

Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, 15th session

13 August 2015

Item 3: Discussion on Reflection Papers and Research Proposals

UK statement

Thank you, Mr President,

The UK aligns itself with the statement just delivered on behalf of the EU.

We would like to thank the Advisory Committee for its work and for the discussions held on the proposed Reflection Papers and Research Proposals.

The UK would like to put on record our concern at the research proposal put forward by the distinguished Committee expert Mr Soofi, entitled: "Global grievance forum for perceived defamation of religion".

The UK believes that adequate mechanisms already exist to protect the right of individuals to freedom of religion or belief. Human Rights Council resolution 16/18, adopted by consensus, contains a list of adequate measures to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatisation of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief. There is a UN Special Rapporteur dedicated to Freedom of Religion or Belief who already has a mandate to receive individual complaints.

We continue to call on member states, civil society organisations and other bodies and individuals to cooperate with these existing mechanisms to promote and protect the right to freedom of religion or belief.

For these reasons the UK could not support the Advisory Committee taking forward discussions on the creation of further mechanisms on this topic.

Thank you, Mr President.