

ECtHR on SAS v. France. A Comment.

Multiculturalism is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Minority but deeply rooted practices with a potential to bring social unrest to host countries - as may be, in our Western societies, the use of the full Islamic veil- raise questions to which law may answer with tolerance or reject with incomprehension and hostility. It is with the first intention in mind that Prof. Zamora and Prof. Camarero, both from the University Jaume I (Castellón) have addressed the ECtHR decision *SAS v. France*, application number 43835/2011, in a paper written in Spanish, with an English abstract that reads as follows:

“The decision of the European Court of Human Rights related to the case S.A.S. is a historic milestone as far as the treatment of the religious freedom all along its jurisprudence is concerned. Throughout a critical analysis their foundations are submitted to review. Among them we underline the requirements of the so called *vivre ensemble* and the wide way it is granted to the State a ‘margin of appreciation’. Both aspects are subject to scrutiny to reach the conclusion that there exists little ultimate basis to support the severe restriction imposed upon freedom of religion and the protection of minorities under the French law of 2010. Upon those basis, the study agrees upon that the above mentioned decision really masks the purpose of an institutional political balance looked for by the High Court in its ruling. A balance that in the present case turns out to be highly burdensome concerning the protection of Human Rights”.

The full text is to be found in the *Revista General de Derecho Canónico y Derecho Eclesiástico del Estado* 37 (2015).