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The dangers of creationism in education, document 11375

The European Evangelical Alliance (EEA) finds it baffling that the Committee on Culture, Science and Education of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe should pass the report on “The dangers of creationism in education” and urges the plenary session to reject it in the October plenary session for the following reasons.

In a democracy, no one should be able to impose dogma, secular or religious. If a theory poses no threat to law and order, scientists and their students should be free to examine it, weighing up the evidence for and against and come to their own conclusions. It seems inconceivable that the Council of Europe might want to prevent the free examination and sharing of ideas¹. Education should never be about indoctrination, nor should it be about indoctrination of ideas deemed acceptable by politicians.

The report portrays an extreme battle between “creationists” and evolutionists, in which democracy, human rights, scientific and medical research and the future of society are at stake². The report rightly states that it is a “scandal to present Darwin as the father of terrorism”.³ However, it is equally scandalous to accuse “creationists” of being such a danger to society. The report offers no evidence to prove their point. There is no evidence.

The report attempts to suggest that “creationist” ideas are having a huge impact but then proves the opposite in its survey around Europe.

The report dismisses a particular form of “creationist” belief but, in doing so, suggests that a great variety of belief positions need to be marginalised. Across Europe, scientists and others, whether followers of a formal religion or not, accept evolution fully, partially or not at all, with or without a “god” behind it. The report implies a huge gulf between only two sides that, for the majority of the population, does not exist.

The EEA believes that the report is unnecessary because the variety of “creationist” ideas pose no threat. If passed however, politicians would be claiming the right to promote conspiracy theories about some of those who believe in a god, stir up division without need and censor what scientists, teachers and students may choose to study and evaluate.

For these reasons, we urge members to reject the report.

¹ See paragraph 18.4 of the Draft Resolution and paragraphs 51 and 98 of the Explanatory Memorandum

² See paragraphs 1, 11, 12 and 17 of Draft Resolution and paragraphs 81, 82, 91, 96 and 104 of the Explanatory Memorandum.

³ Paragraph 87 of the Explanatory Memorandum.