

MEDIA BLOW IT BIG TIME: POPE DID NOT CHANGE STAND ON TURKEY AND EU

Catholic League president Bill Donohue commented as follows:

“It is one of most embarrassing journalistic blunders to have occurred in some time. All the news reports which said that Pope Benedict XVI now supports the admission of Turkey into the European Union were wrong. He never said any such thing. Here is what happened.

“Yesterday, the headline of a front-page article in the *New York Times* read, ‘In Reversal, Pope Backs Turkey’s Bid to Join European Union.’ It quoted Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan’s comment that the pope told him that ‘we wish for Turkey’s entry into the E.U.’ The problem is that the pope’s version of what he allegedly said was nowhere reported, and that’s because he never commented on the brief conversation that was held at the airport. But now he has spoken. Here is a quote made today by the pope and Patriarch Bartholomew in their ‘Common Declaration’:

We have viewed positively the process that has led to the formation of the European Union. Those engaged in this great project should not fail to take into consideration all aspects affecting the inalienable rights of the human person, especially religious freedom....In every step towards unification, minorities must be respected, with their cultural traditions and the distinguishing features of their religion.

“In other words, Pope Benedict XVI has not flip-flopped: admission of Turkey into the European Union is conditioned on its willingness to respect the religious rights of minorities (something it has failed to do).

"The most accurate journalistic source was Bloomberg News. The most accurately worded editorial appears in today's *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The most flagrantly inaccurate editorial is in today's *Newsday*: 'Tuesday, he [the pope] admitted he was wrong and reversed his stance, offering full support to Turkey in its long-stalled efforts to join the EU.'

"There is more than carelessness involved here. Some hate the Catholic Church so much they can't wait to try to prove the pope wrong. Looks like the Holy Father got the last laugh."