript{52.} The information reported on each country is taken from the records of the Eurel website (sociological and legal data on religion in Europe) and is available at the following address: www.eurel.info. We also used the Spain leaflet in the Observatory Pharos data bank on pluralism of cultures and religions: http://www.observatoirepharos.com/.
\textsuperscript{53.} Norway recently introduced a state-religion separation, \textit{Church of Norway – A Brief History}, CHURCH OF NORWAY (Feb. 16, 2015), https://kirken.no/nb-NO/church-of-
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introduced a separation between the Lutheran Church and the State in 2000, religious communities can register and have the acknowledged right to use the state tax system to collect membership fees. State aid is provided for religious communities who “contribute to maintaining and strengthening the fundamental values upon which society is based” and demonstrate stability. In Norway, on May 21, 2012, the Parliament almost unanimously approved a Constitutional amendment that made the Norwegian Lutheran Church more independent. It is remarkable to observe two facts which show that here, too, the separation is far from “French”: 1) the Norwegian Constitution stressed the fact that the country’s “values will remain [their] Christian and humanist heritage”, 2) the Norwegian Lutheran Church, to which the royal family will have to continue to belong, was in favour of separation. The Church will continue to collect public funds along with other religious groups.

On the other hand, Portugal and Spain, two countries of the Iberian Peninsula, redesigned their religion-state relationship following the end of dictatorial regimes and the consecutive building of their democracies. The Portuguese law on religious freedom from June 22, 2001 explicitly defines two principles: separation and cooperation. The Portuguese government must work with the churches and religious communities rooted in Portugal, given their representativeness, in particular to promote human rights, contribute

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54. FRENCH CONSTITUTION, supra note 14.
56. Act on Religious Communities, SFS 1998:1593, Section 16, as amended (Swed.).
57. Id.
58. Church of Norway – A Brief History, supra note 53.
60. Id. at art. 4.
62. Constitution of the Kingdom of Norway, supra note 59 at art. 16.
63. PORTUGAL: A COUNTRY STUDY, supra note 4.
64. 2001 Religious Freedom Act (Port.).
to the overall development of each individual and to promote the values of “peace, freedom, solidarity, and tolerance.” This idea of separation-recognition enables religious groups to fulfill the criteria of explicitly cooperating with the state in the promotion and development of the core values of democracy. The state, in turn, agrees to take into account the contributions of religions to its objectives of common interest.

In Spain, the Constitution of December 27, 1978 put an end to the denominational status of the State. But, while proclaiming, “there shall be no State religion,” the Constitution adds: “The public authorities shall take the religious beliefs of Spanish society into account and shall consequently maintain appropriate cooperation with the Catholic Church and the other confessions.”

The law on religious freedom of July 5, 1980 in turn indicates in article 17: “The State, taking account of the religious beliefs of Spanish society, will establish, if necessary, agreements or cooperation conventions with the registered Churches, denominations, and religious communities which, by their importance and number of believers have reached a notable rootedness in Spain.” In fact, in addition to the Concordat negotiated with the Catholic Church from 1976 to 1979, the Spanish government signed agreements with three religious groups having a “notable rootedness” in Spain in 1992: Jews, Muslims, and Protestants. These agreements provide these groups with some “advantages,” including civil recognition of the marriages they celebrate and the teaching of their religion in public schools. Even if the subject remains highly confrontational in Spain, especially on the issue of religious education in schools, this State practices its own form of a religious recognition type of secularism.

65. Id.
66. Id.
67. C.E., B.O.E. n. 311, Dec. 29, 1978 (Spain) [hereinafter SPAIN CONSTITUTION].
68. Id.
69. Id.
70. B.O.E. 1980, 177 (Spain).
72. Id.
73. See Mar Griera, Les débats concernant l’enseignement des religions à l’école en Espagne [The Debates on the Teaching of Religions in School in Spain], in LE DÉFI DE L’ENSEIGNEMENT DES FAITS RELIGIEUX À L’ÉCOLE: RÉPONDES EUROPÉENNES ET QUÉBÉCOISES [The
Belgium is a country where seven religious groups are recognized by the State: Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican, Jewish, Muslim, plus a seventh non-denominational philosophical community. In contrast to the French State which neither recognizes nor employs any religion, the Belgian State not only recognizes different religions, but also subsidizes them. Rik Torfs, of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, notes that the Belgian system establishes a clear distinction between the State and religion and dedicates their mutual independence. He indicates that the Belgian State applies an active neutrality regarding religions by recognizing certain religions and financing them. While opening a university symposium in Ghent in 2010, the Flemish Minister, Geert Bourgeois, stated that neutrality does not mean that public authorities cannot maintain relations with religious or philosophical organizations. It does not object to aid to churches and religious and philosophical institutions, nor social activities subsidies of Churches and religious or philosophical organizations. Since June 21, 2002, the Belgian State recognizes and finances the “non-denominational philosophical communities” in addition to the six recognized religions. In Belgium, the philosophies of this group are referred to by the term “organized secularism.” As a result of this law, the

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75. French Constitution supra note 14.
76. U.S. STATE DEP’T: BELGIUM, supra note 74.
78. Id. at 17.
80. 1994 Const. art. 181 (Belg.).
81. Claude Javeau, La laïcité ecclésialisée: le cas de la Belgique [Ecclesiastical Secularism: The case of Belgium], in Des maîtres et des dieux: Écoles et religions en Europe
sociologist Claude Javeau noted that secularism forms the “seventh recognized religion” in Belgium. Whether in prison or in the army, you can as easily seek the assistance of a Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, or Muslim chaplain as the assistance of a “humanist” chaplain (i.e., layman/secular). The Belgian example illustrates that practicing an active neutrality concerning religions and beliefs can be manifest in public funding and supportive religious activities, funding that is not incompatible with state neutrality for religious and philosophical concepts of existence.

Germany and Austria take a different approach. In Germany, although “there is no state church,” the most important religious groups are recognized as corporations under public law and integrated as partners in the public sphere. Austria distinguishes between three levels of status: 1) religious societies recognized by law and having the status of a legal person in public law (there are thirteen); 2) other religious communities merely “recorded by the State”; and 3) other religious communities that are associations governed by the Associations Act.

Four countries of the former Communist bloc, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania, chose various forms of separation-recognition when establishing their democracy. So Latvia, while proclaiming that “the church shall be separate from the State,” and stating in the Law on Religious Organizations that the State will privilege no denomination or religion in particular, recognizes eight religious groups as “traditional churches”: Lutheran, Catholic, Orthodox, Old Believers, Methodists, Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, and Jews. This status, established in 2004, allows agreements to be made with the state recognizing the specific role of the Church in the country’s legal system and the value system of

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82. Id.
83. Id. at 155–56.
84. Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Basic Law) art. 137, translation at http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/englisch_gg.html#p0864.
88. See Law on Religious Organizations, 1995, amended 2002, art. 2 (Lat.).
society, as well as its major contribution to moral and socialization processes.90

The Constitution of Poland expresses a particularly strong example of separation-recognition: “The relationship between the State and churches and other religious organizations shall be based on the principle of respect for their autonomy and mutual independence of each in its own sphere, as well as on the principle of cooperation for the individual and the common good.”91 This is an explicit recognition of the contribution of religions to shared values.

According to Michaela Moravcikova, “the Slovak Republic acknowledges [the churches’] social and legal status as public and legal institutions sui generis, and co-operates with them according to the principles of partnership co-operation . . . .”92 In fact, there is a concordat (an agreement or treaty) with the Vatican as well as agreements with other religious communities.93 According to Michaela Moravcikova, the churches are “a significant part of cultural and social life of the State, and an important factor in the creation of a spiritual and moral consciousness in society.”94 Hence, the church-state relationship provides for registration of churches and religious communities in the Ministry of Culture of the Republic if they have at least 20,000 members.95 However, among the twenty or so churches and religious communities registered in 2007, some have fewer than 20,000 members because their existence prior to the 192/1992 law on registration was taken into account.96

In 2006, Romania adopted a law on religious freedom and the general status of religions.97 After asserting that “[t]he Romanian State observes and guarantees the fundamental right to freedom of

90. Id.
91. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND OF 2ND APRIL 1997, art. 25, para. 3.
94. Moravcikova, supra note 92.
95. Id.
96. Id.
thought, conscience and religion for any individual on the territory of Romania,” the law states:

(1) The Romanian State recognizes the denominations’ spiritual, educational, social-charitable, cultural and social partnership role, as well their status as factors of social peace.

(2) The Romanian State recognizes the important role of the Romanian Orthodox Church and that of other churches and denominations as recognized by the national history of Romania and in the life of Romanian society.

While proclaiming that “there is no State Religion in Romania” and that “the State is neutral toward any religious persuasion or atheistic ideology,” the Romanian state grants the status of recognized denominations to the religious associations “that, through their activities and number of worshipers, provide guarantees of sustainability, stability and public interest.” Article 18 specifies the three criteria required to qualify for the category of “recognized religion”:

1) have been operating without interruption as a religious organization in Romania for at least twelve years;

2) present a list proving that at least 0.1% of the population of Romania is a member the organization;

3) present the declaration of faith and bylaws for the organization and operation.

According to these standards, eighteen religious organizations were registered as “recognized religions” by the Romanian state in 2006. In addition to the Romanian Orthodox Church (and two other Orthodox Churches), the Roman Catholic Church, the United Romanian Church, the Greco-Roman Catholic Church, nine Protestant churches (Reformed, two Lutheran, Baptist, Pentecostal, two Evangelical, Seventh-Day Adventist, and Unitarian), the Armenian Church, the Federation of Jewish Communities in

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98. Id. at art. 1, para. 1.
99. Id. at art. 7.
100. Id. at art. 9, para. 1.
101. Id.
102. Id. at art. 17, para. 1.
103. Id. at art. 18.
104. Id. at app.
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Romania, the Muslim religion, and the Jehovah’s Witnesses. These churches were recognized on the understanding that the State may decide to “withdraw the status of recognized denomination when that denomination’s activity seriously threatens public safety, order, health, morality or the fundamental human rights and liberties” that the status of being a recognized denomination allows them. These include the ability to:

- cooperate “in domains of common interests” in partnerships with public authorities;
- receive, on request, state support for the remuneration of the clerical and secular staff “based on the number of their worshipers who are Romanian citizens and based on their genuine needs of subsistence and activity”;
- benefit from the exemption from military service for the clerical and monastic staff;
- guarantee religious education in public and private schools;
- have, within the public education system, theological training centres for teacher training; and
- establish, at the local level, denominational cemeteries.

Religious organizations that do not meet the criteria to be recognized as “religions” or who do not wish to benefit from this status, are offered two possibilities: “religious association” or “religious group.” A religious association is defined as a legal entity of private law composed of at least 300 people and is included in the “Registry of religious associations.” These religious associations also benefit from tax incentives and may eventually

105. Id.
106. Id. at art. 21.
107. Id. at art. 9.
108. Id. at art. 10.
109. Id. at art. 25.
110. Id. at art. 32.
111. Id. at art. 4.
112. Id. at art. 28.
113. Id. at art. 5 para. 2.
114. Id. at art. 40.
115. Id. at art. 44.
become a recognized religion. A religious group is a form of association without legal personality, in other words, a de facto association.

As can be seen in both Western and Eastern Europe, forms of recognition secularism have been deployed by articulating the reciprocal independence of the state and of religions on the one hand, with the explicit acknowledgement of the place and role of religions in the collective life on the other hand. Part IV further analyses the assumptions and the impact of such a posture with respect to the social and cultural phenomenon of religion.

IV. A SOCIAL AND CIVIC AWARENESS OF RELIGIONS

The features of religion-state relationships in European countries reject ostracism with regard to religion. These states consider that the religious dimension of these associations is not in itself an obstacle to their social, cultural, educational, ethical, and civic contributions for collective life, an awareness that may even go as far as providing funding to these organizations. This attitude includes both a trivialization of the religious phenomenon and an awareness of its specific features. On the one hand, the attitude is trivializing in the sense that without special attention to the religious dimension of these organizations, they are considered to be like other social organizations. Although based on a conviction of beliefs, these organizations are also similar to others that perform various social functions and whose contributions may be of interest to the state (like sports and arts organizations for example). On the other hand, taking into account the specific features of the religious phenomenon as a social and cultural fact, they are given specific legal frameworks in which their organization is respected insofar as the operation of authority and the internal implementation of their own standards are concerned.

116. Id.
117. Id. at art. 1.
118. Religious Freedom in Germany, supra note 16.
119. Id.
120. In some respects, one might consider that this trivialization represents a radicalization of secularism: getting away from any scheme of criticism of religion, religions are approached as social and cultural facts that deploy their activities and their contributions are positively accepted in the rules of law, human rights, and pluralist democracy.
121. See supra Part III.
This awareness may, for example, go as far as recognizing the right of a religious organization to dismiss one of its employees if the employee, by his/her behaviour, contradicts the core values of the group in which he/she freely chooses to work. In the Obst v. Germany case concerning an official of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon church) who was summarily dismissed by the authorities of the church for adultery, the European Court of Human Rights did not find that there had been an abuse of power by the authorities of the church because of the importance of the principle of marital fidelity to the church. The employment contract implies respect for the group’s “high moral principles.” On July 9, 2013, this same Court validated the refusal of the Romanian Orthodox Church to register a trade union of employees, considering that not doing so would have come back to an illegitimate interference in the internal organization of a religious group. Taking into account the specific features of religious groups is also manifest in the fact that public authorities explicitly integrate their contributions in the field of education, particularly with regard to moral education, and in the field of ethics at the level of society as a whole. In doing so, states recognize religious groups as providers of guidance and as resources in the conduct of life and the search for a good life.

These regimes of recognition secularism ultimately reflect a sociological understanding of religious phenomena by demonstrating a deep understanding, though often implicit, of these religious issues. Indeed, these devices show that public authorities have generally understood that religious phenomena should not be reduced either to their private and individual dimensions, or to their dimensions of beliefs and ritual practices. The public authorities have both implicitly and explicitly incorporated the notion that religious associations are not like other associations into their laws and policies. They recognize that these are associations that deeply

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123. Id. at ¶ 50.
126. Moravcikova, supra note 92.
mobilize people, involving emotional and militant dimensions and creating sustainable identities, in constant evolution beyond the variety and intensity level of practices and beliefs to each other.127 These associations constitute, for the persons who adhere to them, identity and ethical resources; they articulate the individual and the collective, the local and the global.128 Above all, they provide “sense” in the three meanings of the word: the meaning of life and death, happiness and unhappiness; the direction of life by ethical standards that guide behaviour; and sensations, or ways of feeling individually and collectively, the individual and collective emotions.129 Therefore, it is indeed a matter of social realities sui generis, even if from one era to another, from one culture to another; these realities are changing and take many different forms. Religious phenomena are symbolic infrastructure through which human beings attempt to symbolically master their existence, to be part of space and time, in a synchrony and a diachrony.130 It is, therefore, a social and cultural phenomenon that requires the implementation of a symbolic intelligence secularism in which human beings also function within the three above-mentioned dimensions.

Another dimension also emerged: the recognition by public authorities of the historical and cultural importance that one or several specific religious traditions have had in a given country.131 The particular roles of Lutheranism in Sweden, Orthodoxy in Romania, and Catholicism in Spain are obvious in these countries.132 Trying to promote a sense of equality by putting all religions on the same level—for example, Buddhism and Catholicism in Spain133—seems like an attempt to apply an abstract scheme that denies history and reality. Merely considering the individual aspects of religious and philosophical attitudes fails to account for the cultural strata of

127. See Borowski, supra note 17, at 390.
128. See id.
131. Act on Religious Communities, supra note 56.
132. Id.; Moravcikova, supra note 92; FRENCH CONSTITUTION, supra note 14.
133. FRENCH CONSTITUTION, supra note 14.
societies, the fact that particular religious dimensions have played a more significant role in the history of the societies and in their configuration as state-national communities. This is particularly identifiable in their national calendars and the architectural landscape of religious buildings. Because of this, offering to certain religious groups a legal framework recognizing specific rights and some protection for facilities according to certain criteria would in itself constitute a violation of Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). This article guarantees, in addition to the freedom of religion and belief, the protection against discrimination of a religious or convictional group in comparison with others—in other words, equal treatment for all of them. It should be noted that any discrimination is prohibited by the ECHR under Article 14: “The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.”

This does not prevent the Strasbourg Court (i.e. European Court of Human Rights) from considering the various recognition systems practiced by the states that come within the margin of appreciation of these states, which, given the special role of certain religions in the collective life of their country, grant them certain privileges. The control of the Court is exercised only in ensuring that the recognition system be open to any religious group that meets the required criteria. Thus, the Court held that Austria had

136. EUR. CONV. ON H.R. art. 9.
137. Id.
138. Id. at art. 14.
violated Article 9 of the Convention by multiplying the obstacles.\textsuperscript{141} This was especially evidenced by a ten-year waiting period that prevented Jehovah’s Witnesses from being granted the status of “religious society” (Religionsgemeinschaft), the highest degree of recognition of a religious group in Austria, which includes the right to teach religion in public schools.\textsuperscript{142} In its judgement, the Court stated:

In view of these substantive privileges accorded to religious societies, the obligation under Article 9 of the Convention incumbent on the State’s authorities to remain neutral in the exercise of their powers in this domain requires therefore that if a State sets up a framework for conferring legal personality on religious groups to which a specific status is linked, all religious groups which so wish must have a fair opportunity to apply for this status and the criteria established must be applied in a non-discriminatory manner.\textsuperscript{143}

In a decision concerning Croatia and the applications submitted by several Protestant communities, the Court found that the Croatian state’s refusal to sign agreements with the Protestant communities constituted discrimination in exercising the right to freedom of religion; although the conclusion of special agreements with the state and some religious communities to establish a specific legal regime for them, was not in itself contrary to Articles 9 and 14 of the Convention.\textsuperscript{144} On this occasion, the Court stated:

The Court reiterates that discrimination means treating differently, without an objective and reasonable justification, persons in relevantly similar situations. However, the Contracting States enjoy a certain margin of appreciation in assessing whether and to what extent differences in otherwise similar situations justify a different treatment . . . . In particular, the conclusion of agreements between the State and a particular religious community establishing a special regime in favour of the latter does not, in principle, contravene the

\textsuperscript{141} Id. at §§ 66–69.

\textsuperscript{142} Id. at §§ 91–92; see also Act of 20 May 1874 on the Legal Recognition of Religious Societies, RGBl. n. 68/1874, Sec. 2 [Austria], available at http://www.legirel.cnrs.fr/spip.php?article42; FEDERAL PRESS SERVICE, RELIGIONS IN AUSTRIA 9 (Walter Reichel & Thomas Eder eds., Maria Bennett trans., 2011) available at https://www.bka.gv.at/DocView.axd?CobId=37670.

\textsuperscript{143} Id. at § 92.

requirements of Articles 9 and 14 of the Convention, provided that there is an objective and reasonable justification for the difference in treatment and that similar agreements may be entered into by other religious communities wishing to do so.145

The court confirmed that “the State had a duty to remain neutral and impartial in exercising its regulatory power in the sphere of religious freedom and in its relations with different religions, denominations and beliefs."146

Beyond establishing different levels of legal recognition that allow each religion to choose the status it prefers and allow the state to take into account the historical and cultural significance of certain religions in the concerned country religious organizations in many European societies are considered useful, cultural auxiliaries that participate in the training of people in pluralistic democracies.147 Across Europe, secularism does not necessarily mean a lack of cooperation between public authorities and religions, as the majority of the European countries that have implemented various religious recognition systems incorporate a number of public interest missions.148 In other words, religion does not appear in Europe as an effective foil against which the state and society should struggle for autonomy, but as a training vector and tool for the development of individuals that makes a useful contribution to the education of young people in learning their future responsibilities as citizens.149 Far from any “religious political excommunication,"150 several European countries are developing public policies to integrate religion into the overall governance of the society, including in the field of education.151

In Europe, religions are symbolic resources that can hardly be ignored by political leadership. In fact, in some European countries, starting with Germany, the defense of freedoms and the protection against the dangers of dictatorship and nationalism went hand in

145. Id. at § 85 (citations omitted).
146. Id. at § 88.
147. Moravcikova, supra note 92.
148. Levy & Razin, supra note 129.
149. Id.
150. See Jean-Marc Ferry, THE LIGHTS OF RELIGION: INTERVIEW WITH ÉLODIE MAUROT [LES LUMIÈRES DE LA RELIGION: ENTRETIEN AVEC ÉLODIE MAUROT] 9–10 (2013). Ferry asserts that the exclusion of religious beliefs out of the public sphere is impoverishing for the citizen and democracy, a political excommunication of the religious. Id.
151. Levy & Razin, supra note 129.
hand with the consolidation of the institutional position of the churches and of their moral authority. While proclaiming that “there is no state church,” Jacques Zylberberg notes, the German State gives part of the public space to religious institutions arising from historical religious institutions.” Thus, the government recognizes religious institutions as political institutions participating in the common good.

This model, which, far from reducing public action to only the actions of the state and local authorities, recognizes that religious groups can cooperate in public interest missions and help ensure and legitimize democracy, particularly through their educational endeavours that permeate both Western and Eastern Europe. Ultimately, this type of secularism that dominates in Europe differs from the French secularism. European countries have eventually understood that the liberal state has indeed an interest in giving free reign to religious voices in the public, political sphere and that religious organizations are taking part in public life. As such, the state cannot discourage believers and religious communities from politically expressing themselves because it cannot know if in doing so, it might restrict the secular society from accessing important resources for the foundation of the society.

V. WHAT ABOUT FRANCE?

While France puts off an appearance of a completely secular state in contrast to these other European countries, this Part will show that developments over time have led it to a recognition secularism.

In France, the tradition of an emancipatory state exercising a kind of philosophical authority over the population has resulted in the belief that “true” freedom is only to be found in emancipation from religion. Thus, once a public recognition is manifest with

153. Id.
154. Levy & Razin, supra note 129.
regard to the religious, this quickly gives rise to negative reactions from those who confuse secularism and privatization of religious matter.\textsuperscript{157} President Jacques Chirac officially recognized the Masonic organizations in 2003 for the 275th anniversary of the foundation of the masonry.\textsuperscript{158} What would people have said if he had honoured religions in similar circumstances? Yet, the meeting between President Nicolas Sarkozy and Pope Benedict XVI at the Elysée Palace on September 12, 2008, was a fine example of a republican secularism of recognition and dialogue.\textsuperscript{159}

The status of secularism in France has also evolved over the past fifty years. Two indices are used to demonstrate the change. The first concerns the financing of church activities. The French Republic subsidizes the private education sector through contracts established by the Debré Act in 1959.\textsuperscript{160} Catholic schools were the first affected by this “school concordat,”\textsuperscript{161} but Jewish schools were also affected,\textsuperscript{162} and, since 2000, a few Muslim schools have felt the effects as well.\textsuperscript{163} It also applies to associations specifically dedicated to sporting, cultural, or social matters related to different faiths.\textsuperscript{164} The religious activities themselves, which were particularly targeted by the prohibition of 1905, are now supported.\textsuperscript{165} Various measures of tax exemption have been adopted which allow religious associations to benefit from indirect subsidies.\textsuperscript{166} Various aids in

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\textsuperscript{157} Id. at 47.  \\
\textsuperscript{158} M. Jacques Chirac, President of France, Address on the Occasion of the 275th Anniversary of the Masonic Order in France (June 23, 2003), available at http://www.cesnur.org/2003/fr_chirac_1.htm.  \\
\textsuperscript{160} Frances C. Fowler, School Choice Policy in France: Success and Limitations, 6 EDUC. POL’Y 429, 429–30 (1992).  \\
\textsuperscript{161} Id.  \\
\textsuperscript{163} Harry Judge, The Muslim Headscarf and French Schools, 111 AM. J. EDUC. 1, 7 (2004).  \\
\textsuperscript{164} Service Public Association [Public Service Association], Subventions versées aux associations [Grants to Associations], SERVICE-PUBLIC.FR (Jan. 1, 2015), https://www.service-public.fr/associations/vosdroits/F3180.  \\
\textsuperscript{165} Id.  \\
\end{flushleft}
support of constructing places of worship were also added, in the form of provision of sites, loan guarantees, and even direct support, as in Rennes or Evry during the 1980s.\textsuperscript{167} The Council of State was petitioned to rule on the legality of such measures, and validated the principle of assembly in five judgments delivered on July 19, 2011.\textsuperscript{168}

The second indication concerns acceptance of religious affiliations as can be seen in the school environment. Though there is a ban on wearing “patent” religious signs,\textsuperscript{169} regulations now grant students the ability to obtain a leave of absence for religious obligations, and the benefit of chaplaincies, not only as provided for by the law of December 9, 1905 in boarding schools,\textsuperscript{170} but also in high school and college day schools. The introduction of teaching about religions in school curriculum since 1990-2000 also marks a qualitative leap.\textsuperscript{171} Built around the study of religious facts through existing disciplines without introducing either a special subject, or specific teaching staff,\textsuperscript{172} the French model indeed constitutes a unique model in Europe. The theme of “recognition” is central however: by specifying that religious knowledge is essential to the constitution of a “tolerant society,” the Department of Education rediscovers, away from the abstract concept of secularism, the importance of the religious factor in the construction of individual and collective identities.

\textsuperscript{167} Cf. Portier, supra note 27, at 102.

\textsuperscript{168} CE, Commune of Trélazé [Commune de Trélazé], 19 July 2011, n. 308544 (Fr.); CE, Federation of the free thinking and social action of the Rhône [Fédération de la libre pensée et de l’action sociale du Rhône], M.P., 19 July 2011, n. 308817 (Fr.); CE, Urban Community of Le Mans, Le Mans City [Communauté urbaine du Mans, Le Mans métropole], 19 July 2011, n. 309161 (Fr.); CE, Commune of Montpellier [Commune de Montpellier], 19 July 2011, n. 313518 (Fr.); CE, Mme V, 19 July 2011, n. 320796 (Fr.).

\textsuperscript{169} Code de l'éducation [Code Educ.] art. L141-5-1 (Fr.) (“In schools , colleges and public high schools , the wearing of signs or dress by which pupils overtly manifest a religious affiliation is prohibited.”), available at http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do;jsessionid=708182A5A6C05C72B347822E5F11231D7.tpdila07v_1?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006524456&dateTexte=20151023&categorieLien=id#LEGITEXT000006524456.

\textsuperscript{170} Service Public Association, supra note 164.


\textsuperscript{172} Id.
Public authorities, both locally and centrally, are more and more willing to call on religious organizations to participate in various policy networks and in different forums for reflection where the collective standard is being developed. The institutionalization of the relationship between the government and the Roman Catholic Church in 2002, 173 and the creation of the French Council of the Muslim faith in 2003, 174 indicate, among other elements, this strong trend of French political life. Yet, after a year marked by difficult relations with major denominations (due to the passage of the law opening marriage to same-sex couples), President François Hollande himself, initially reluctant and counter to his predecessor, granted a public dimension for the religious and justified the practice of cooperation with holy orders during the ceremony of the vows with religious authorities in January, 2014. 175 President Hollande stated:

I want to address you with this message, over and beyond my vows: we can expect much from this dialogue between the State and religions. We also feel that there is a need for spirituality in our country. We cannot merely reduce the material considerations, even if they are essential. Because there is a crisis, there is also the need to have a conscience, to understand the meaning and contribute to it.” 176

Even in France then, behind the official neutrality of abstention and non-recognition of religious groups, a certain form of recognition-secularity is actually practiced. 177 Therefore, we can say that in terms of state-religion relations, France is less singular and more European than has been imagined. While maintaining forbearance and neutrality rhetoric, ministries of the Republic maintain regular contact with qualified representatives of different religions, representatives who are also received at the Élysée at the traditional New Year reception of vows. 178 The establishment, in 2002, of an annual meeting between the government and the

174. Id.
175. President Hollande Vows to Clamp Down on Religious Intolerance, FRANCE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM (Jan 7, 2014), ambafrance-uk.org/President-Hollande-vows-to-clamp.
176. Id.
177. See Willaime, supra note 41, at 67–82.
Catholic Church\textsuperscript{179} as well as the creation in 2003 of the French Council of the Muslim faith\textsuperscript{180} testify, alongside other events, of a regular practice of dialogue and consultation between public authorities and religious authorities.\textsuperscript{181}

The consideration of religious dimensions by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs’ Analysis and Prospective Center\textsuperscript{182} shows that French diplomacy, just like American diplomacy,\textsuperscript{183} understands that religious facts cannot be ignored in the context of international relations. Laurent Fabius, current Minister at the French Foreign Ministry, explained recently at a symposium that a number of current international crises remain unintelligible and beyond insoluble when the religious factor is not taken into account. The analysis of developments in religious matters is an important tool in understanding the world. Religion, because it influences individual and collective behaviour, changes our mission of knowledge of realities, or of knowledge of the field. The attention we must pay it encompasses a wide variety of problems: balance within states, bilateral relations, transnational issues, security issues, international standards, and challenges of development.\textsuperscript{184} He concluded that religion can and must be a cultural factor of dialogue and peace. In this area, France has a valuable experience to assert without arrogance. It endeavours and will endeavour to do so.\textsuperscript{185}

All these findings contradict a secularist perception of French secularism that ignores the religious dimensions and conveys a unilaterally negative approach to them. It is true that discrepancies between the speech of secularism and the practices to which they

\textsuperscript{179} Id.

\textsuperscript{180} Id.

\textsuperscript{181} Eglise Catholique en France [Catholic Church in France], 10ème rencontre de l’Instance Matignon [10th meeting of the Matignon Forum], EGLISE.CATHOLIQUE.FR (Sept. 12, 2014), http://www.eglise.catholique.fr/Actualites/382316-10eme-rencontre-linstance-matignon/.


\textsuperscript{183} Id.

\textsuperscript{184} Laurent Fabius, Religions et politique étrangère [Religion and Foreign Policy], in LA DIPLOMATIE AU DÉFI DES RELIGIONS. TENSIONS, GUERRES, MÉDIATIONS [DIPLOMACY CHALLENGE OF RELIGIONS, TENSIONS, WARS, MEDIATIONS] 13 (Denis Lacorne, Justin Vaïsse & Jean-Paul Willame eds., 2014).

\textsuperscript{185} Id. at 21.
give rise are particularly clear in France. Throughout Europe, what is especially notable are various forms of recognition secularism which combine mutual independence of the state and religion with an explicit inclusion of religion’s place and role in society. After opposing the denominational model that prevailed in countries having a Protestant or Orthodox culture\textsuperscript{186} and the separation models which prevailed in the predominantly Catholic countries of Europe,\textsuperscript{187} Philippe Portier describes a crossover movement where denominational states have opened themselves to a separative logic, separatist states to a partnership logic. Hence, we have seen, on a European level, the emergence of a shared model of secularism while meeting the criteria of both equality and recognition of memberships, specific to a flexible separation scheme.\textsuperscript{188} This is indeed a system of separation-recognition prevailing in Europe. In other words, a regime which, while based on the respective autonomy of states and religions, explicitly recognizes the place and role of religious groups by granting them a specific legal framework within which to function.

VI. CONCLUSION

This implementation of the social recognition of religions in many secular countries of Europe is also reflected on the same scale in the European Union itself. The Lisbon Treaty Preamble states that it “dr[ew] inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law.”\textsuperscript{189} In adopting this, the European Union asserts that, among the diverse heritage that inspire it, there are also religious heritages. The wording, by asserting that it is from this heritage that the universal values cherished by Europe have developed, goes further in recognizing that religious heritages, among others, have also contributed to the development of these values. The Preamble thus clearly differs from the Preamble of the Charter of European Union Fundamental

\textsuperscript{186} Portier, \textit{supra} note 27.
\textsuperscript{187} \textit{Id.}
\textsuperscript{188} \textit{Id. at 98.}
Rights, which had been controversial, particularly in France, because of the reference to the religious heritage of Europe. Not only are religious heritages explicitly mentioned in the Lisbon treaty, but by using the phrase “drawing inspiration from” in the treaty to replace the word “conscious” in the Preamble to the Charter of Fundamental Rights, the Lisbon Treaty recognizes that religious heritages are also legacies that alongside others have promulgated the democratic values upon which European states and the European Union itself are based. This is official recognition in a secular and non-secular pluralistic spirit, of the role of religions in the formation of a democratic Europe.

A second element of the Lisbon Treaty recognizes the presence of religions in the public space and explicitly agrees to take into account their various contributions to community life without sacrificing the independence of the state and public authorities with regard to any religion or philosophies. The Treaty states the following:

1. The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States.

2. The Union equally respects the status under national law of philosophical and non-confessional organisations [sic].

3. Recognising [sic] their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organisations [sic].

In other words, while clearly asserting that the state-religion relationships are derived from national law and not from community law, the Treaty declares that the national mechanisms built into its twenty-eight state-members will be respected, and the European Union explicitly recognizes the identity and specific contribution of religious and philosophical groups (atheistic humanisms) and wishes to maintain an “open, transparent and regular” dialogue with them. In doing so, the European Union, as are Member States, establishes that it is not secularist, but secular.

192. Id.
Towards a Recognition and Dialogue

Beyond the diversity of Church-State relationships in the various European countries, there is a trend towards a secular recognition of religions. This trend combines mutual independence of the state and religion with an explicit consideration of the role of religion within society. The European Union and its Member states are secular and no religion determines the politics of the States or of the E.U. As Ronan McCrea argues: “The approaches of Member States to religion are characterized by Europe’s common heritage of Christianity and by humanist and secular influences that have emerged from European history and have limited religious influence over law and politics in Europe to a greater degree than elsewhere.” Secularism is thus an important part of the European identity. But this fundamental secularism does not prevent taking into account religions’ contributions to society. This idea is why I speak of a secularism of recognition: a secularism that involves a practice of regular dialogues between public authorities and representatives of religion, instead of the government ignoring religions.
