Religion and Belief in Europe

Ebulletin readers with an interest in discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief may be interested in two recent publications written by or with contributions from the Commission. The first is a report by Equinet Europe *Faith in Equality*, March 2018 and the second is a shorter article; *Religion and Belief in Europe*, SCOLAG issue 488 June 2018 p125.

*Faith in Equality, Equinet*

*Faith in Equality* is an ambitious report by Equinet, which captures over one hundred cases from courts at all levels across Europe. It provides analysis of the international legal framework and addresses key developments from international courts. However, its unique function is to gather cases from national supreme and lower courts down to settled or pending cases from member states which would otherwise be difficult to access. The report is collated in five thematic chapters; employment, education, provision of goods and services, manifestation of religion and belief in public and public administration and state functions.

The report acts as a reference guide but also makes a number of observations. The highest number of cases on religion and belief were in employment where emerging issues included headgear and religious symbols and religious harassment in the workplace.

Perhaps the most sensitive area identified was education, where any legal and policy decisions impact on and have to be viewed in light of children’s rights and their best interests and where Member States often have a wide margin of appreciation.

The final chapter draws together cases in the area of public administration and state functions which acutely demonstrate that States continue to grapple with the challenges of striking a balance between the
right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion of an individual or a group against public safety, public order, health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

*Religion and Belief in Europe, SCOLAG*

Readers looking for a shorter digest of recent case law may be interested in *Religion and Belief in Europe, SCOLAG* which is aimed at practitioners and academics with an interest in religion and belief and with some prior knowledge of EU and human rights law. It draws out some of the key CJEU and ECtHR cases in from this fast-moving area of law such as *Mockute v Lithuania* (on freedom to manifest religion in psychiatric care). It provides an update on some of the cases covered in the *Equinet* report such as *Vera Egenberger* (recruitment) and *Osmanoglu v Switzerland* (compulsory mixed swimming lessons), as well as identifying some communicated cases of note to watch out for in the coming months. The cases covered will update practitioners on a range of key cases from education through to work, diet, health care, court rooms, prison rules and ultimately autopsy and burial.