



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

France

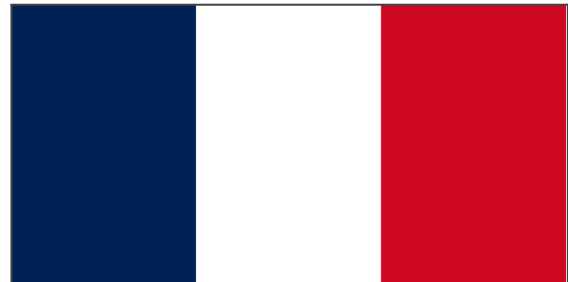
By Theodor Babusiaux

Religious laws

France has *laïcité*. The principle of *laïcité* (also known as the law of 1905), enshrined in the Constitution, safeguards freedom of conscience, guarantees believers and non-believers the same right to freedom of expression of their beliefs or convictions, and ensures, through the separation of church and state and the neutrality of public authorities with regard to all religions, equality for all before the law regardless of religion or conviction. *Laïcité* is applied everywhere except for Alsace, Moselle and some outer-seas territories of France. Over time, *laïcité* has been up for very intense debate within French society, and many laws claiming to be derived from it have been passed, such as a law in 2004 banning ostentatious religious symbols in Schools. Furthermore, since 1978, creating or operating statistical questionnaires on ethnic or religious affiliations has been prohibited. Nevertheless, estimations by the The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies indicate that the majority of the French population is irreligious (51%), followed by Catholicism (29%), Islam (10%), other christian affiliations (9%), and then very small populations (around/less than 1%) of Buddhists, Jews and Other Religious Affiliations.

Read more

<https://www.info.gouv.fr/organisation/laicitegouvfr/qu-est-ce-qu-e-la-laicite>
<https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/20210-alsace-moselle-ou-tre-mer-les-exceptions-au-droit-des-cultes-loi-1905>
https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/article_lc/LEGIARTI000006524456/2025-10-09
https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/article_lc/LEGIARTI000037822942
<https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/6793308?sommaire=6793391>



Internet freedoms

France has always been quite strict with regards to internet freedoms. In 2024, Pavel Durov, the creator of Telegram, was arrested by French police because of Telegram infringing on French internet moderation regulations. The French government has also been one of the key supporters of the chat control measure, a measure which is currently being debated in the European Union and would mandate scanning of all private digital communications, including encrypted messages and photos, potentially threatening fundamental privacy rights and digital security for all EU citizens.

France also has rather strictly enforced anti-hate speech laws on the internet. PHAROS is a French government platform for reporting illegal online content and behavior.

Read more

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arrest_and_indictment_of_Pavel_Durov
<https://fightchatcontrol.eu/>
<https://internet-signalement.gouv.fr/>

