

**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