

# International Conference in Rome Unites Global Experts to Address Current Challenges to Religious Freedom

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- On Thursday, May 30th, the international [conference](#) titled “Freedom of Belief and Religious Recognition: Current State and Perspectives” convened at the Church of [Scientology](#) auditorium in Rome. Participants included university professors, government officials, parliamentarians, and religious representatives, all focused on dissecting the multifaceted challenges to religious freedom in Italy and around the world.



Rome FoRB Congress

Organized in collaboration with the Observatory on Religious Entities, Ecclesiastical Heritage, and Non-Profit Organizations of the University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli,” the day-long event featured robust discussions facilitated through two morning international roundtables and two afternoon national ones.

## Navigating Global Perspectives on Religious Freedom

The morning sessions, moderated by Prof. Alfonso Celotto of the University of Roma Tre, delved into global perspectives. The first panel included Senator Lorena Rios Cuéllar, former director of religious affairs of the Colombian government; Prof. José Daniel Pelayo Olmedo, deputy director general for coordination and promotion of religious freedom of the Spanish government; and Dr. Gary Vachicouras from the Institute for Postgraduate Studies in Orthodox Theology in Geneva.

Discussions highlighted Colombia’s constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religion, Spain's extensive registry of 26,000 religious groups, and the increasing religious plurality in Greece. Dr. Vachicouras emphasized that accepting the principle of freedom of belief could resolve conflicts arising from this plurality.

The second panel, featuring U.S. constitutional expert Austin Hepworth, Prof. Juan Ferreiro Galguera from the University of Oviedo, Spain, and former European Court of Human Rights jurisconsult Vincent Berger, examined religious freedom through comparative lenses. Hepworth referenced the 1948 U.S.-Italy Friendship Treaty, while Ferreiro Galguera distinguished between secular and secularist states. Prof. Berger discussed the need for full recognition of religious denominations and the role of the ECHR in protecting religious freedoms.

### Analyzing Italy's Unique Religious Landscape

The afternoon panels, moderated by Prof. Antonio Fuccillo from the University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli," focused on Italy's specific context. Speakers included Prof. Maria D'Arienzo from the University "Federico II" of Naples, Prof. Gianfranco Macrì from the University of Salerno, and Prof. Francesco Sorvillo from the University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli."

Debates revealed the outdated nature of Italy's Law No. 1159 from 1929, which still governs religious denominations despite the evolutions in its republican democracy. Discussions from Dr. Marco Respinti of "bitterwinter.org," Dr. Nader Akkad from the Grand Mosque of Rome, and Mother Anastasia of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese underscored media responsibility, interfaith dialogue, and the long struggle for recognition faced by the Romanian Orthodox Church in Italy.

### A Call for Enhanced Religious Freedom

Lina Pirotta, representative of the Church of Scientology Italy, opened the conference by echoing the institution's longstanding belief in fundamental rights to religious practice, originally encapsulated in [L. Ron Hubbard's](#) Creed of the Church of Scientology.

By uniting domestic and international experts, the Church sought to provide comprehensive insights into the status quo of religious freedom and potential pathways toward its enhancement. The event underscored the necessity of greater regulatory attention to religious phenomena, aiming to foster an environment where freedom of belief can truly flourish.

The conference concluded with a call to action—emphasizing collaboration and dialogue as foundational pillars in the communal quest to uphold and advance the inalienable right to religious freedom across the globe.

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