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ALDE (15.04.2009) / HRWF Int. (15.04.2009) – Email: [info@hrwf.net](mailto:info@hrwf.net) – Website: <http://www.hrwf.net> - On March 27th, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations adopted Resolution 10/22 on "Combating Defamation of Religions". The resolution expresses concern over growing intolerance and xenophobia, in particular Islamophobia and calls on governments to criminalize religious blasphemy.

Sophie in 't Veld (Netherlands, D66) calls on the Commission President Barroso to firmly condemn any limitation of the freedom of speech and to take action against the UN initiative:

"Barroso should use his forthcoming annual meeting with religious leaders to make a joint public statement in support of full and unrestricted freedom of speech. The European Commission, as the custodian of the Treaties, has a special responsibility on this issue.

Freedom of conscience and freedom of religion are fundamental rights, the cornerstone of democracy. But these freedoms are individual rights. The exercise of the freedom of religion and the freedom of conscience fully depends on the freedom of expression. Criticism of religious, political or other views should not be subject to any restrictions. That would be contrary to our democratic values. The European Union must stand tall for fundamental freedoms."

You will find attached a letter that was co-signed by ALDE-members Renate Weber, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Sarah Ludford, Lena Ek, Johannes Lebech, Alexander Alvaro, Silvana Koch-Mehrin and Jules Maaten attached to this press release.

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