

## EPP WORKING GROUP 'INTERCULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE'

### "How Religions can coexist in Peace"

Wednesday, 8 February 2023

16.00 - 18.00 hrs.

Room JAN 6Q1

### Vademecum of speakers' biographies



#### **Jan Olbrycht MEP**

**Vice-Chair of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and Co-Chairman of the Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue of the EPP Group**

PhD in Sociology. Lecturer, expert, politician. Former mayor and president of one of the Polish regions, active in many European local and regional government organisations. Regional policy and urban development expert. Speaker at international conferences on interreligious related issues. Member of the European Parliament since 2004. Vice-president of the European Peoples Party Group at the European Parliament and Chief Whip in charge of the Parliamentary work of the EPP Group. Currently Member of the Parliamentary Committees on Budgetary Control and substitute member of the Committee of Budgets and of the Regional Development Committee. Standing rapporteur on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027. Member of the Delegation for relations with Canada. Similarly, to last terms, co-chair of the European People's Party in the EP working group on intercultural and religious dialogue and president of the European Parliament's URBAN Intergroup.



#### **György Hölvényi MEP**

**Co-Chairman of the Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue of the EPP Group**

György Hölvényi is a Member of the European Parliament, Co-Chair of the Working Group for Interreligious Dialogue of the European People's Party Group at the European Parliament. Since 2014, he has been serving as Member of the Committees on Development and further on Human Rights, among others. Currently he acts as Coordinator for the EPP Group for international development, supervising his political group's line for this policy area. Since 2019, Mr Hölvényi has been Goodwill Ambassador of the Hungary Helps Programme. Between 2012 and 2014, Mr Hölvényi has been active as the Secretary of State for the Relations with Churches, Civil Society and National Minorities of the Ministry of Human Capacities of Hungary. From the late 1990s, Mr. Hölvényi acted as deputy state secretary at the Hungarian Ministry for Youth and Sports. Currently, he also serves as Vice-President for International Affairs of the Christian Democrat People's Party of Hungary.



**François-Xavier Bellamy MEP**  
**Head of the French Delegation of the EPP Group**

François-Xavier Bellamy was born in 1985. He graduated from the Sorbonne University in Paris (2008) and the École Normale Supérieure (2009) in Philosophy. He has been the President of the philosophical association Philia since 2013. François-Xavier Bellamy has been a philosophy teacher since 2009, but he took a break after his election as MEP in May 2019. After working for the Ministry of Culture and the cabinet of the Minister of Justice, he took up local functions such as Deputy Mayor of Versailles in 2009, responsible for employment, education and youth. He became a local Councillor in 2019. He was the leader of Les Républicains' list for the 2019 European elections.



**Marek Halter**  
**Author of the book "La Juive de Shanghai"**

Marek Halter was born on 27 January 1932 in Warsaw, is a French writer. Jewish of Polish origin, naturalized French in 1980, he deals in his books with the history of the Jewish people. He is the son of a printer and a Yiddish poetess. At the age of five, he escaped with his parents from the Warsaw ghetto. When they arrived in Ukraine, a Red Army patrol directed them to Moscow. Then, at the beginning of the German-Soviet war, Marek and his family are sent to Kokand, in Uzbekistan. By turns a thief and a pioneer, he returns to Poland in 1946. In 1950, Marek Halter and his parents move to Paris. He went to Israel for the first time in 1951 and worked in a kibbutz. But he wanted to be a painter and, upon his return to Paris, he enrolled at the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts. In 1967, he founded and chaired the International Committee for Negotiated Peace in the Middle East. He initiated the first meetings between Israelis and Palestinians. In 1973, he oversaw a seminar on art and politics at Harvard University in the United States. It was in Paris, however, that he published his first book, "Le Fou et les rois", which was devoted to peace in the Middle East. This book was awarded the Prix Aujourd'hui in 1976. Marek Halter has published more than ten books, including "La Mémoire d'Abraham" in 1983, Prix du Livre Inter.



**Imam Hassen Chalghoumi**  
**Author of the book "Libérons l'Islam de l'Islamisme"**

Hassen Chalghoumi was born on 5 September 1972 in Tunis, is a Franco-Tunisian religious and community leader. He is president of the cultural association of Muslims of Drancy, which manages the Al-Nour mosque of which he is one of the imams. Moreover, he is a French preacher with a degree in theology from Lahore, theologian, and lecturer, active in community outreach. Self-proclaimed imam of Drancy, he presents himself as a supporter of inter-religious dialogue, particularly between Islam and Judaism. After a beginning of notoriety in 2006, he is, in the following years, more and more present in the French media as a representative of a "moderate Islam". The French political class makes him one of its interlocutors in Muslim circles. In favour of the burqa ban, he denounces the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Arab world. Between 1992 and 1996, he studied in Koranic schools in Syria and Pakistan. In 2000, he became a naturalized French citizen. In 2009-2010, he was the victim of threats and assaults. Between January and March 2010, the mosque of Drancy, managed by the association al-Nour that he directs, is the scene of sharp tensions between supporters of Chalghoumi, the faithful, and supporters of the collective Sheikh Yacine. His positions have earned him police protection from the French state. In September 2010, he published For an Islam of France.