

CASE STUDY:**MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS INSIDE UNESCO ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
VERSUS RESPECT FOR RELIGIOUS BELIEFS**

Request by the Muslim countries to approve a UNESCO decision on the controversy which began after the Danish newspaper "Jyllands-Posten" published 12 editorial cartoons on 30 September 2005, most of which depicted Muhammad, principal figure of the religion of Islam.

Two parallel negotiating groups, both divided between countries defending freedom of expression (value: to protect civil rights; core interest: to avoid to pave the way for any kind of censorship) and countries privileging respect for religious beliefs (value: to protect the strong feeling of Muslim people about their Prophet; core interest: to adopt a binding international legal instrument to ensure respect of religions) , **trying to reach a common language on the issue**

Difficult issues in the negotiations:

- different values and cultural parameters
- variable borders between freedom of expression, censorship, insults and hate crimes in the various national legal systems
- strong and ceaseless pressure by the Muslim communities of several countries
- risk to boost terroristic actions