



Religious Freedom in Europe

European history reserves precious few pages to its nurture of religious freedom.

The cherished religious freedom of the Greeks was embraced by the Romans. However, Domitian's introduction of an Imperial Cult (in AD81-96) led to persecution of Christians and Jews who refused to worship the Emperor. Constantine's *Edict of Milan* (AD313) granted religious freedom to all, but two years later new edicts forbade Jews from proselytising and later from holding public office.

In Moorish Spain and in the Ottoman Empire (1301-1922), Jews and Christians were religious minority communities (*dhimmis*) with historians divided as to whether this afforded state protection or state control of religion. Within those territories under papal influence, Jewish religious and social activities were strictly

regulated by decree of Innocent III (1215).

From the 16th to the 20th centuries, the *Index of Prohibited Books* proscribed the books of religious free thinkers and those considered heretical. The *Peace of Westphalia* (1648) secured religious plurality in principle although the place of religious minorities remained precarious throughout the 17th century. The advent of the 18th century heralded the Enlightenment ideal of religious tolerance, though frequently rooted in indifference rather than a positive welcome for religious plurality. Despite this new atmosphere, Church leaders were generally hostile to religious tolerance and continued to persecute dissidents.

By the twentieth century, the ideological intolerance of religion emerged in new forms: fascism, communism, and nationalism. Where these have taken

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EDITORIAL

Twenty European centuries of religious intolerance (and a few freedoms)

The history of Europe could (and often is) told as a story of religious intolerance. Whether the focus is on the shifting frontiers of Christendom as it interfaced with paganism and Islam, or the conflicts between Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christians, or even the treatment of religious minorities within those larger blocks of Christianity, there are numerous examples of inhumanities conducted in the name of religion.

Yet in the 20th Century a new chapter in the story began to be written: the interaction not between European believers of different faiths but between religious Europeans and secular Europeans. And whilst many see secularism as inherently disinterested in religion, the history of the 20th Century and the current experience of faith communities around Europe proves this is often not the case. Government regulation and social hostility is now frequently directed at religious minorities in many European countries.

Darrell Jackson gives a historical overview to the topic in his lead article as well as introducing some of the bodies who monitor religious freedom worldwide and giving some startling examples of discrimination and intolerance across Europe.

Our feature statistical article develops and improves Nova Index of Secularity which we introduced in Vista Issue 3 and correlates it with measures of religious freedom leading to some very interesting findings. And we conclude this issue with another set of online and printed resources on the topic.

In closing, might we draw your attention to the European Consultation to be held at Redcliffe College in January 2012 (see p.5)

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political control, 'freedom' of religion has generally only been guaranteed to those religious groups that supported the ruling powers.

The European Convention on Human Rights (1953) enshrined religious freedom as a basic human right, to be extended across the member states of the Council of Europe. European citizens have legal recourse under this Convention and may bring cases against the State for infringement of their religious rights. However, legislation dealing with religion at national level varies widely across Europe and in many instances reflects the historical relationships that majority Christian traditions have enjoyed with the State. Violent persecution and suppression of religious groups are nowadays relatively scarce across Europe, but official discrimination and social hostility still occur.

Measuring the degree of religious freedom in any given situation can be difficult. States that uphold religious freedom may nevertheless officially favour one group over another and thereby generate (whether deliberately or accidentally) social suspicion and hostility. Hostility towards religious groups, as well as their regulation, may equally be an outcome of either a committed secular, political, or religiously inspired ideology. As a consequence, most measures of religious freedom avoid the discussion of motivation and instead focus on the social and personal consequences of religious practice and orientation.

There are a number of long-standing international bodies, governmental and non-governmental, which monitor and measure religious freedoms. Among these is Freedom House, which publishes *Freedom in the World*, an annual report of civil liberties and political rights. Freedom House 'calls attention to global trends in freedom and democracy, and shines a public light on dictatorship and abuse' by monitoring press reports and press freedoms.

The US State Department is also charged with monitoring religious freedom globally and produces its *International Religious Freedom Report* (IRFR) as a contribution towards this. F18, meanwhile, is a European-based news service committed to reporting on abuses of religious freedom. In addition, the Hudson Institute's *Center for Religious Freedom*, associated with the pioneering work of

Paul Marshall, also monitors religious freedom.

More recently the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life published its 2009 study *Global Restrictions on Religion* which established new criteria for measuring restrictions on religion, deploying multiple researchers coding documented instances of restrictions. From these observations, PEW has developed scales that measure government restrictions and social hostilities against religion.

“Examples of regulation, favouritism, discrimination and intolerance are to be found across contemporary Europe.”
Darrell Jackson

In addition, the Association of Religious Data Archives (ARDA) measures governmental regulation of religion, favouritism towards religion, social regulation of religion and religious persecution. In preparing its scales of religious freedoms, the ARDA analyses the US State Department's *IRFR* and several other important datasets, including those of the *Center for Religious Freedom* and the *CIRI (Cingranelli-Richards) Human Rights Dataset*, which monitors governmental human rights practices.

Generally speaking, indicators of religious freedom pay attention to four main measures: governmental regulation (or restriction) of religion, governmental favouritism towards religion, social regulation of religion, and social hostility (or persecution) towards religion. More recent approaches (see the work of the *Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians*, for example) have tended to focus on the nuanced ways in which social hostility can generate, for example, media representations (especially stereotypes) of religious minorities. Media stereotypes can themselves, in turn, become a motivation for further discrimination at multiple levels.

Examples of regulation, favouritism, discrimination and intolerance are to be found across contemporary Europe. Two countries, Georgia and Hungary, have provided contrasting approaches during 2011.

In July, Georgia introduced amendments to its Civil Code which allow religious groups to register as religious associations instead of being forced to register as non-profit bodies. Whilst the Orthodox Church retained its special status within Georgia, the rights of religious association were extended to the widest possible range of religious minorities.

In contrast, on July 12th, the Parliament of Hungary enacted a new 'Law on the Right to Freedom of Conscience and Religion, and on Churches, Religions and Religious

EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Rome
4th November 1950

ARTICLE 9

9.1 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

9.2 Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Communities'. The new legislation severely restricts the legal status and activities of a wide range of religious minorities in Hungary, including the Methodist Church, Unitarian Church and the Assemblies of God. Only 14 of 358 registered churches and religious associations were granted legal recognition with others being required to reapply for registration by a court after a two-thirds approval in the Hungarian parliament. In the case of Hungary, these more restrictive measures were introduced by a right-wing government that has previously been an ally of the Churches.

Other instances of similar infringements are not uncommon across Europe and with this edition of *Vista* we have begun the task of correlating measures of secularism with those of religious freedom. The manner in which secular societies and states respond instinctively to issues of religious freedom varies across Europe and we believe that this relationship bears further investigation. Secularisation has typically been welcomed as a guarantor of religious freedom. That may no longer be taken for granted, particularly with the rise of new forms of nationalism across Europe. Religious freedom may very well serve as a barometer for further restrictions on personal, social and political freedoms. If so, we do well to keep an eye on these vital signs.

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RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN A SECULAR SOCIETY:

Is there a relationship between religious freedoms and secularity? We take some recognized measures of religious liberty and investigate the relationship with the NOVA Index of Secularity.

Article 18 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) clearly states that 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.'

Measuring religious freedom

There are many different ways of measuring religious freedom and you can find some of them outlined in the resources section overleaf. For this study we have used as our primary source the 2009 Pew Forum Global Restrictions on Religious Freedom report, available from <http://pewforum.org/Government/Global-Restrictions-on-Religion.aspx>

Researchers measured reported incidents of 'religious violence, intolerance, intimidation and discrimination' in each country between mid-2006 and mid-2008, collating information from 16 primary sources. These included country constitutions; Amnesty International reports; U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices; U.N. Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief reports and the Council of the European Union annual report on human rights.

Through a coding process, two indices were compiled: a Government Restrictions Index (GRI) and a Social Hostilities Index (SHI), each using a scale of 0-10.

The GRI covered issues such as whether or not all faiths received the same level of government access and privileges, did the constitution affect religious freedom, and if

religious groups had to register.

The SHI included tensions and hostilities within and between religious groups, for example whether people of one faith were being hindered from operating by other organisations or religious groups, or hostility due to conversion or proselytism.

Countries within both indices were categorised into very high, high, moderate and low levels, and this study has followed these same basic categories. Whilst globally the study found that 32% of countries had 'high or very high' levels of religious restriction, none of the European countries included in this study had 'very high' levels, and only three (Russia, Turkey and Greece) had high levels of government restrictions and social hostility.

Measuring secularity

The Nova Index of Secularity (NIS) analyses results from the European Values Survey, and ranks 25 countries in relative order of secularity. It includes measures of belief in God, religious identity, the importance of religion, attendance at religious services and confidence in the church.

Following the launch in October 2010 of NIS, further analysis of EVS data has led to some enhancements in our Index. The number of countries it includes has risen to 25 which means the population of the countries covered by the index is now 760 million. A sixth dimension of religiosity/secularity, the frequency of private prayer has been included. Furthermore, all the responses to a question – including 'don't knows' – are now taken into account. This is a significant proportion of the responses for some countries. Finally, age restrictions have been established limiting the index to respondents between 20 and 80 years old and the index has been normalised to a scale of between 0 and 1.

Despite these methodological innovations, the relative ranking of the 25 countries remains largely unchanged, with the Czech Republic, Germany and Sweden as the most secular countries, and Greece, Poland, Romania and Turkey as the least.

Religious Freedom and Secularity

So, are secular countries less religiously restrictive and socially hostile? Broadly speaking, yes. These two dimensions, as described by their GRI and SHI values, have

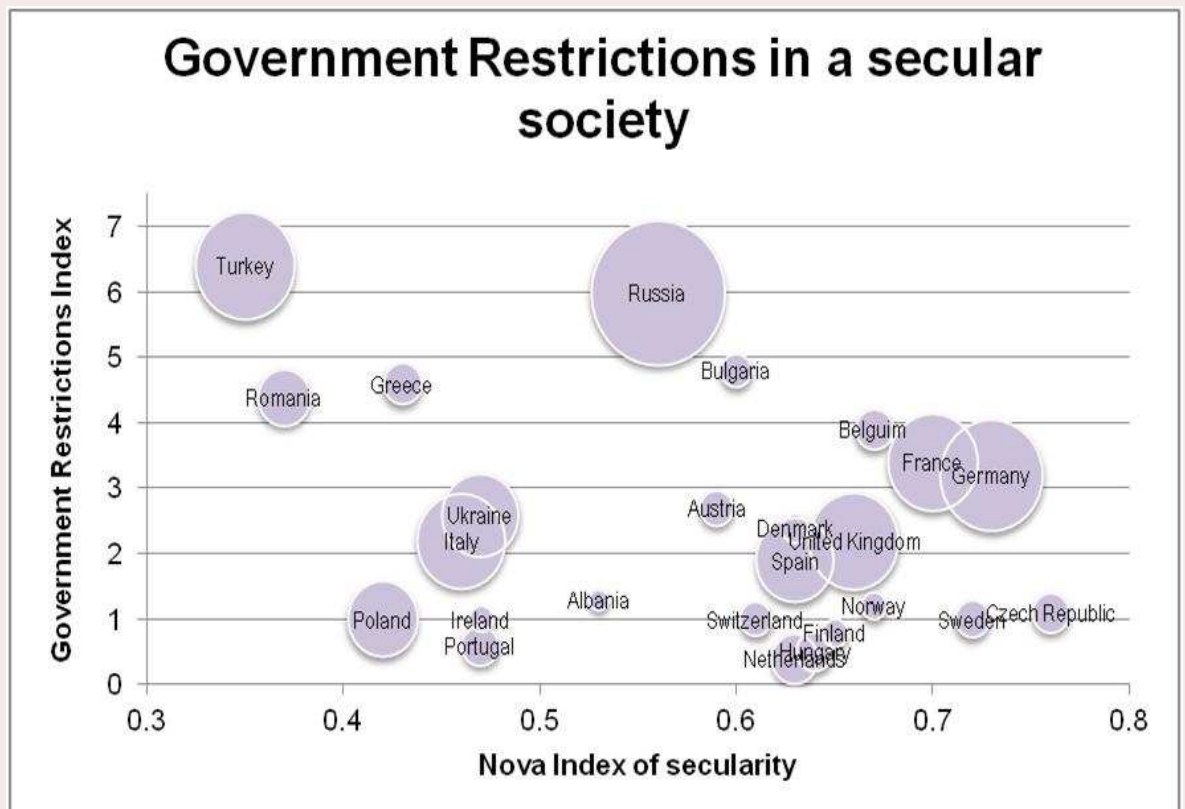


Figure 1

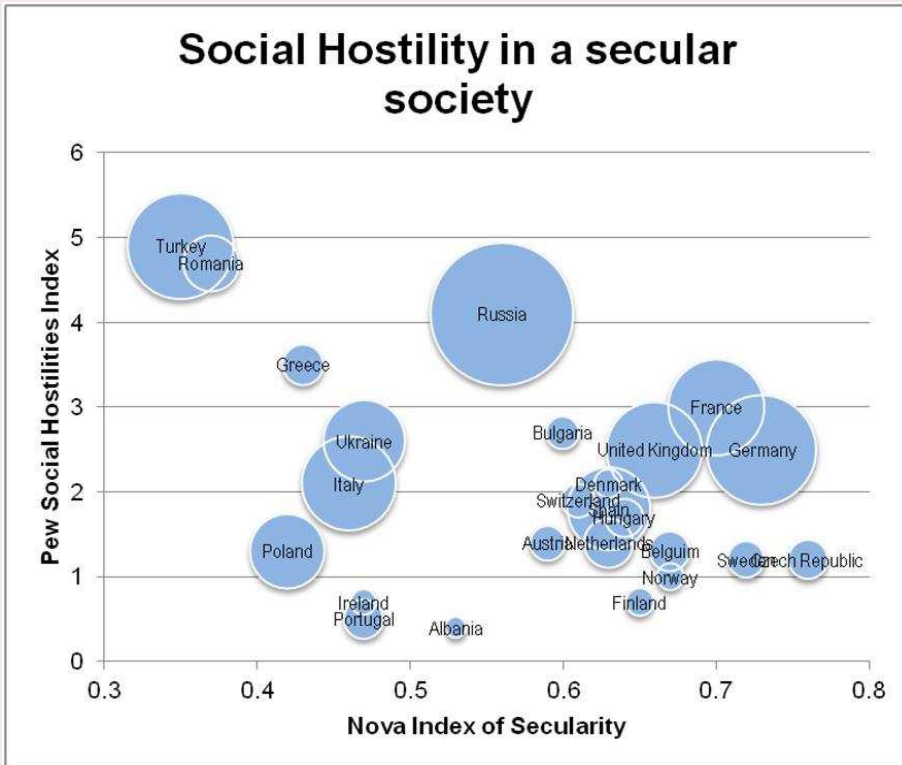


Figure 2

been plotted against the NIS values and the results can be seen in Figures 1 and 2., and the population of each country reflected in the size of the circle.

It is immediately apparent that all the countries with high levels of secularity have either low or moderate restrictions. Germany, France and Belgium have higher levels of government legislation governing freedom than the other high secular countries. The UK has moderate social hostility with some levels of government restriction, whereas Belgium has higher levels.

Moderately secular countries vary in the amount of religious freedom they experience. Surprisingly, Albania has the least restriction and hostility from among this group – whilst Russia has high levels of both hostility and restriction. Most of the counties in this group have higher levels of government restriction than social hostility, however Switzerland experiences moderate social hostility alongside low levels of restriction.

The least secular countries have varying amounts of religious restrictions. The traditionally Catholic countries of

Ireland, Portugal and Poland all enjoy low levels of government restriction and social hostility, with Italy being marginally moderate in this respect. The predominately Orthodox countries of the Ukraine, Greece and Romania and the secular Muslim state of Turkey are more restrictive.

When you plot the religious restrictions on a graph against NIS unsurprisingly there are clusters around moderate to high levels of secularity and low levels of religious restriction. Belgium, France and Germany stand out as being relatively more restrictive, but still much lower than Turkey, Romania, Russia or Greece.

In these graphs, the size of the circle gives an indication of the relative size of

population, according to the latest figures from the US Department of State website www.state.gov. If you rank the counties into high, moderate or low for each category it is possible to see what percentage of the total population in these countries fall into each category (Table 1).

With regard to secularity, the 25 countries in this study range between 0.37 (not very secular) to 0.76 (much more secular). Therefore no countries are completely secular or non-secular. However in order to simplify analysis, we took the range between the highest and lowest, and divided it into three. Therefore countries between 0.35 and 0.48 are considered to have low levels of secularity, those between 0.49 and 0.62 are considered to be moderately secular, and those between 0.63 and 0.76 have relatively higher levels of secularity. When compared to population, more people live in highly secular societies than the other two categories, however almost a third live in countries with relatively low levels of secularity (Table 1).

Almost a third of the population of Europe live in countries with high levels of government restrictions and social hostility. However, it must be remembered that the population of Russia and Turkey, together make up 28.3% of the 760 million covered by this analysis. So in fact only around 2.5% of people in this study living outside of Russia and Turkey experience high levels of government restriction (although these figures do not include Belarus) and 4.2% of people in countries high levels of social hostility.

Almost half of the people in these 25 European countries experience relatively low government restrictions, but there is

Table 1: Europe at a glance: secularity, restriction and social hostility

Levels of secularity	% of Europeans according to levels of secularity experienced	% of Europeans experiencing governmental restrictions according to levels of secularity experienced	% of Europeans experiencing social hostility according to levels of secularity experienced
High	44%	31%	33%
Moderate	22%	21%	44%
Low	34%	48%	23%

much greater social hostility, with only a quarter of the population living in a country with low levels.

There are some caveats to this study. While we look at the population as a whole, the restrictions or hostility may be directed towards a minority within a given country (e.g Muslims in France or Baptists in Russia), leaving the vast majority of the population are free to practice their faith.

Secondly, both the Pew Index and Nova Index of Secularity use data from before 2010. Since then, there have been increasing restrictions on religious minorities, with Hungary's July 2011 law formally recognising only 14 of over 300 religious groups active in the country, and bans on the wearing of the burkha, being brought into law by the Netherlands and Belgium, for example.

JA and JM

Country	Nova Index of Secularity	Government Restrictions Index	Social Hostilities Index
Czech Republic	0.76	1.1	1.2
Germany	0.73	3.2	2.5
Sweden	0.72	1.0	1.2
France	0.70	3.4	3.0
Belgium	0.67	3.9	1.3
Norway	0.67	1.2	1.0
United Kingdom	0.66	2.2	2.5
Finland	0.65	0.8	0.7
Hungary	0.64	0.5	1.7
Denmark	0.63	2.4	2.1
Spain	0.63	1.9	1.8
Netherlands	0.63	0.4	1.4
Switzerland	0.61	1.0	1.9
Bulgaria	0.60	4.8	2.7
Austria	0.59	2.7	1.4
Russia	0.56	6.0	4.1
Albania	0.53	1.3	0.4
Ukraine	0.47	2.6	2.6
Ireland	0.47	1.0	0.7
Portugal	0.47	0.6	0.5
Italy	0.46	2.2	2.1
Greece	0.43	4.6	3.5
Poland	0.42	1.0	1.3
Romania	0.37	4.4	4.7
Turkey	0.35	6.4	4.9

Levels on each scale:

Low		Moderate		High	
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EUROPEAN CONSULTATION 2012

Speakers

Robert Calvert Alessia Passarelli
 Bert de Ruiter Tony Peck
 Chris Wigram Tim Davy

4-5 January 2012

Redcliffe College, Gloucester, UK

Cost (incl. meals and accommodation)
 £75 until 31 October 2011
 £85 from 1 Nov to 23 Dec 2011

Full programme details and booking:
www.globalconnections.co.uk/europe12



Religious Freedom Indices	Eastern Europe	Western Europe
Government Regulation of Religion Index, 0-10, low is less regulation ¹	3.58	1.51
Government Favouritism of Religion Index, 0-10, low is less favouritism ¹	5.79	5.95
Social Regulation of Religion Index 0-10, low is less regulation ¹	6.53	4.15

Source: Association of Religious Data Archives, www.thearda.com



The resources relating to religious freedom have a global rather than solely European focus, however it is possible to extract information about Europe without too much effort.

Organisations such as Amnesty International www.amnesty.org, Release International www.releaseinternational.org, Open Doors www.opendoors.org and the Barnabas Fund www.barnabasfund.org monitor religious restrictions and campaign for freedom of religious expression around the world as well as supporting victims of oppression.

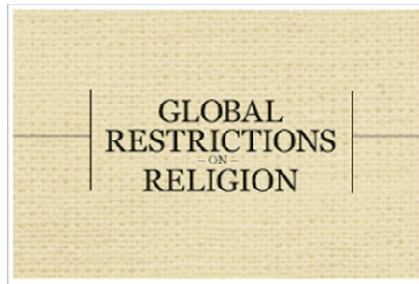
Other organisations collate information and comment. The US Department of State website www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/ carries comprehensive *Background Notes* on every country globally. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor produce an annual *International Religious Freedom Report*, available as a pdf from www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/



US based organisation, Freedom House, www.freedomhouse.org also monitors and analyses trends in freedom and democracy, producing several annual reports including *Freedom in the World*, *Freedom of the Press*, *Nations in Transit*, and *Countries at the Crossroads*. While these are not only to do with religious freedom, this issue is alluded to in 'political rights and civil liberties' section of the country reports, which include Europe.

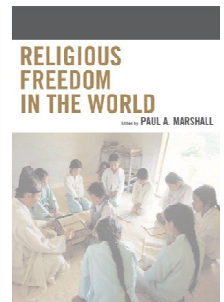
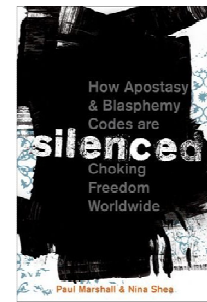


Regions of Europe can be compared with each other and against the rest of the world using the Association of Religion Data Archives www.thearda.com – the table below is an example of the kind of information that can be extracted from this data: www.thearda.com/internationalData/index.asp



The 2009 Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life report on *Global Restrictions on Religion* can be downloaded from pewforum.org/Government/Global-Restrictions-on-Religion.aspx. The research attempts to give a comprehensive overview of religious restrictions using data from a wide variety of sources, and some of the European results are used in the Vista article comparing religious freedom and secularity.

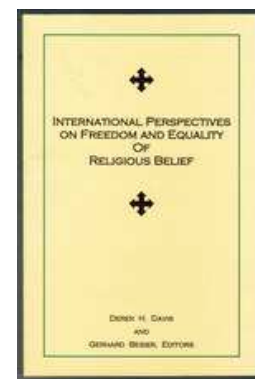
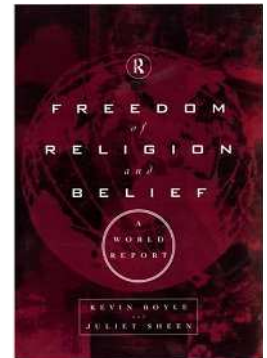
Religious Freedom is one of the policy centres of the Hudson Institute crf.hudson.org/. This website carries current news and comment on issues of freedom of religion around the world. Paul Marshall, Senior Fellow of the Institute, writes extensively on religious freedom. Publications include his 2007 report *Religious Freedom in the World* published by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, and his soon-to-be-released book *Silenced: How Apostasy and Blasphemy Codes are Choking*



Freedom Worldwide. It is co-authored by Nina Shea, also of the Hudson Institute and published by OUP USA.

Two other reports, though rather dated, are still worth a mention. Boyle and Sheen's *Freedom of Religion and Belief: A World Report* gives a comprehensive account of "how the right to hold beliefs is understood, protected or denied throughout the world". The treatment of each country featured follows a broadly similar pattern.

International Perspectives on Freedom and Equality of Religious Belief, edited by Davis and Besier, focuses on how European governments treat religion and analyzes the situation in



certain European "hotspots". The chapters are not written in a systematic manner, thus not making comparison very easy.

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