

INTERCULTURAL & RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

ACTIVITY REPORT 2019

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Intercultural and Religious Dialogue Unit

I. INTRODUCTION

The EPP Group Intercultural and Religious Dialogue activities aim to promote mutual understanding and an active sense of European citizenship for a peaceful living together. Decision makers are called to provide answers to the complex crisis with political, economic, religious and cultural implications in Europe.

'Intercultural and Religious Dialogue' does not mean theological discussions in the European Parliament. It is about listening to people from the sphere of religion and exchanging views with representatives of academia, governments, European Institutions on issues of common interest or concern and in connection to religion and intercultural relations.

The EPP Group organises a wide range of events on a regular basis:

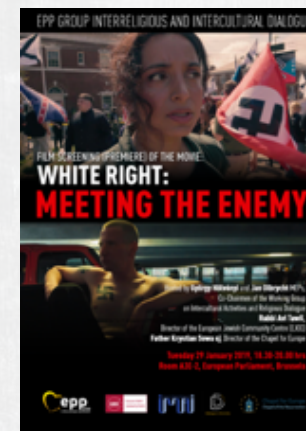
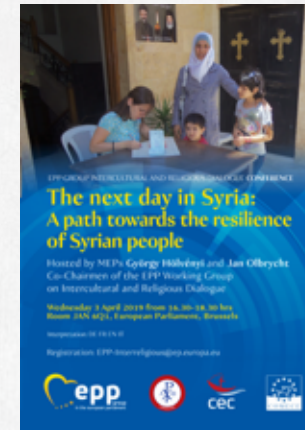
- EPP Group Annual Dialogue with Religions and Cultures;
- Monthly Working Group meetings;
- Visits of religious leaders from the Middle East, Africa and Asia;
- Conferences on current affairs related to religion (Religious radicalisation, Persecution of religious minorities, etc...);
- Seminars on relevant topics with the participation of experts from EU and non-EU countries.

II. 2019 EVENTS OVERVIEW

	DATE	TIME AND PLACE	ACTIVITY
1	10 JANUARY	8.00 - 9.30 ASP MEP SALON	Working Breakfast "Global Syriac Centre" (MEP Mandl)
2	23 JANUARY	13.00 - 14.00 ASP MEP RESTAURANT	Working lunch with Andrew Bennett, Religious Freedom Institute, Washington
3	29 JANUARY	18.30 - 20.00 ASP 3E2	Film screening (premiere) of the movie "White Right: Meeting the Enemy" with the cooperation of the Chapel for Europe and the European Jewish Community Centre (EJCC)
4	12 FEBRUARY	8.30 - 9.30 LOW MEP SALON	Working Breakfast "The situation of Christian communities worldwide: The Christian Persecution World Watch List 2018" (Open Doors)
5	12 MARCH	8.30 - 9.30 LOW MEP SALON	Working Breakfast with Gabriela FREY, Representative of the European Buddhist Union (EBU) to the EU and Council of Europe
6	26 MARCH	8.30 - 9.30 LOW MEP SALON	Working Breakfast with Mgr. Paolo RUDELLI, Special Envoy and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the Council of Europe as a follow up to the December 2018 Rome visit
7	28-31 MARCH	MOSTAR, MEĐUGORJE	Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina "On the way of reconciliation and life in a multi-ethnic society"
8	03 APRIL	16.30 - 18.30 JAN 6Q1	Conference "The next day in Syria" In collaboration with COMECE, CEC and CROCEU
9	4 APRIL	08.30-09.30 MEP SALON	Meeting with Media
10	16 APRIL	8.30 - 9.30 LOW MEP SALON	Working Breakfast with Ambassador Irakli Giviashvili, Per- manent Representative of Georgia to the Council of Europe as a follow up of the June 2018 visit in Tbilisi

	DATE	TIME AND PLACE	ACTIVITY
11	19 SEPTEMBER	08.00 - 09.00 LOW MEP SALON	Working Group Meeting on 'Legislative work opportunities: *dreams & realities*
12	11 - 12 OCTOBER	KRAKOW, POLAND	XIX. International Krakow Conference "Challenges for a new Europe"
13	15 OCTOBER	12.30 - 14.00 ASP MEP SALON	Meeting with His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria & Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church
14	23 OCTOBER	08.30 - 09.30 LOW MEP SALON	Working Group Meeting on "Philosophy, Inter-cultural and Interreligious Dialogue"
15	19 NOVEMBER	08.30-11.00 ASP 5H1	Seminar on "The role of churches and religious communities in the process of peace building and conflict prevention " with representatives of Georgian Orthodox Church and other religious communities from Georgia
16	26 NOVEMBER	14.00-16.00 N.4.3	"Remembering 30 years of Religious Freedom in Central and Eastern Europe" (In cooperation with MEPs Sojdrová & Štefánek)
17	28 NOVEMBER	8.00 - 9.00 LOW MEP SALON	Working Group Meeting with Rev. Barrios Prieto appointed new SG of COMECE
18	12 DECEMBER	LEBANESE MARONITE MONASTERY SAINT CHARBEL (NEAR WATERLOO), BELGIUM	XXII. Annual Interreligious Dialogue on "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together" (February 2019 Abu Dhabi Declaration)
19	19 DECEMBER	08.00 - 09.00 LOW MEP SALON	Working Group Meeting: presentation of the Annual 'Aid to the Church in Need' (ACN) Report

A SELECTION OF ILLUSTRATIONS DETAILING THE EPP GROUP WORKING GROUP (WG) ON INTERCULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN 2019



1. EPP Group Working Group (WG) on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue: meetings

In 2019, the EPP Group Working Group (WG) on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue developed and defended concrete political actions, which served to strengthen links with political and religious representatives, with civil society and other relevant personalities from the cultural, economic and academic fields.

> MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SALZBURG SYRIAC INSTITUTE

The meeting focused on the significance of the Syriac heritage. The conduct of the event was to raise awareness of the situation as well as a follow up to what has been done. It is statistical that 1 in 10 Christians is being persecuted today, and that in 2/3 of the countries of the world, Christians are experiencing harassment. The main point is to address these topics, to protect individuals, help them on a legal ground and not only prevent some parts of a problem, but solve the whole problematic issue.

The need to take more action to change the situation and to give more concrete help is essential, as the Middle East is the cradle of Christianity and continuity needs to be ensured.



Jan Olbrycht and György Hölvényi MEPs, Co-Chairmen of the EPP Group Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue; Prof. Erhard Busek, former Vice-Chancellor of Austria; Lukas Mandl MEP; Prof. Aho Shemunkasho; Prof. Peter Bruck; Andreas Thonhauser

> MEETING WITH REVEREND ANDREW BENNETT, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM INSTITUTE IN WASHINGTON

Reverend Bennet presented the project about the International Religious Freedom Policy (IRFP) Landscape Report.

Rev. Bennett is a Senior Fellow at the Religious Freedom Institute (RFI) in Washington, DC., where he is leading a project about the International Religious Freedom Policy (IRFP) Landscape Report.

The Institute is surveying foreign ministries and multilateral organizations to determine the extent of their religious freedom advocacy, policy, and programming activities. This is the first time that such a comprehensive survey of IRFP activities has ever been undertaken. The goal is to provide a clear picture of what is currently being done through foreign policy activity to advance religious freedom internationally.

With the support of the US State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom and Global Affairs Canada, who currently co-chair the International Contact Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief (ICG), the RFI sent out a survey to the desks responsible for religious freedom policy and programming in ICG member foreign ministries. This survey, which is available online, is a principal means of gathering the essential data required for completing the report.



Reverend Andrew Bennett with the EPP Group Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue Co-Chairs and members of the EPP Group secretariat

> FILM SCREENING (PREMIERE) OF THE MOVIE "WHITE RIGHT: MEETING THE ENEMY" WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE CHAPEL FOR EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTRE (EJCC)

Short description of the movie:

“When Deeyah Khan was six, her father took her to her first anti-racism rally. A Pakistani immigrant to Norway, he promised her that things would get better and that the skinhead gangs that terrorised their family and families like them would soon find themselves relics of past prejudices that bigotry belonged in history, that tomorrow would be a more tolerant time.

Following the lauded jihad – in which she spoke to radicalised British Muslims who had fought in the name of jihad on the battlefields of Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia and Chechnya and now found themselves full of regret – Deeyah joins the frontline of the race wars in America. She sits face-to-face with fascists, racists and the proponents of the “alt-right” ideologies. Deeyah’s need to find the deeper human causes of horrific social forces opens a different possibility for connection and solutions. Rather than dismiss these men as monsters, she is determined to discover the men behind the masks”.

> MEETING WITH THE NGO "OPEN DOORS" ON "THE SITUATION OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES WORLDWIDE: THE CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION WORLD WATCH LIST 2019"

The director of Open Doors Mr Michael Varton presented the 2019 annual report.

The World Watch List combines Open Doors’ field experience and on-the-ground intelligence with the year-round analysis of its research unit, providing insights into the trends, scale and dynamics of the persecution of Christians around the world. The list presents the 50 countries where it is most dangerous to live as a Christian. However, this year an unprecedented trend has begun to reveal itself. Of the 50 countries, as many as 40 are now designated as places where Christians experience ‘very high’ or ‘extreme’ levels of persecution. In 2014, only 22 countries were designated in this way – a number that has almost doubled in just five years. In real terms this means that approximately 245 million Christians are at risk of ‘high’, ‘very high’, or ‘extreme’ levels of persecution in 2019. An increase from 215 million in 2018.

From the rise of Daesh in the Middle East to Boko Haram in Nigeria, to the overspill of criminal activity into community life in Latin America and the growing Hindu nationalist rhetoric of the Indian government affecting Muslims, Christians and Sikhs alike. This has truly become the issue of our time. FoRB intersects intimately with other key human rights. When Christians have their right to FoRB violated, their freedom of expression, their right to association and nationality as well as their right to a fair trial are regularly violated too.

> CONFERENCE "THE NEXT DAY IN SYRIA" IN COLLABORATION WITH COMECE, CEC AND CROCEU

EPP GROUP INTERCULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

CONFERENCE

**THE NEXT DAY IN SYRIA:
"A PATH TOWARDS THE RESILIENCE OF SYRIAN PEOPLE"**

WEDNESDAY, 3 APRIL 2019

16:30 – 18:30 HRS.

ROOM JAN 6Q1, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, BRUSSELS

PROGRAMME

16:30-16:40 WELCOMING ADDRESS

- > **Mairead McGuinness**, First Vice-President of the European Parliament
- > **György Hölvényi MEP**, Co-Chairman of the Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue
- > **Metropolitan Athanasios of Achaia**, Director of the Representative Office of the Orthodox Church of Greece to the European Union on behalf of CROCEU, COMECE and CEC

16:40-17:30 SESSION I "HUMANITARIAN AID FOR ALL"

Chair: **Marijana Petir MEP**

- > **Archimandrite Fr. Moses Alkhasi**, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch
- > **Mgr John Darwish**, Melkite Greek Catholic Archbishop of Zahle and Forzol in Lebanon
- > **Jean-Louis De Brouwer**, Director for Europe, Eastern Neighbourhood and Middle East in the European Commission Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection

DEBATE AND PANEL DISCUSSION

17:30-18:20 SESSION II "RECONSTRUCTION AND RESILIENCE FOR SYRIA"

Chair: **Alojz Peterle MEP**

- > **Fr. Andrzej Halemba**, Head of Projects for the Middle East, Pontifical Foundation "Aid to the Church in Need"

- > **Elsy Wakil**, World Student Christian Federation Executive for Middle East & Program Director for Peace Building and Overcoming Violence
- > **Mihaela Matei**, Political Officer, Syria desk, MENA 1 Division, European External Action Service (EEAS)

DEBATE AND PANEL DISCUSSION

18:20-18:30 CONCLUSION REMARKS

Jan Olbrycht MEP, Co-Chairman of the Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue

Interpretation: EN, FR, IT, DE

Christian Churches are concerned about the fate of Syrian people, and their future, and share the common understanding that the right to return and to come back to daily life should be made effective without further delay.

Overall attention should be paid not only to short term-goals, but, to expand into long term-goals, including the reconstruction of the country (not only infrastructures, health care or education services but also economic life...) and ensuring a safe, "attractive" and viable environment for the returnees. In order to achieve this, stakeholders need to come up with practical solutions.



Mairead McGuinness MEP, First Vice-President of the European Parliament and Marijana Petir MEP with conference speakers and invited guests

The event was held, for the first time, in cooperation with the three most relevant and Brussels based organisations of the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Churches: the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU (COMECE), the Committee of the Representatives of Orthodox Churches to the European Union (CROCEU) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC).



Left to right: György Hólvényi and Jan Olbrycht MEPs and Co-Chairmen of the EPP Group Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue; Mairead McGuinness MEP, First Vice-President of the European Parliament and Metropolitan Athanasios of Achaia

The aim of this seminar was to exchange views about the current situation of people in Syria and to reflect on possible solutions (incl. legal ones) to promote the future normalization of their lives. As, for a variety of reasons, humanitarian aid provided to Syria is not always reaching all its population, one of the major points of interest would be to find the best way to fairly distribute resources for the resilience of Syrian people.



Romain Strasser, Head of the Intercultural and Religious Dialogue Unit; Jan Olbrycht MEP, Co-Chairman of the EPP Group Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue; Archimandrite Fr. Moses Alkhabisi; Marijana Petir MEP and Mrg John Darwish

> WORKING GROUP MEETING ON 'LEGISLATIVE WORK OPPORTUNITIES: *DREAMS & REALITIES*' Exchange of views with José-Luis Bazán, legal advisor of COMECE.



José-Luis BAZÁN

Holds a Ph. D. (International Public law) from the University of Navarre (Spain). He is a researcher and lecturer in International and European human rights' protection & Social Ethics in different institutions. Dr Bazán currently works as an Independent Consultant in EU policies and as a Legal Adviser at the Secretariat of COMECE (Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union) since 2010

> WORKING GROUP MEETING ON "PHILOSOPHY, INTERCULTURAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE": Presentation by and exchange of views with MEP and philosopher François Xavier Bellamy



BELLAMY François-Xavier

Has been the President of the philosophical association Philia since 2013. François-Xavier Bellamy has been a philosophy teacher since 2009. 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 Republicans' list for the 2019 European elections.

> "MEETING WITH CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST, ASIA AND AFRICA"

In 2017, the Government of Hungary launched the special programme "Scholarship for Christian Young People" to provide university scholarships for young people from Christian families from all over the world, in order to facilitate their access to high-quality university education. The "Scholarship for Christian Young People" programme provides university studies and full board in Hungary for Christian university students to enable them to use their European-level knowledge to help rebuild their countries, which have been ravaged by civil war or genocide, among others in Syria and Iraq. The scholarship's most important goal is to enable Christians who are persecuted or suffer discrimination to remain in the land of their birth.



György Hölvényi MEP, Co-Chairman of the Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue



Marcela Szymanski, Head of the EU office and Advocacy, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)



Students from Iraq, Nigeria and Kenya

> MEETING WITH MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES

The Co-chairs György Hölvényi and Jan Olbrycht took stock of the Working Group's main activities during the 2014-2019 legislative term.

> SEMINAR "REMEMBERING 30 YEARS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE" (IN COOPERATION WITH MEPS SOJDROVÁ & ŠTEFANEC)

The event discussed the role of church and religious freedom in Central Europe 30 years ago in comparison with nowadays situation and challenges.



Mairead McGuinness, Vice-President of the European Parliament; Fr. Manuel Enrique Barrios Prieto, Secretary General of COMECE



Michaela Šojdrová MEP



Left to right: Jan Olbrycht MEP, Co-Chairman of the EPP Group Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue; Ivan Štefanec MEP; Mairead McGuinness, Vice-President of the European Parliament; Fr. Manuel Enrique Barrios Prieto, Secretary General of COMECE



**26²⁰¹⁹
NOV 9** **REMEMBERING
30 YEARS OF FREEDOM
IN CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE**

With the participation of **Malread McGuinness** MEP
and **Rainer Wieland** MEP, Vice-Presidents of the EP
Hosted by **Michaela Šojdrová** MEP and **Ivan Štefanec** MEP

13.00 hrs (after the votes) **Celebration of 30 Years of Freedom**
Life performance of the European Anthem by **SGV Choir** (Czech Republic)
> Flower Carpet Bar (LDW building), European Parliament, Strasbourg

14.00–16.00 hrs EPP WG on **Intercultural & Religious Dialogue Seminar:
Role of Churches in Central Europe: 30 years ago and now**
> Room: LDW N3.4, European Parliament, Strasbourg

17.00 hrs **Thanksgiving Holy Mass**
Thanksgiving for 30 years of freedom in Central and Eastern Europe,
the celebration of 30th anniversary of canonisation of Saint Agnes
of Bohemia
> Notre-Dame Cathedral in Strasbourg
RSVP: michaela.rojdrova-office@europarl.europa.eu



**> WORKING GROUP MEETING WITH REV. BARRIOS PRIETO APPOINTED NEW SECRETARY
GENERAL OF COMECE (COMMISSION OF THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCES OF THE EU)**



He was ordained priest in the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano in 1988. He studied philosophy and theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University, obtaining the title of Doctor of Theology in 1998, and graduated in psychology at a Spanish state university. Since 2011 he has been Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue of the Spanish Episcopal Conference and for twenty years he has been priest at the parish of Santa Catalina de Alejandría in Madrid.

**> WORKING GROUP MEETING: PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL 'AID TO THE CHURCH IN
NEED' (ACN) REPORT**

Aid to the Church in Need is a Pontifical Foundation of the Catholic Church, supporting the Catholic faithful and other Christians where they are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need.

The report examines key developments in 12 countries of core concern for Christians suffering human rights abuses. Covering a 25-month period from July 2017 to July 2019 (inclusive), the report draws on fact-finding trips carried out by Aid to the Church in Need staff to countries noted for persecution against Christians, for example northern Nigeria, Pakistan, Syria and other parts of the world which cannot be revealed because of security concerns.

This report shows that, in Egypt, Pakistan and elsewhere, Christian women suffer the most, with reports of abductions, forced conversions and sex attacks.

Persecuted and Forgotten?

A report on Christians oppressed for their faith 2017-19



A snapshot of a deepening crisis

 Aid to the Church in Need
ACN UNITED STATES

George J. Marlin, Chairman
Sarkis Boghjalian, Executive Director

2. Meetings with High-level Religious, Political Leaders and Academic Experts

> MEETING WITH GABRIELA FREY, REPRESENTATIVE TO THE EU AND COUNCIL OF EUROPE OF THE EUROPEAN BUDDHIST UNION (EBU)

The European Buddhist Union EBU was founded in 1975 as an umbrella association for existing European Buddhist organisations and it has participatory status with the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations at the Council of Europe.

Its mission is (1) to facilitate international exchange and promote spiritual friendship amongst European Buddhists; (2) to support social action and ideas motivated by Buddhist values; and (3) to amplify the voice of Buddhism in Europe and worldwide.

This meeting was an occasion to inform MEPs about present day activities of EBU and its relevant work in a number of areas (defending human rights, contributing to peace building measures, educational and social activities).

It was for the first time that the WG discussed with a representative of the Buddhist faith.

European Buddhism is growing fast and today, the political authorities of most European countries have come to some form of official recognition of Buddhism. Based on a 2012 survey, it is assumed that there are approximately 3 million people self-identifying as Buddhists in Europe (including Russia).



Left to right: Csaba Sógor, MEP; György Hölvényi MEP, Co-Chairman of the EPP Group Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue; Gabriela Frey, Representative of the European Buddhist Union (EBU) to the EU and Council of Europe; Anna Záborská, MEP; Romain Strasser, Head of the Intercultural and Religious Dialogue Unit

> MEETING WITH MGR. PAOLO RUDELLI, SPECIAL ENVOY AND PERMANENT OBSERVER OF THE HOLY SEE TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AS A FOLLOW UP TO THE EPP MEPS VISIT TO ROME IN DECEMBER 2018 AND EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE ABU-DHABI DECLARATION SIGNED ON 4TH FEBRUARY BY H.H. POPE FRANCIS AND THE GRAND IMAM OF AL-AZHAR.



On 10 June 1995, he was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Bergamo. He completed his theological studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he received a doctoral degree in moral theology and a licentiate in canon law. On 1 July 2001, he entered the diplomatic service of the Holy See and worked in the nunciatures in Ecuador (2001–2003) and Poland (2003–2006) and then worked in the Section for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State.

On 20 September 2014, Pope Francis appointed him Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, just a month before Francis' visit to Strasbourg.

On 3 September 2019, Pope Francis named him a titular archbishop and gave him the title of apostolic nuncio. He was replaced in Strasbourg on 21 September 2019 by Marco Ganci. He received his episcopal consecration from Pope Francis on 4 October. On 25 January 2020, Pope Francis named him Apostolic Nuncio to Zimbabwe.

> MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR IRAKLI GIVIAŠVILI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GEORGIA TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AS A FOLLOW UP OF THE JUNE 2018 VISIT IN TBILISI



Dr. Irakli Giviashvili currently holds a position of an Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Georgia to the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. He holds a law degree from the Tbilisi State University, LLm from the University of Heidelberg and a PhD from the Nottingham Law School, Nottingham Trent University. Mr. Giviashvili previously worked as Ambassador at Large on Human Rights, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (2014 - 2017), Deputy Permanent Representative of Georgia to the Council of Europe, Director of the International Law Department (2011 - 2014), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (2007 - 2011). In 2006 -2007, Mr. Giviashvili served as Chief of Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, he is the author of several articles on international human rights and international law.

> MEETING WITH HIS HOLINESS POPE TAWADROS II, POPE OF ALEXANDRIA & PATRIARCH OF THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE SITUATION OF COPTIC CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT.

Approximately, 10 million Christians live in Egypt (majority Coptic Orthodox; other Christians include Armenian Apostolic, Catholic, Maronite, Orthodox, and Anglican), making up 10 per cent of Egypt's population of 99.4 million.

The delegation led by His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, The Pope of Alexandria & Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church discussed with MEPs about the present day situation of Christians in Egypt.



His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria & Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church with Michaela Šojdrová MEP



Top row from left to right: MEPs Peter Van Dalen, Karlo Ressler, Michaela Šojdrová, Lukas Mandl, Francois-Xavier Bellamy, György Hölvényi, Mairead McGuinness, Jan Olbrycht, Andrey Kovatchev and Rasa Juknevičienė. Bottom row from left to right: H.E. Ambassador Khaled El Bakly and His Holiness Pope Tawadros II.

> SEMINAR ON "THE ROLE OF CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE PROCESS OF PEACE BUILDING AND CONFLICT PREVENTION " WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GEORGIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND OTHER RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES FROM GEORGIA

BRUSSELS, TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER

08H30-11H00 EPP GROUP SEMINAR ON "THE ROLE OF CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE PROCESS OF PEACE BUILDING AND CONFLICT PREVENTION"

08H30-08H45 WELCOME SPEECH

Mairead McGuinness - First Vice-president of the European Parliament, Responsible for the Parliament's Dialogue with Churches, Religions and Non-Confessional Organisations (Article 17 TFEU)

Rasa Juknevičienė - MEP, Vice-Chair of the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) Delegation

08H45-10H30 INTERVENTIONS

Bishop Jakob Iakobishvili, Bishop of Bodbe

Prof. Tea Gogotishvili, Official representative of the Patriarchate to the Interreligious Council

Father Andria Jagmaidze, Head of Public Relations of the Patriarchate

Ramin Igidov, Sheikh of Georgia

Rev. Father Kirakos Davtyan, Vicar in the Armenian Diocese in Georgia, Diocese of Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Holy Church

Gabriele Bragantini, Episcopal vicar of the Catholic Church in Georgia

Merab Chanchalashvili, Chairman of the Board of Tbilisi Great Synagogue

10H30-11H00 DISCUSSION

A high-level religious Delegation from Georgia with representatives from the Georgian Orthodox Church, the Muslim Community (Shia and Sunni), the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church and the Jewish Community exchanged views in the seminar with MEP's on sensitive issues such as: the role of religion on politics and society, the occupation (annexation) of 20% of Georgia's territory by Russia, the creeping process of borderization, the ban on visiting their family graves in South Ossetia

and Abkhazia, the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Church, LGBT's rights, child marriages and mixed marriages.

It was the first time ever that such a delegation composed of all major churches and religious communities visited together Brussels.



Rasa Juknevičienė MEP, Vice-Chair of the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) Delegation; Mairead McGuinness First Vice-president of the European Parliament



Michaela Šojdrová MEP



Bishop Jakob Iakobishvili, Bishop of Bodbe



Iasin Aliev, Mufti of Eastern Georgia



Gabriele Bragantini, Episcopal vicar of the Catholic Church in Georgia

3. Visits

> MISSION TO BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA "ON THE WAY OF RECONCILIATION AND LIFE IN A MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY" MOSTAR, MEDJUGORJE (BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA)

"ON THE WAY OF RECONCILIATION AND LIFE IN A MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY"

29 - 30 MARCH 2019
MOSTAR, MEĐUGORJE
AGENDA

FRIDAY, 29 MARCH 2019

- 09H00 DEPARTURE TO MOSTAR
- 11H30-12H30 MEETING WITH THE DON **ŽELJKO MAJIĆ** MAIN VICAR
- 13.00-14.30 LUNCH WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MAYOR OF **MOSTAR AND EPP SISTER PARTIES**
- 14.45 MEETING WITH MEDIA
- 16H30-17H30 MEETING WITH THE **PATRIARCHATE** (IGUMAN **DANILO PAVLOVIC**)
- 17H45-18H45 MEETING WITH **MUFTI SALEM EF. DEDOVIĆ**
- 19H00-20H15 VISIT OF MOSTAR
- 20H30 DINNER WITH NGO 'S :

HKD Napredak Mostar (Croatian cultural Association)
Matica Hrvatska Mostar (Croatian Association, Mostar)
Prosvjeta (Serbian cultural Association, Mostar)
BZK Preporod (Bosniak Association, Mostar)
Jewish community representative

SATURDAY 30 MARCH 2019

- 09H00 DEPARTURE TO MEDUGORJE
- 09H45-10H45 MEETING WITH ARCHBISHOP **MGR HENRYK HOSER**, APOSTOLIC VISITOR
- 12H30-13H30 VISIT OF MOTHER'S VILLAGE AND THE COMMUNITY MERCIFUL FATHER AND COMMUNITY CENACOLO, WITH FRA MILJENKO STEKO
- 16H45-17H45 VISIT OF RADIO STATION "MIR" (PEACE); INTERVIEWS
- 18H00 EVENING MASS

The delegation had separate meetings with high-level religious Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish representatives in order to better understand the complexity of the situation from the aspect of each of them and to exchange on possible future prospects, while the meetings with the civil society, Academia and NGOs were more focused on everyday life of the citizens, their needs and possible solutions for the current situation.

The delegation visited also the pilgrimage site of Medjugorje and had an exchange of views with Archbishop Mgr Hoser, the Pope's Apostolic Visitor to this place of high spirituality.



Romain Strasser, Head of the Intercultural and Religious Dialogue Unit; Wim van de Camp MEP; Lorenzo Cesa MEP; Željana Zovko MEP, EPP Group Deputy Coordinator in AFET Committee; Joachim Zeller MEP; Miroslav Mikolášik MEP with representatives from the Orthodox Church



From Left to right: Sanja Mijic, EPP-Group Secretariat, Romain Strasser, Head of the Intercultural and Religious Dialogue Unit; Joachim Zeller MEP; Miroslav Mikolášik MEP; Željana Zovko MEP; EPP Group Deputy Coordinator in AFET Committee; Archbishop Mgr Henryk Hoser; Wim van de Camp MEP and Lorenzo Cesa MEP.

XIX. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

CHALLENGES FOR A NEW EUROPE

KRAKOW, OCTOBER 11-12, 2019

**INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CENTRE
31-008 KRAKOW, 25 MAIN MARKET SQUARE, WWW.MCK.KRAKOW.PL**

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Honorary Chairman of the Organizing Committee:
HE Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz

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Polish, English, German

ORGANIZERS:

Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow,
Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Poland,
Robert Schuman Foundation in Luxembourg,

IN CO-OPERATION WITH:

EPP Group in the European Parliament,
Polish Delegation in the EPP Group in the EP, European People's Party (Christian Democrats),
Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE)
and Publishing House „Wokół nas” in Gliwice

Honorary Patronage
Jacek Majchrowski
Mayor of Krakow

FRIDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2019

09.00 – 10.00 REGISTRATION

10.00 – 10.30 WELCOME

Card. Stanisław Dziwisz, Honorary Chairman of the Organizing Committee
Andrzej Halicki, MEP, Chairman of the Polish Delegation in the EPP Group in the EP
Prof. Jacek Majchrowski, Mayor of Krakow
Konrad Adenauer Foundation
Rev. Manuel Barrios Prieto, Secretary General of COMECE
Jacques Santer, Robert Schuman Foundation in Luxembourg

10.30 – 11.00 INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT MATTER:

CHALLENGES FOR A NEW EUROPE

Abp prof. Grzegorz Ryś, Metropolitan of Łódź

11.00 – 13.00 I PANEL SESSION

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AS A CHALLENGE FOR EUROPEAN POLITICS

DEBATE:

Prof. Altay Goyushov, Baku State University, Azerbaijan
Andrzej Grzyb, former MEP, Rapporteur of the report on EU Guidelines and the mandate of the EU
Special Envoy on the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU
Rabbi Michael Schudrich, Chief Rabbi of Poland
Moderation: **Zbigniew Nosowski**, Publicist, WIEŻ quarterly

13.00 – 14.00 LUNCH

14.00 – 16.00 II PANEL SESSION

NEW EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AFTER THE BREXIT

DEBATE:

Bp William Kenney, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, Representative of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales at COMECE

Mairead McGuinness, MEP, Ireland

Jan Tombiński, EU Ambassador to the Holy See

Moderation: **Agnieszka Łada PhD**, Political analyst, Institute of Public Affairs

16.00 – 16.30 COFFEE BREAK

16.30 – 18.30 III PANEL SESSION

POPULISM IN EUROPE – RELATIONS BETWEEN ÉLITES AND CITIZENS

DEBATE:

NN.

Ivo Belet, former MEP, Belgium

Prof. Kazimierz M. Ujazdowski, University of Łódź

Moderation: **Rev. Kazimierz Sowa**, Journalist

19.00 HOLY MASS CONDUCTED BY CARD. KAZIMIERZ NYCZ – ARCHBISHOP METROPOLITAN OF WARSAW, SAINTS PETER AND PAUL CHURCH, 54 GRODZKA STREET

20.00 CEREMONY OF THE PRESENTING **MRS HANNA SUCHOCKA** WITH THE BP TADEUSZ PIERONEK'S AWARD "IN VERITATE" FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS IN COMBINING CHRISTIAN AND EUROPEAN VALUES

DINNER AT THE INVITATION OF **PROF. JACEK MAJCHROWSKI**, MAYOR OF KRAKOW, GALLERY OF THE 19-CENTURY POLISH ART, THE SUKIENNICE (THE CLOTH HALL)

SATURDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2019

09.00 – 10.00 REGISTRATION

10.00 – 10.15

Rija Oomen Ruijten, President of the Robert Schuman Foundation in Luxembourg

Horst Langes, Honorary President of the Robert Schuman Foundation in Luxembourg

10.15 – 11.45 IV PANEL SESSION

COMMON ECONOMIC MODEL FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION?

INTRODUCTION:

Elżbieta Bieńkowska, EU Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

DEBATE BETWEEN:

Prof. Elżbieta Mączyńska-Ziemacka, President of the Polish Economic Society

Prof. Georg Milbradt, former Minister President of Saxony

MODERATION:

Wawrzyniec Smoczyński, Publicist, former Director of analytical centre Polityka Insight

11.45– 12.15 COFFEE BREAK

12.15 – 14.15 SPECIAL SESSION:

CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPE – THREE DECADES AFTER THE AUTUMN OF NATIONS

TALK BETWEEN:

Vytautas Landsbergis, former President of Lithuania

Bronisław Komorowski, former President of the Republic of Poland

DEBATE:

Basil Kerski, Director of the European Solidarity Centre

Valentin Mihaylov PhD, University of Silesia

Alojz Peterle, former Prime Minister of Slovenia

Moderation: **NN.**

14.15 – 14.30 SUMMARY

Rev. prof. Wojciech Zyżak, Rector of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow

Participants expressed their hope that the European project has a future despite of all its problems. Therefore, interactions between politicians and Church representatives are essential to master the challenges collectively through more cooperation and coherent actions.



Left to right: Jan Tombiński, EU Ambassador to the Holy See; Jacques Santer, former President of the European Commission and Honorary President of the Robert Schuman Foundation; Mairead McGuinness MEP, First Vice-president of the European Parliament; Bp William Kenney, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, Representative of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales at COMECE; Fr. Manuel Barrios Prieto, General Secretary, Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU (COMECE);



Left to right: Ivo Belet, former MEP; Jan Olbrycht MEP, Co-Chairman of the EPP Group Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue; Mairead McGuinness MEP, First Vice-president of the European Parliament; Alojz Peterle, former MEP

4. XXII ANNUAL EPP GROUP INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE WITH CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

“HUMAN FRATERNITY FOR WORLD PEACE AND LIVING TOGETHER”

DECLARATION SIGNED BY POPE FRANCIS AND THE GRAND IMAM OF AL-AZHAR
ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, FEBRUARY 2019

12 DECEMBER 2019

Lebanese Maronite Monastery Saint Charbel (near Waterloo)
2, Rue Armand De Moor, 1421-Ophain-Bois-Seigneur-Isaac
Belgium

PROGRAMME

THURSDAY, 12 DECEMBER

08:15 HRS DEPARTURE FROM EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, ATRIUM (ATR) BUILDING WELCOME
POINT

09:30 HRS OPENING SESSION

WELCOME MESSAGES

Jan Olbrycht MEP, Co-Chairman of the Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue
György Hölvényi MEP, Co-Chairman of the Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue
Kris Peeters MEP, Head of the EPP Group BE Delegation

OPENING SPEECHES

H.E. Archbishop Alain Paul Lebeaupin, Apostolic Nuncio to the EU
H.E. Mohamed Issa Abushabab, Ambassador, United Arab Emirates to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU
Mairead McGuinness MEP, First Vice-president of the European Parliament, Responsible for the
Parliament's dialogue with churches, religions and non-confessional organisations (Article 17 TFEU)

10:15 - 11:30 HRS SESSION I.
(Focus on the origins, principles and goals of the Document)

Chair
Jan Olbrycht MEP, Co-Chairman of the Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue

KEYNOTE SPEECH:

H.E. Cardinal Miguel Àngel Ayuso Guixot, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious
Dialogue

INTERVENTIONS

Dr Sheikh Abdel Meneem Fouad, Representative of Sheikh Ahmed El Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al
Azhar and Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Science of Al Azhar University

Fr. Manuel Barrios Prieto, General Secretary, Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU
(COMECE)

Reverend Canon Andrew Thompson, Chaplain of St Andrew's Anglican Church in Abu Dhabi
Fr. Enzo Fortunato OFM Conv, Director of the Press Office of the Sacro Convento di Assisi, Italy

11:30 - 12:30 HRS DISCUSSION

OPENED BY:

Edina Tóth MEP, Member of the Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula

12:30 HRS LUNCH

14:00 - 15:15 HRS SESSION II.

(Focus on the “Next steps”: a) how to enhance interfaith relations, b) implementation and new
initiatives, c) main challenges)

Chair
György Hölvényi MEP, Co-Chairman of the Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue

KEYNOTE SPEECH:

H.E. Omar Ghobash, Assistant Minister for Cultural Affairs at the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation

INTERVENTIONS

Riay Tatary Bakry, President of the Spanish Islamic Committee and Imam of Madrid

Fr. Michael O'Sullivan, Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia - Abu Dhabi

Timo Aytaç Güzelmansur, Managing Director, Centre for Christian-Muslim Encounter and
Documentation CIBEDO, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Rabbi Avi Tawil, Director of the European Jewish Community Centre (EJCC)

15:15 - 16:15 HRS DISCUSSION

OPENED BY:

Željana Zovko MEP, EPP Group Deputy Coordinator in AFET Committee

16:15 - 16:30 HRS CLOSING SESSION

Jan Olbrycht MEP and György Hölvényi MEP Co-Chairmen of the Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue

16:30 - 17:00 HRS VISIT OF ABBEY

The EPP Group held its annual intercultural dialogue with churches and religious institutions on 12 December, 2019 in the Lebanese Maronite monastery in Saint Charbel, Belgium. The international conference was dedicated to historical milestone declaration co-signed by Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar University in Egypt. The document is entitled Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together. The declaration recognises the dignity of all human beings and affirms that good relations between different cultures are necessary to protect the religious and civil rights of citizens.

Kris Peeters MEP, Head of the EPP Group Belgium Delegation welcomed the participants and highlighted the uniqueness of the conference venue, namely the Lebanese Maronite Monastery in the heart of Belgium near Brussels.

György Hölvényi MEP, Co-Chair of the EPP Group Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue, highlighted: “Religions must undertake joint efforts to represent universal values. As the common declaration underlines, we have several points in common, despite differences between the two religious traditions. One major shared value is definitely the family as a community of man and woman and the child as a member of this community.”

Jan Olbrycht MEP, Co-Chair of the EPP Group Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue, pointed out the significance of the document as it is written by the authors as “a declaration of good and heartfelt aspirations“. The text is an invitation for different actors of public life to work for peace and understanding. Consequently, our annual Intercultural Dialogue with Churches and Religious Institutions was a response to this invitation.

At the meeting in the monastery, MEPs had the unique opportunity to exchange views with experts and high-ranking religious representatives on the document and reflect together on how interreligious relations between Christians, Muslims and Jews have changed in the twenty-first century and how they could evolve in the European Union.

Guest keynote speakers included Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and Omar Ghobash, Assistant Minister for Cultural Affairs at the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

For further information about the conference please see the Brochure: “XXII Annual Intercultural Dialogue with Churches and Religious Institutions, Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together”, published by the EPP Group in the European Parliament.



Jan Olbrycht MEP and György Hölvényi MEP, Co-Chairs of the EPP Group Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue



Edina Tóth MEP, Member of the Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula; Jan Olbrycht MEP, Co-Chairman of the EPP Group Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue; Romain Strasser, Head of the Intercultural and Religious Dialogue Unit



Željana Zovko MEP, EPP Group Deputy Coordinator in AFET Committee; György Hölvényi MEP, Co-Chairman of the EPP Group Working Group on Intercultural and Religious Dialogue; Romain Strasser, Head of the Intercultural and Religious Dialogue Unit



H.E. Cardinal Miguel Àngel Ayuso Guixot, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue



H.E. Omar Ghobash, Assistant Minister for Cultural Affairs at the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

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