



AFRICA/EGYPT - Coptic and Islamic scholars agree on the new Egyptian Constitution

Cairo (Agenzia Fides) - Towards an agreement to resolve disputes related to the new Egyptian Constitution. This is what is reported according to the newspaper Al-Masry Al-Youm, Egyptian political parties, Al-Azhar and the Coptic Church representatives met at Shura Council of Parliament to manage to resolve disputes over eight articles in the new constitution.

In particular, the participants agreed to keep Article 2 as it was in the 1971 Constitution, which states: "Islam is the religion of the State, Arabic is its official language and the principles of Islamic Sharia are a main source legislation." The constitutional amendment of 1980 had changed the last part of the article, stating that "the principles of the Islamic Sharia are THE main source of legislation."

They also agreed that Egyptians Christians and Jews may resort to their religious law in matters of personal status and religious affairs (eg marriage).

They rejected a proposal that makes Al-Azhar the final reference for the interpretation of the principles of Sharia and Islamic jurisprudence, replacing it with the Council of Senior Scholars.

They agreed to cancel the articles on alms, restricting freedom of the press, imprisonment of journalists, and punishing those who offend God, to be replaced by a law criminalizing contempt of religions. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 27/09/2012)