



*For Immediate Release*

## **New #FoRBDefender Movement Calls on People of all Faiths and None to Declare: “Believe it or not, it’s my Right!”**

BRUSSELS, 26 June 2018 – The European Platform against Intolerance and Discrimination (EPRID) today launches its new #FoRBDefender movement on freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, calling on people everywhere to unite under the slogan, “Believe it or not, it’s my Right!”

The #FoRBDefender movement is an online initiative that aims to raise awareness of the right to freedom of religion or belief (“FoRB”). It stands in solidarity with people across the globe facing discrimination, oppression and violence because of their religion or belief (including non-belief) and calls on high-level decision-makers at national and international level to more robustly defend and protect this fundamental human right.

Amy Shepherd, CSW’s EU Advocacy Manager and member of EPRID’s 2018 Board of Coordinators, said in a statement: “Across the world, people’s freedom to choose, manifest, change and abandon their religion or belief is under threat. There is an urgent need to stand up for FoRB and press decision-makers for more concrete and visible protective action. EPRID hopes that by reaching out to politicians, diplomats, media, business, civil society activists and others, the #FoRBDefender movement will show that FoRB protects everyone, and that everyone has a role to play in protecting FoRB.”

Jointly developed by EPRID, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), European Humanist Federation (EHF), International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) and the Nordic Ecumenical Network on Freedom of Religion or Belief (NORFORB), the #FoRBDefender movement is centred on social media action. Supporters visiting [www.forb-defenders.org](http://www.forb-defenders.org) are encouraged to commit to being “FoRB Defenders” and Tweet, Facebook or Instagram photos of themselves holding up the “Believe it or not” logo.

In 2013, the EU adopted Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief which set out how it intends to advance this fundamental right in external action. The #FoRBDefender movement has been inspired by EU-level discussions on how the Guidelines could be better implemented.

According to research by the Pew Research Centre, around 80% of the world’s population suffer discrimination, oppression or violence because of their religion or belief. No religion or belief group, including theists, non-theists and atheists, are exempt from FoRB violations.

**For further information please contact Amy Shepherd at CSW on +32 473 53 29 50 or [amyshepherd@csw.org.uk](mailto:amyshepherd@csw.org.uk) or visit [www.forb-defenders.org](http://www.forb-defenders.org)**

**EPRID is a network of civil society organisations, religious bodies and individuals operating at EU level. We are convinced we need each other to get religious intolerance and discrimination higher on the European agenda.**