

**Swiss council of religions SCR**  
Schweizerischer Rat der Religionen  
Conseil suisse des religions  
Consiglio svizzero delle religioni

## **For Religious Coexistence in Peace and Freedom**

### **Statement of the Swiss Council of Religions on the referendum initiative to ban the construction of minarets**

#### **Synopsis:**

The Swiss Council of Religions decisively rejects the Minaret Initiative. The Council, which consists of leaders from the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities, is dedicated to protecting religious peace in Switzerland and to strengthening trust among the churches and religious communities. The Minaret Initiative would bring about just the opposite. It instrumentalizes religion for political aims and engenders mistrust among the populace.

The freedoms guaranteed by the Federal Constitution form a foundation for the peaceful and respectful coexistence of people of different religions and cultures in Switzerland. Everyone has the right in this country to live their faith visibly, freely, and in a community within the framework of the public order. This also includes the construction of places of worship that are typical for their respective religion.

The Swiss Council of Religions supports integration instead of exclusion, as every human being is a divine creation from the point of view of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Ways must be found to deal with differences and to live together in peace and mutual respect for each other and for each other's beliefs. This requires a dialogue at all levels. Any measures that contribute to creating trust should therefore be supported.

The Swiss Council of Religions views the freedom of religion as a basic universal right. The Swiss Council of Religions thus attempts, within the limits of its possibilities and contacts, to assert its influence in situations of religious discrimination, marginalization, and persecution in other countries.

#### **Introduction**

The initiative to ban the construction of minarets was submitted with just under 115,000 signatures on July 8, 2008, and will be voted on by the people in a referendum on November



## **The right to public presentation and religious practice**

People do not live in isolation, but religions – in communities that are built on trust and in which

These commonalities among Christianity, Judaism, and Islam constitute a common founda-

eral tradition, one that seeks out dialogue and works towards a common learning process.  
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