



20TH ANNUAL EPP GROUP INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE WITH CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

FROM UNDERSTANDING TO COOPERATION

PROMOTING INTERFAITH ENCOUNTERS TO MEET GLOBAL CHALLENGES

ZAGREB, 7 - 8 DECEMBER 2017



PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY, 6 DECEMBER

20.30 HRS. / WELCOME RECEPTION HOSTED BY THE CROATIAN DELEGATION

THURSDAY, 7 DECEMBER

09:00 HRS / OPENING

György Hölvényi MEP and Jan Olbrycht MEP, Co-Chairmen of the Working Group on Intercultural Activities and Religious Dialogue
Dubravka Šuica MEP, Head of Croatian Delegation of the EPP Group

WELCOME MESSAGES

- Mairead McGuinness, First Vice-President of the European Parliament, responsible for dialogue with religions (video message)
- Joseph Daul, President of the European People’ s Party
- Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of Croatia

10:00-12:30 HRS / SESSIONS I AND II

THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS: EXPECTATIONS, POTENTIALS, LIMITS

10:00-11:15 HRS / SESSION I

MEMORIES AND LESSONS LEARNED DURING 20 YEARS OF DIALOGUE

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

OPENING MESSAGE:

Alojz Peterle MEP, former Responsible of the Interreligious Dialogue

INTERVENTIONS

- Gordan Jandroković, Speaker of the Croatian Parliament
- Joseph Daul, President of the European People’ s Party
- Vito Bonsignore, former Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group responsible for Dialogue with Islam
- Mons. Prof. Tadeusz Pieronek, Chairman of the International Krakow Church Conference Organizing Committee
- Stephen Biller, former EPP Group Adviser responsible for Interreligious Dialogue

DISCUSSION

11:15-12:30 HRS. / SESSION II

NEW CHALLENGES

Chair: **Jan Olbrycht MEP**, Co-Chairmen of the Working Group on Intercultural Activities and Religious Dialogue

OPENING MESSAGE:

Othmar Karas MEP, former Responsible of the Interreligious Dialogue

INTERVENTIONS

- **Dražen Bošnjaković**, Croatian Minister of Justice and President of the Committee for relations with the religious communities
- **Rev. Olivier Poquillon OP**, General Secretary of the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the EU (COMECE)
- **Rev. Manuel Enrique Barrios Prieto**, Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations at the Spanish Bishops’ Conference, Madrid
- **Rev. Laurent Basanese SJ**, Director of the Centre for Interreligious Studies at the Jesuit University ‘Gregoriana’ of Rome

DISCUSSION

14:30-16:00 HRS / SESSION III

THE CURRENT MIGRATION AND REFUGEE CRISIS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES ON SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Chair: **György Hölvényi MEP**, Co-Chairmen of the Working Group on Inter-cultural Activities and Religious Dialogue

OPENING MESSAGE:

Elmar Brok MEP, former Chairman of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs

INTERVENTIONS

- **Archbishop Habib Hormuz Al-Naufali**, Chaldean Catholic Archdiocese of Basra, Iraq
- **Nina Obuljen Koržinek**, Croatian Minister of Culture
- **Péter Heltai**, Ambassador-at-Large, Hungary Helps Programme, Ministry of Human Capacities, Hungary
- **Rev. Piotr Mazurkiewicz**, Professor of Political Sciences in Warsaw, former General Secretary of the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the EU (COMECE)
- **Rabbi Awi Tawil**, Director of the European Jewish Community Centre (EJCC)

DISCUSSION

16.30-19.30 HRS / STUDY VISIT

FRIDAY, 8 DECEMBER

09:00-12:00 HRS / SESSION IV AND V

RELIGION, VIOLENCE, AND PEACE: COOPERATING FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

09:00-10:30 HRS / SESSION IV

INTERFAITH RELATIONS FROM A CROATIAN PERSPECTIVE

Chair: **Ivica Tolić MEP**

OPENING MESSAGE: Marijana Petir MEP

INTERVENTIONS

- **Davor Ivo Stier**, Member of the Croatian Parliament
- **Rev. Željko Tanjić**, Rector of the Catholic University of Croatia
- **Rabbi Luciano Moše Prelević**, The Chief Rabbi of Croatia and the Chief Rabbi of Montenegro
- **Mufti Aziz ef. Hasanović**, President of Meshihat of Islamic Community in Croatia

DISCUSSION

10:30-12:00 HRS / SESSION V

INTERFAITH RELATIONS IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

Chair: **Ivana Maletić MEP**

OPENING MESSAGE: Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, Ecumenical Patriarchate INTERVENTIONS

- **Zdravka Bušić**, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
- **Bishop Porfirije**, Metropolitan of Zagreb and Ljubljana of Serbian Orthodox Church
- **Karsten Dümmel**, Director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Office in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

DISCUSSION

12:00 - 12:30 HRS / OVERALL CONCLUSIONS:

Dubravka Šuica MEP, Head of Croatian Delegation of the EPP Group

MESSAGES



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

“Interreligious Dialogue belongs to the core identity of the EPP Group: today, thanks to God we are here both to celebrate and work.”

“The role of the dialogue has enormously increased in this period, this is the truth, both for Europe and the world even in the age of extreme secularism, even if a part of the European political elite tends to ignore this fact.”

“Churches and religions are providing ethical basis for human life. Is therefore extremely dangerous if states wish to overtake this, or determine ethics.”



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

“The Dialogue has been developed by our group and the European People’s Party before It was legally in the Treaty: it was developed by our colleague politicians 20 years ago and later, in the Treaty, there is the formula providing that European Union should have a constant dialogue with Churches. It means that the Treaty in fact confirms the work we have done before inside our group.”



Dubravka Šuica MEP, Head of Croatian Delegation of the EPP Group

“Sometimes we need to educate to prevent violent extremism, especially among the youth: the interreligious dialogue is one of the main instruments in fighting this problem and in building mutual respect”

“The word ‘understanding’ reveals the very basis of what lies beneath: the substance, the essence and the starting point. These are the basis.”

“Interreligious dialogue has its main goal in promoting peaceful co-existence and in creating social cohesion.”



Mairead McGuinness, First Vice-President of the European Parliament and responsible for dialogue with religions

“It is clear that we cannot plan for what kind of Europe we want to build together without asking ourselves what values are at the foundation of the project, what is the moral and ethical framework that supports it. It is clear too that the contribution of people of faith matters a lot in this context.”

“The choice of Zagreb for the 20th anniversary conference is a symbolic one as Croatia is our newest EU Member State, and it sends a message about the future where we seek to integrate the states of the Western Balkans. Here again churches and religious communities can play a crucial role, particularly in healing the wounds of past conflicts.”



Joseph Daul, President of the European People's Party

“The commitment shown by W. Martens and the EPP to support the Dialogue stands for our Christian Democratic education. The values define us in the EPP and we have our perception of the human being. All that we do, all that we believe, all that we are... stands for that perception of humanity.”

“Now we need to promote more mutual understanding between religions and stability in our neighbouring regions. We need both solidarity and responsibility.”



Alojz Peterle MEP,
former Responsible of the Interreligious Dialogue

“W. Martens’ initiative was very important and useful, it was partnership oriented and open. And I would say that we learned a lot from each other: we didn’t deal with only theoretical issues but we also dealt with practical issues. What we did in these years was contributing to the change and to the clarity.”

“What is most important for the future for our Dialogue is to empower the citizens and the believers who live all the time with their values, their belief and their principals.”



Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of Croatia

“Existing social tensions, increasing movements of people in Europe and growing religions’ intolerance further emphasize the need of constraint cooperation between different religious communities and necessity of high levels of mutual understanding.”



Gordan Jandroković, Speaker of the Croatian Parliament

“Religions and Church communities may contribute to finding answers to many political and other issues. They may help in growing together and promoting these values among the believers and in encouraging people to act jointly.”



Vito Bonsignore, former Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group responsible for Dialogue with Islam

“We understood immediately that a priority was to open new channel of dialogue with the Islamic world. Not easy, sometimes very difficult but absolutely important, imperative. We have been able to see the common points and we tried to focus on these particular common points in order to create a necessary foundation to move forward into the future as far as establishing close ties between Europe and the surrounding neighbours, between our party and other political counterparts in other parts neighbouring the European Union as well.”



Stephen Biller, former EPP Group Adviser responsible for Interreligious Dialogue

“In 1993 Saint Pope John Paul II gave the world Veritatis Splendor, the splendour of truth. [...]. Veritatis Splendor is indeed, for Jews, Christians and Muslims, a tool for dialogue.”

“Together we can draw out the right references from the Koran in teaching coexistence, compassion, tolerance and peace. Through its dialogue work, the group can prove that it has religious sensitivity and the religious knowledge to serve Europe’s Muslims and to bring about social harmony. Then our new Muslim neighbours can stimulate a vast zone in Europe of prayer and work.”



Mons. Prof. Tadeusz Pieronek, Chairman of the International Krakow Church Conference Organizing Committee

“It is absolutely necessary to understand we are part of a large family of free Nations and what we tried to do is trying to show that the Catholic Church and the Catholic Community has a very important role to play and has much to offer as far as the extension of the life of the European Union as well as the growth of the Union.”



Dražen Bošnjaković, Croatian Minister of Justice and President of the Committee for relations with the religious communities

“Regarding Article 17 of the Treaty, the EU doesn’t have competence over religious legislation. There is also a question of treaties’ interpretation on judicial terms and analysis of the powers of the Court of Justice. One of EU’s challenges will also be to adopt measures to reinforce the Churches’ implication in the integration of populations.”



Rev. Olivier Poquillon OP, General Secretary of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU (COMECE)

"We have to put humanity back into the legislative texts. As an observation, there is a growing fear of Islam in Europe, which can be understandable if we don't know the religion. But there is also a growing fear of Muslims which is less understandable because we know them, they are our neighbours or our family and we have been living with them for a very long time."

"The role of the Dialogue is therefore essential. Politicians are not in charge of the Dialogue, it is the religions' duty to talk between them. The State should stay neutral and promote meetings. We need to write some legislation that will respect Humans."



Rev. Manuel Enrique Barrios Prieto, Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations at the Spanish Bishops' Conference, Madrid

"We need to find ways of living in pluralism without falling into relativism or fundamentalism [...]. The right to freedom of religion must be respected in this particular context: Secularisation is trying to put us all on the same level while ignoring everybody's beliefs. We should be creative in terms of values and way of life."



Rev. Laurent Basanese SJ, Director of the Centre for Interreligious Studies at the Jesuit University 'Gregoriana' of Rome

"Before you look to the future you need to understand your past and see your present clearly. For Europe to be able to talk about the future, we must first understand, respect and pay tribute to the Christian thinking that marks it historically. We should not sideline religion, but clarify it so we can build on a healthy foundation."



Othmar Karas MEP, former Responsible of the Interreligious Dialogue

"Politicians are not in charge of the Dialogue between religions but they have a responsibility in talking with religious representatives, they need to make sure that some platforms for Dialogue exist and encourage it. The success of Interreligious Dialogue is linked to the success of integration and the credibility of the Institutions."



Elmar Brok MEP, former Chairman of the European Committee on Foreign Affairs

"We have religious heritage, Europe has the right to protect this cultural -religious heritage."

"Very intense discussion is needed: for example, I am a Catholic and I want to live in a country where it is allowed to follow any other faith, even it is a Catholic country."



Archbishop Habib Hormuz Al-Naufali, Chaldean Catholic Archdiocese of Basra, Iraq

"More than 4 million people left Iraq and 1 million are Christians among them. We have a traditional culture, which goes back to the Babylonian empire. We should do something strongly because the fanatics are strong [...]."

"We have to speak loudly to the centres of fanaticism outside Iraq, in Cairo and in some other Arabic countries."

"Immigration is also a dilemma in Irak because there are only 15 percent Christians, while there were 60 percent before."



Nina Obuljen Koržinek, Croatian Minister of Culture

"We put religion on the core of our thinking about the past and the future. Many crises are interpreted to be stemming from the interreligious differences. This is why we need to work on the intercultural dialogue."

"Something that belongs to the European history and the history of Croatia as well the fact that traditions have been marked by contact with other cultures. This is what we recognise today as our cultural identity and our cultural peculiarities."



Péter Heltai, Ambassador-at-Large, Hungary Helps Programme, Ministry of Human Capacities, Hungary

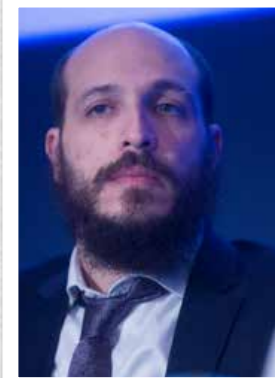
"As a Christian and European country, Hungary pays special attention to supporting the Middle-Eastern and African Christian communities that are in minority in their regions."

"They are the ones that in an area stormed by war are vulnerable in the face of attacks of religion extremists. [...] This is first and foremost a human rights issue. We would also like to encourage dialogue."



Rev. Piotr Mazurkiewicz, Professor of Political Sciences in Warsaw, former General Secretary of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU (COMECE)

“Due to the migration from the Islamic and African civilization to the western countries, the percentage of the Christians and Muslims will be the same in the global scale in the future [...]. The positive scenario would be the cooperation of these cultures. We have to think about what we can do in Africa and propose developments there.”



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

“We have to remind ourselves (Muslims, Christians, Jewish) that the elements of our religions are based on coalition buildings. We have to respect the new country systems and we have to work with that, and there is a responsibility to tell people our destiny. We have to adopt the ideals of the reality and not the reality of the ideals. There is a way of creating the situation of peace.”



Marijana Petir, MEP

“We need to underline that here, in Europe, we have radicalisation but do we know which strategy can handle and cut this radicalisation?”



Davor Ivo Stier, Member of the Croatian Parliament

“Religion is playing again a vital role but now it is less focused on the distinction and more on the cooperation among religious communities.”



Rev. Željko Tanjić,
Rector of the Catholic University of Croatia

“Within the Dialogue, the place of faith in the society must be clear. Sometimes, we have to face some misunderstanding because of two extreme tendencies, which create amalgams between the State and religion or, on the contrary, exclude religion. Then there is no more Dialogue and we cannot find solutions to the challenges we are facing.”



Rabbi Luciano Moše Prelević, the Chief Rabbi of Croatia and the Chief Rabbi of Montenegro

“We do not learn enough from each other and about the essence of our religion”

“It is crucial to get to know each other to be able to discuss together. Why is it important that religious communities open the Dialogue? To avoid them to be closed on themselves. God and Men are in a continuous Dialogue.”

“God is still in contact with Men but through intermediaries. The question is not to determine if God can bring peace to Earth but if WE can do it.”



Mufti Aziz ef. Hasanović, President of Meshihat of Islamic Community in Croatia

“Nowadays, the solution is more in the hands of politicians than of the religious leaders. When there is a crisis, these questions become more and more interesting.”

“These questions call for solutions, maybe within a legal framework that does not exist. A number of factors can disrupt the Intercultural Dialogue between religions and with politicians. Politicians should try to avoid ruining this Dialogue with a wrong political rhetoric.”



Ivana Maletić, MEP

“In order to progress in the South-Eastern Europe and to reach peace, cooperation, cohabitation we need really to actively work in order to be able to harmoniously approach to these issues”



Metropolitan Emmanuel of France,
Ecumenical Patriarchate

“In South Eastern Europe today, new crucial questions arise: what will be the role of religions in the definition of national identities when religion itself is in a sort of crisis? If people believe less and faith loses importance in people’s life, what will the impact on issues of identity and self-definition? More importantly, how can interreligious dialogue be incorporated into these reflections?”



Bishop Porfirije, Metropolitan of Zagreb and Ljubljana of
Serbian Orthodox Church

“We try to respect each other: this is the essence of the intercultural dialogue organized by the EPP Group. We should identify the best ways to achieve at least mutual understanding and acceptance between each other as we created Europe and as we civilized our society.”



Zdravka Bušić, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign
and European Affairs

“Sustainable solutions for interfaith relations started with dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding. Good practices encourage facing global challenges. Several catholic and orthodox experts are working together and sharing practices in the framework of the interreligious dialogue.”

“What comes from this work is a steady progress between churches. In the context of mutual understanding and respect the main element is the interreligious dialogue.”



Karsten Dümmel, Director of the Konrad Adenauer
Foundation Office in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

“The dialogue between the religions, as well as the recognition of the facts, is the prerequisite for the process of reconciliation.”

“This is where the challenge for the international community lies: to call for dialogue between religions on one hand, and on the other hand the dialogue between local politics, religious communities and religiously motivated NGOs.”

BIOGRAPHICAL ELEMENTS



Andrej Plenković,
Prime Minister of Croatia

Andrej Plenković was sworn in as Prime Minister on 19 October 2016, thus becoming the 12th Head of Government since Croatia's independence. On 17 July 2016, he was elected President of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), a member of the European People's Party.

Born in Zagreb on 8 April 1970, Andrej Plenković is married and has two children. He is fluent in English, French and Italian and conversant in German.

Croatia's Prime Minister-designate, Andrej Plenkovic is a lawyer with a varied diplomatic career, born in Zagreb in 1970. Plenkovic graduated from the Zagreb Faculty of Law in 1993, where he also completed post-graduate studies in international public and private law. In October 1997 Plenkovic was named the head of the Department for European Integration and remained in that post until 2001. Between 2002 and 2005 he was the deputy head of the Croatian Mission at the EU in Brussels, in charge of coordinating the Mission's political activities. From 2005 to 2010 he held the post of Deputy Ambassador in France, in charge of political and organisational affairs. He was a member of Croatian parliamentary committees on foreign affairs, European integration, justice, environmental protection, and inter-parliamentary cooperation. In 2014 he was elected a member of the European Parliament on the slate of the HDZ Delegation in the EPP.



Joseph Daul, President
of the European People's Party

Born in Strasbourg (France) on 13 April 1947, Joseph Daul has been President of the European People's Party (EPP) since November 2013. He is member of Les Républicains. He graduated from the French Institute of Higher Studies in National Defence (l'Institut des hautes études de défense nationale, IHEDN), and is a cattle farmer and advocate for the French agriculture movement, having presided over different associations in the sector. At the same time, he has pursued a political career. He served as Mayor of

Pfettisheim (Bas-Rhin) from 1989 to 2001, and afterwards as Deputy Mayor and Vice-President of the community of communes of Kochersberg until 2008. He was a member of the European Economic and Social Committee from 1980 to 1982 and the Chairman of the Meat Group of the Committee of Agricultural Organisations in the European Union from 1996 to 1999. As a member of the European Parliament from 1999 to 2014, he served as Chairman of the Conference of Committee Chairmen from 2002 to 2004 and as Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development from 2002 to 2007, at which point he was elected Chairman of the Group of the European People's Party in the European Parliament. In October 2013, Wilfried Martens asked Joseph Daul to replace him as President of the EPP during his illness. After the passing away of President Martens, Joseph Daul took over fully as President of the EPP, following a vote in the Political Assembly and subsequently at the Dublin Congress. He decided not to run again in the European elections in 2014 and to leave his position as Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament in order to dedicate all his time to his new function. He is reelected as President of the EPP at the Madrid Congress in October 2015. Among other honours, he is an 'Officier du Mérite Agricole', 'Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite' and 'Officier de la Légion d'Honneur'.



Mairead McGuinness, First Vice-President of the European Parliament, responsible for dialogue with religions

Mairead McGuinness is the First Vice-President of the European Parliament and represents the Midlands-North-West constituency in Ireland. As First Vice-President, she oversees relations with national parliaments, in particular with the EU affairs committees of Member State parliaments. She has responsibility for the Parliament's dialogue with religious and

non-confessional organisations on EU policies and legislative proposals. She is a member of the Parliament's Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee and the Constitutional Affairs Committee. An agricultural economist, her work focuses on the future shape of agriculture and rural development policies, global development policy, the environment, public health, and food safety and security. She is Vice-Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Montenegro Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee. McGuinness was lead negotiator for the EPP Group, the largest political grouping in the Parliament, on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (Pillar I). She works on issues impacting on the sustainability of the food supply chain, including unfair trading practices. She was voted MEP of the Year for Agriculture. She is co-chair of the Parliament's MEP Heart Group, focused on tackling heart disease through information, awareness, diet and physical activity. Mairead was lead negotiator for the EPP on the revision of the Medical Devices Regulation. Mairead chaired the Parliament's investigation into the collapse of the Equitable Life assurance company which identified issues around weak financial regulation. Prior to becoming an MEP she was a well-known journalist, broadcaster and commentator.



Dubravka Šuica MEP, Head of Croatian Delegation of the EPP Group

Dubravka Šuica, born in Dubrovnik in 1957, is a Member of the European Parliament and representative of the centre-right Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). She graduated from the University of Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in 1981, where she majored in English and German language. She worked as a high school teacher, university professor and principal in Dubrovnik until her mayo-

ral election win in 2001. She was the first female mayor of Dubrovnik and one of the first female mayors of major Croatian cities in modern Croatia, serving two consecutive terms as mayor of Dubrovnik between 2001 and 2009. In 2013, she was elected as a Member of the European Parliament and in 2014 she was reelected and is currently serving a five-year term in office. In October 2012, she was elected vice-president of EPP Women. Following the 2014 elections Šuica was elected as Vice Chair of the Delegation for relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo (DSEE), Member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI), and as a Substitute Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN), Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM) and Delegation for relations with the United States (D-US).



György Hölvényi MEP, Co-Chairman of the Working Group on Intercultural Relations and Interreligious Dialogue of the EPP Group

Member of the European Parliament for the EPP Group since 2014 MEP and member of the Committees on Environment and further Culture and education of the EP. Previous Positions: Secretary of State for Relations with Churches, National Minorities and Civil Society, 2012- 2014. Secretary-General of the Robert Schuman Foundation, 2009. Advisor on

Intercultural and Religious Dialogue in the EPP Group Secretariat, 2009-2012, and Press Advisor, 2003-2009. Head of President's Cabinet Office, Duna Television Broadcasting Co, 2000-2003. Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports, 1999. Director for Tourism, Tihany Municipality and Tihany Benedictine Abbey, 1996-1999. Press Secretary of the Budapest Group, Christian Democratic Party, Head of Foreign Affairs Department, 1994-1996. Head of Department, Ministry of Welfare, Parliamentary Secretariat, 1991-1994. Teacher, Szent-Györgyi Albert Elementary School, 1990-1991. Education : College of Tourism and Economics, Postgraduate Program for Economics and Tourism 1998-2001 Eötvös Lóránd University, Teacher Training College, Teacher's Degree on Hungarian Literature and History 1985-1990.



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

Jan Marian Olbrycht is a Polish politician and Member of the European Parliament for Silesian Voivodeship with the Civic Platform party. Olbrycht is vice-chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Development, substitute for the Committee on Transport and Tourism and for the Delegation to the EU-Bulgaria Joint Parliamentary Com-

mittee. Previous Positions: since 2003 member of the Committee for National Spatial Planning, Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN); member of the National Council for Regional Policy, 2000-2004; member of the World Council of United Cities and Local Governments, 2004; member of the Organisation of the Assembly of European Regions (ARE), 2000-2004; Vice-Chairman of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, 1995-2001; Marshal of the Silesian Voivodeship, 1998-2002; Regional Councillor of the Silesian Voivodeship, 1998-2004; Mayor and member of the town council in Cieszyn, 1990-2004; since 2004: Member of the National Council of the Citizens' Platform; Chairman of the Policy Council of the Social Movement, 2002-2004; first Marshal of Silesian Voivodeship between 1999 and 2002.

SESSIONS I and II - THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESS: EXPECTATIONS, POTENTIALS, LIMITS

SESSION I - MEMORIES AND LESSONS LEARNED DURING 20 YEARS OF DIALOGUE



Alojz Peterle MEP,
Former Prime Minister of Slovenia

Elected Member of the European Parliament since 2004. Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Joint Parliamentary Committee. Member of Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Conference of Delegation Chairs. Prime Minister of the first democratically elected Slovenian Government (1990-1992). Deputy Prime Minister (1993-1994) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1993-1994 and June-November 2000). Elected MP 1990, 1992, 1996 and 2000. Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission for European Affairs (1996). President of the Christian Democrats of Slovenia (1990-2000). Chairman of the Council of the New Slovenia-Christian People's Party (2001-2005). Vice-President of the EUCD (1996-1999), Vice president of the European People's Party (2006-2009). Elected representative of the National Assembly to the European Convention and elected member of its presidency (2002-2003). Head of the Slovenian Delegation in the EPP-ED (2004-2006). Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE for Central Asia (2004-2005). Co-chair of informal all-party forum "MEPs against Cancer" and the WG on Health. He has received a number of prestigious awards, including European Voice's European of the Year in 2003. Education: History, geography, and economy, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.



Gordan Jandroković, President of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia

Gordan Jandroković (born in Bjelovar on 2 August 1967) is the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament since 5 May 2017. He graduated from the University of Zagreb - Faculty of Civil Engineering in 1991, and obtained a diploma from the Faculty of Political Sciences in 1993. He previously served as Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration from 2008 until 2011 and as Deputy Prime Minister of Croatia from 2010 until 2011, in the cabinet of Jadranka Kosor. Jandroković was elected the Member of the Croatian Parliament for 5 consecutive times, in Croatian parliamentary elections in 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2016. During his parliamentary career Jandroković, among other functions, served as the Chairman of the Committee on the Economy, development and renovation from 2003 to 2004 and as the Chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee from 2004 to 2007. In the same period he served as the Chairman of the Delegation to the Croatia - EU Joint Parliamentary Committee. In the 7th term of the Croatian Parliament, from 2011 to 2015, Jandroković was the Deputy Chairman first of the European Integration Committee and then of the European Affairs Committee, founded upon Croatia's entry into the European Union. He was elected the Chairman of the European Affairs Committee on 23 January 2016. Following the extraordinary parliamentary elections in September 2016, he was elected the Deputy Speaker of the Croatian Parliament on 14 October 2016.



Vito Bonsignore, former Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group responsible for Dialogue with Islam

Vito Bonsignore, born 3 July 1943, is an Italian politician and former Member of the European Parliament for North-West with the European People's Party. Previous affiliations: Vice-Chairman, Delegation for relations with the United States; Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs; Member, Delegation for relations with the People's Republic of China; Member, Delegation to the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly; Substitute, Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. Education and career: graduate in business studies; Technical Director and General Director of the Turin-Alessandria-Piacenza motorway company; former member of the DC Central Directorate; member of the National Executive of the UDC; town councillor of Venaria Reale (TO) (1970-1980); member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies (1987-1994); Under-Secretary for the Budget (1992-1993).



Mons. Prof. Tadeusz Pieronek,
Chairman of the International Krakow Church Conference Organizing Committee

Tadeusz Pieronek born 24 October 1934 in Radziechowy, Poland is a Polish Roman Catholic auxiliary bishop-emeritus, Catholic academic and professor of theology and civil law. From 1951-1954 he studied at the Theological Faculty of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, from 1956 until 1960 at the Faculty of Canon Law at the Catholic University of Lublin. He was ordained a priest in 1957. From 1961 until 1965 he studied in Rome at the Pontifical Lateran University, specializing in civil law as well as canon law. He received his doctorate in 1975, and was appointed theology professor in 1987. Further positions: auxiliary bishop of the Sosnowiec from 1992 to 1998, secretary-general of the Polish bishops' conference from 1993 until 1998. In 1998 he was appointed titular bishop of Cufrura. From 1998 to 2004 he was the rector of the Pontifical Academy of Theology. In 2007 he celebrated his 50th priestly anniversary with Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz in Cracow. In 2008, he received the Jan Karski Eagle Award to honour his combat for tolerance and his efforts to fight against «extremism». In recent years, he has supported the social project of the Children's Hospice „Father Józef Tischner” in the city of Cracow.



Stephen Biller, former EPP Group Adviser responsible for Interreligious Dialogue

Stephen Biller was born in 1940 in Meopham, Kent (United Kingdom). Education: Finchley Catholic High School and Universities of Liverpool and Aston in Birmingham; qualified in physics and metallurgy. Career: formerly executive secretary to the board of Joseph Lucas limited (an engineering firm with 120000 UK employees and quaker philosophy); formerly first Secretary British embassy – Bonn (hm diplomatic service), economic affairs (and ecumenism in the absence of the Anglican chaplain); European Parliament (Various Services 1976-2007).

SESSION II - NEW CHALLENGES



Othmar KARAS, MEP - Chair of the Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee

He was born in 1957. Ybbs/ Donau, Lower Austria. Degrees : Mag. Phil. (University of Vienna) and Master of European and International Business Law (M.B.L.) (HSG), doctor honoris causa (Donau-Universität Krems). Occupation and political functions: University of Vienna, Instructor (Department of Political Studies), Member of the European Parliament (since 1999), Secretary General of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) (1995 - 1999), Member of the Austrian Parliament (1983 - 1990), Manager in the banking and insurance sector (1981 - 1995), Political advisor of the Austrian People's Party (1979 - 1981). European Parliament: Head of the ÖVP-Delegation (2006 - 2009 and since 2011), Rapporteur, Basel III, President of the Kangaroo Group (2009 - 2013), EPP Coordinator, Special Committee on the Financial, Economic and Social Crisis (CRIS) (2009 - 2011), President of the SME Intergroup (since 2004), Vice-President and Treasurer of the EPP-Group (2004 - 12/2011), EPP Coordinator in the Committee for Economic and Monetary Affairs (2002 - 2004), Member of the Presidency and Treasurer of the EPP-Group (1999 – 2004).



Dražen Bošnjaković, Croatian Minister of Justice and President of the Committee for relations with the religious communities

Dražen Bošnjaković is a Croatian politician, member of the centre-right Croatian Democratic Union, and current Justice Minister. Bošnjaković was born in Vukovar in 1961. He lived in Ilok until he was eighteen and after finishing high school he went to Zagreb and studied at the Law faculty. On beginning his career he worked in the Council of Ivanić Grad, and from 1993 until 1997 he was a secretary in Sisak-Moslavina County. After that he started his own law firm and worked as a lawyer until entering into politics. He became a member of the Croatian Parliament on December 23, 2003, and served until January 11, 2008. From 2008 he was a state secretary in the Ministry of Justice of Republic of Croatia, and he is a member of the Central Committee of Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ). He is vice-president of the County Committee of HDZ of Zagreb County for then years.



Rev. Olivier Poquillon OP, General Secretary of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU (COMECE)

Brother Olivier Poquillon OP was born in Paris in 1966. After studies in international law, he entered the novitiate of the Dominicans in 1994 and was ordained priest in 2001. Among other assignments, he served as an expert of the Holy See to the Council of Europe and as a military chaplain in the Balkans, Africa and the Middle East. He also chaired the

Dominican Order's Francophone Commission for Justice and Peace. After teaching at the University of Mosul (Iraq), he was the Permanent Delegate of the Order to the United Nations from 2008 to 2013. Since then he has been the Prior of the Dominican convent in Strasbourg. Brother Olivier Poquillon arrived in Brussels where he becomes the head of the Secretariat of COMECE, a team responsible for conducting dialogue between the Bishops of the Catholic Church in Europe and the European institutions.



Rev. Manuel Enrique Barrios Prieto, Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations at the Spanish Bishops' Conference, Madrid

Manuel Barrios Prieto was born in Madrid in 1962. During his childhood he lived in Italy, where he attended the high school 'St. George's Inglés School-Rome'. He was ordained as a priest in the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano on 21 May 1988. He studied philosophy and theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University obtaining a Phd in theology. He

also studied Psychology at the UNED, getting his degree in 1998 with a specialization in Clinical Psychology. He has a Master's degree in psychotherapy from the Universidad Pontificia de Comillas. Previous positions: Episcopal Delegate for Family Pastoral in the diocese of Madrid (2002-2011); archpriest of Barajas (2003-2012); professor of theology at the Institutes of Religious Sciences San Agustín (2000-2011) and San Damaso (2001-2010). He is currently: Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations at the Spanish Bishops' Conference (since 2011); Ecumenical Delegate in the diocese of Madrid (since 2012) and pastor of St. Catherine of Alexandria (since 1998). He is Italian interpreter at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as author of several publications and articles.



Rev. Laurent Basanese SJ, Director of the Centre for Interreligious Studies at the Jesuit University 'Gregoriana' of Rome

Fr. Laurent BASANESE received a first formation in aeronautical engineering before becoming a Catholic priest in the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). Frenchman of Italian origins, he received a philosophical and theological formation in Paris, Naples and Rome. Sent by his religious Superiors to the Arab world and Islam, he travelled widely and resided in the Medi-

terranean countries mainly Egypt, Algeria, Lebanon, Syria before the war... He holds a double Ph.D. in Arab Studies, Islamic and Oriental Civilizations from the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Paris – Sorbonne) and from the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies (Rome). His research theme was "The Love of God Within the Limits of Reason Alone – Faith and Reason in the Thought of Ibn Taymiyya in the Light of Elias of Nisibis'spiritual Theology". Since 2011, he is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Missiology of the Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome) and Director of the Gregorian Centre for Interreligious Studies. He has given numerous lectures on the question of fundamentalism in recent years and has written several articles.

His teachings deal with the fundamentalist deviations of the Faith, comparative studies between Islam and Christianity, and Arab Christian theology. His research concerns the systems of religious thought and the inculturation of the Gospel. He is also the Chaplain of the Gregorian University.

SESSION III - THE CURRENT MIGRATION AND REFUGEE CRISIS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES ON SOCIETY AND CULTURE



Elmar Brok MEP, former Chairman of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs

Born in 1946. Bielefeld (North Rhine-Westphalia). Studied at the Centre of European Governmental Studies (Edinburgh University). Journalist. Member of regional executive, North Rhine-Westphalia CDU. Chairman of the CDU federal committee on foreign policy. Former federal Vice-Chairman of Junge Union, Germany. District Chairman. Vice-Chairman of the International Democratic Union (IDU). Vice-Chairman of EUCDW. Former coordinator, Social Affairs Committee and special committees on «German unification» and «Drugs». Member of the European Convention in the European Parliament. Observer both the at Amsterdam and Nice IGC's. Chairman of EPP Convention Group. Official European Parliament observer, Intergovernmental conference on the EU Constitution (2003/2004). President of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the EP (1999-2007). Member of the Political Bureau of the EPP Group and of the Presidency of the EPP Party. EPP-spokesman on foreign affairs; Chairman of USA delegation. MEP since 1980.



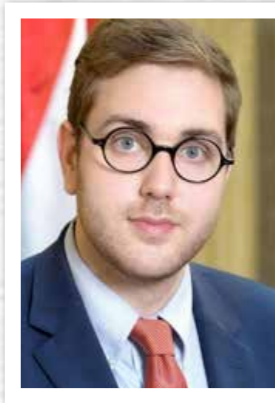
Archbishop Habib Hormuz Al-Naufali, Chaldean Catholic Archdiocese of Basra

Archbishop Habib Jajou was born in 1960, in the Chaldean village of Baqofah, Nineveh, Iraq. Ordained as a Chaldean Catholic priest in 1998, and consecrated in 2014 as an Archbishop. Academically, he obtained two MScs in Geophysics (1989)/Iraq and in Applied theology (2014)/UK, plus four Diplomas in Journalism between 2006-2010/UK. He has many publications and articles in both Arabic & English.



Nina Obuljen Koržinek, Croatian Minister of Culture

Nina Obuljen Koržinek (born 1970) is a Croatian violinist and political scientist who serves as the Minister of Culture in the Cabinet of Andrej Plenković since 19 November 2016.[Former State Secretary (2008-2011) and former Assistant Minister (2006-2008) at the Croatian Ministry of Culture, she has more than twenty years of experience in cultural and media policy research, policy making and project management. She graduated from the Academy of Music and Faculty of Arts of the University of Zagreb and holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Zagreb. She worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture and UNESCO, Paris, and then joined the Croatian Institute for Development and International Relations. As State Secretary responsible for culture and media she was a member of the negotiating team for the Croatian accession to the EU responsible for the fields of culture and education as well as information society and media. She was Head of the Croatian delegation for negotiations on the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions (2004-2005) and Chairperson of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Convention (2010). She was a Chairperson of the Board of the Croatian Radio and Television. In 2004 she received the European Cultural Policy Research Award for her research on the impact of the EU enlargement on cultural policies. She was engaged as an expert on various projects for UNESCO, Council of Europe, European Cultural Foundation, Asia-Europe Foundation, UNDP, European Parliament etc.



Péter Heltai, Ambassador-at-Large, Hungary Helps Programme, Ministry of Human Capacities, Hungary

Career: Ambassador-at-Large (Hungary Helps); Editor, 2017; Intern at European Parliament, Szabad Európa Program - Office of György Hölvényi [EPP], 2016; Intern at Balassi Institute 2015/2016; Member at Saint Ignatius Jesuit College for Advanced Studies, 2013/2015; Intern at NATO Parliamentary Assembly - assistant of General László Makk, Head of Secretariat for Security and Defence Policy at Office of Hungarian National Assembly during the NATO PA in Budapest, 2015; Research Intern, 2014; Congressional Intern at US Congress, 2014; Internship at the Office of Congressman Andy Harris; Vice President at Saint Ignatius Jesuit College for Advanced Studies, 2014; assistant-team of Gergely Gulyás MP, 2013. Education: University of Leuven - Master's Degree, European Studies: Transnational and Global Perspectives, 2015 - 2017; Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem - Bachelor's Degree, History, 2011 - 2015; Budapest.



Rev. Piotr Mazurkiewicz, Professor of Political Sciences in Warsaw, former General Secretary of the Commission of the Bishops'

Piotr Mazurkiewicz is a priest from the Archdiocese of Warsaw, Poland. Born in 1960, he was ordained a priest in 1988. He is a professor of Political Science at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, where he directs the Institute of Political Science. He is also a member of the Research Council of the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy

of Sciences and a member of the Board of the European Society for Research in Ethics «Societas Ethica». At the service of the Polish Bishops' Conference, Fr Mazurkiewicz is a member of the Advisors' Group on the European Union and member of the Council for Social Affairs. He has collaborated on many occasions with COMECE, in particular, participating in the drafting of the report to the COMECE Bishops entitled «The evolution of the European Union and the responsibility of Catholics» published in 2004. He is a specialist in European studies, political philosophy, Catholic social teaching, social and political ethics. He is fluent in English, French, German and Italian.



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

Rabbi Avi Tawil is currently Director of the European Jewish Community Centre (EJCC), a Brussels based non-profit organisation that promotes Jewish Culture in Europe. The EJCC highlights the roots of Jewish culture in the European family for over millennia and its contribution to an inclusive European culture. In addition to that, it aims to encourage those who identify with Jewish culture to welcome our com-

mon responsibility and duty to the European Project which we are proud to belong. He was born and raised in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He studied rabbinical studies, Jewish Philosophy, and Kabbalah in the Rabbinical College of Canada in Montreal, Seminar of Jewish studies in Manchester, UK and at the Yeshivah Gedolah in Safed, Israel. He was ordained as Rabbi in the headquarters of Chabad in Brooklyn, NY, and taught Jewish Philosophy in the Yeshivah Gedolah of Buenos Aires. During 2001–2003 he was responsible for educational and humanitarian programmes with the Jewish community of Cuba and Patagonia. Since 2004, he lives in Brussels, Belgium with his wife and four young children, where he has developed a number of cultural projects aimed at intercultural dialogue in Europe. He has participated in several lectures and conferences where he advocated for better understanding and mutual respect between cultures and religions.



Ivica Tolić, MEP

Commodore Ivica Tolić is a flag officer of the Croatian Armed Forces with extensive expertise in military and security affairs. In the European elections in 2014 he was a candidate for the Croatian Democratic Union with the support of Croatian war veterans. He was a volunteer during the Croatian War of Independence from 20 July 1991 until the end of the war in 1996. He was awarded several times for bravery and merit throughout his career. He held a large number of high-level military commands during the war and in peace-

time: Deputy Commander, 3rd Infantry Battalion, 4th ZNG Brigade (1991); Commander, 3rd Infantry Battalion, 4th ZNG Brigade (1991-1992); Commander, 53rd Marine Battalion (1993-1994); Chief of Staff of the Southern Battlefield (1994-1995); Commander of the Southern Battlefield (1995-1996); Chief of Staff of the IV Military District of the Croatian Army (1996); Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander of the Croatian Navy (1996-1998), Commander of the Military-Maritime Sector South Adriatic (1999-2003); Fleet Commander of the Croatian Navy (2003-2008). He obtained an Engineer's Degree in Maritime Transport at the Maritime Faculty in Rijeka and a Master's Degree in Economics at the Faculty of Economy in Split. In addition, he has attended several military schools and courses, including: the Naval Military Academy in Split (1991), Command-Staff School of the Croatian Army in Zagreb (1994), War School of the Croatian Armed Forces in Zagreb (1999), Senior Executive Course in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (2000), and the NATO Defence College in Rome (2005). MEP since 2016: member of the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee and substitute in the Transport and Tourism Committee.

SESSION IV and V - RELIGION, VIOLENCE AND PEACE: COOPERATING FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

SESSION IV - INTERFAITH RELATIONS FROM A CROATIAN PERSPECTIVE



Marijana Petir MEP

Born in 1975 in Kutina, Croatia. She graduated in biology and ecology at the University Of Zagreb - Faculty of Science and obtained a Master's Degree in theology at the Catholic Faculty of Theology (Zagreb).

She was Vice-President of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) and President of the grassroots organisation of the HSS in the Sisak-Moslavina county. She served two mandates as Member of the Croatian Parliament. She was Chairwoman of the Croatian Parliament's Deputy Club of the HSS and

Chairwoman of the Committee for Environmental Protection. She was a Member of the Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and of the Croatia-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee. She also served as an external member of the Croatian Parliament's Committee on Human and National Minority Rights as a representative of the Croatian Catholic Bishops' Conference. Positions in the Parliament: member- Science and Technology Options Assessment; member- agriculture and Rural Development; member- former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; member: Women's Rights and Gender Equality; substitute-Israel; substitute- Union for the Mediterranean; substitute - Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.



Rev. Željko Tanjić, Rector of the Catholic University of Croatia

Born in 1968 in Bjelovar (Croatia), Željko Tanjić has been a priest at the Archdiocese of Zagreb since 1994. He obtained a doctorate in fundamental theology (Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Rome). He taught at the Catholic Faculty of Theology, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia, and was the CEO of Kršćanska sadašnjost d.o.o., Publishing House of the Archdiocese of Zagreb. In 2011 he was appointed Rector of the Catholic University of Croatia. He published various

books and articles in the field of fundamental theology. In 2014 His Sanctity the Pope Francis appointed him a member of the International Theological Commission.



Davor Ivo Stier, Member of the Croatian Parliament

Davor Ivo Stier (born 6 January 1972 in Buenos Aires, Argentina) is a Croatian Democratic Union politician and diplomat. He was a member of the Croatian Parliament in 2011-2013, of the European Parliament in 2013-2016, as well as 13th Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia in 2016-2017. Stier was born in Buenos Aires where he graduated in Political Science and International Relations at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina, and later on in journalism.

Political career: Stier returned to Croatia in 1996 at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after which he worked in the Croatian embassies in Washington and Brussels, and by 2009 was foreign policy adviser to Prime Minister Ivo Sanader. At the 2011 parliamentary elections, Stier was elected as a member of the Croatian Parliament. He became a member of the Interparliamentary Cooperation Committee and the Committee for European Integration, and was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee. He was also nominated as a member of the Croatian Parliament delegation at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the Croatian Parliament delegation at the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the Republic of Croatia. Following Croatia's EU accession, at the first elections to the European Parliament in Croatia in April 2013, Stier won 14 005 votes on the list of

the HDZ coalitions and became one of the first Members of the European Parliament from Croatia. In the second election for the European Parliament in Croatia in May 2014, Stier again won a 26,432-vote mandate as a candidate on the list of HDZ's coalition made by HSS, HSP AS, BUZ, ZDS and HDS. In 2015, Stier published the book The New Croatian Paradigm: an Overview of Social Integration and Development. Stier was a Deputy Prime Minister of Croatia and the 13th Minister of Foreign and European Affairs in the Cabinet of Andrej Plenković from 19 October 2016 to June 2017. Parliamentary functions: member of the European Affairs Committee; member of the Foreign Policy Committee; member of the Interparliamentary Co-operation Committee; member of the Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.



**Rabbi Luciano Moše Prelević,
Chief Rabbi of Croatia and Chief Rabbi
of Montenegro**

Luciano Moshe Prelević is the Chief Rabbi of Croatia and Chief Rabbi of Montenegro. He was born in 1953 in Zagreb. He studied civil engineering in Split and Zagreb. In The Jewish Community of Zagreb Prelević intensified his religious life and devoted himself to study Judaism (Torah). In 1999 he went to Jerusalem for his Rabbinical studies. He studied in Shehebar Sephardic Center and Aish HaTorah Yeshivah where he graduated in 2007 as the top student. In 2008 he got the position as the Rabbi of The Jewish Community in Zagreb and two years later he became the Chief Rabbi of Croatia. In 2012. He was ordained as The Chief Rabbi of Montenegro. He is member of The Conference of European Rabbis (CER). Prelević also voluntarily serves the Jewish communities in Macedonia, Kosovo and Slovenia.



**Mufti Aziz ef. Hasanović,
President of Meshihat of Islamic
Community in Croatia**

Dr Aziz ef. Hasanović is currently the Director of Center of Halal Quality Certification in Croatia and of the Mehisat of the Islamic Community in Croatia. He was the Head Imann of this community in Zagreb until 2005. He has taken part in several international conferences held in Amman, Teheran, Vienna or Istanbul. He also participates frequently in round table discussions on a variety of topics of religious, cultural, social, educational and humanitarian character in Croatia, Austria, Slovakia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

SESSION V - INTERFAITH RELATIONS IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE



Ivana Maletić, MEP

Ivana Maletić is an economic expert with years of experience in the areas of public finance, budgeting and EU funds. She obtained a Master's Degree in Economics at the Faculty of Economy in Zagreb. She started working at the Ministry of Finance, initially as Associate Expert and Consultant, and then as Assistant Minister and Secretary of State. She is an internationally renowned lecturer and consultant in the area of financial management and has held numerous seminars on the subjects of financial management, budgetary processes, public finance reform, EU funds, regional development etc. She has published a large number of expert and scientific works, co-authored several significant books in the area of public finance and participated in numerous research projects. She has taken an active part in the negotiations relating to Croatia's accession to the European Union as Deputy Chief Negotiator for Chapter 22: Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments (EU funds). In the first Croatian elections for the European Parliament she has been elected as a representative of the Croatian Democratic Union.



**Metropolitan Emmanuel of France,
The Ecumenical Patriarchate**

He was born in 1958 on the island of Crete, Greece. He received his secondary education in France, attending the Sorbonne in Paris, before continuing his studies at the Catholic Institute and the St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute. Ordained a priest in 1985, Fr. Emmanuel continued his doctoral studies at the Holy Cross Institute of Theology in Boston, Massachusetts in the United States. Upon completion of his studies, Fr. Emmanuel was appointed vicar general of the Greek Diocese of Benelux. In 1995, he was appointed director of the Office of the Orthodox Church under the auspices of the European Union in Brussels, Belgium. On November 11, 1996, he was consecrated the auxiliary bishop of the Benelux diocese.



**Zdravka Bušić, State Secretary
in the Ministry of Foreign and
European Affairs**

Education: Cleveland State University, Bachelor of Arts, Political Science, Cleveland, Ohio, USA, 1979. Case Western Reserve University, Master of Arts, Library and Information Science, Cleveland, Ohio, USA, 1981. Work experience: researching and processing the rich archival materials of world-renowned writer and publicist Bogdan Radica for the purpose of preparing his bibliography (2014 - 2016); Croatian

Member of the European Parliament (2013 - 2014); Researching the literature of the Foreign Croatica Collection at the National and University Library in Zagreb (2010 - 2013); library advisor for computerization at the Croatian Institute for Librarianship at the National and University Library in Zagreb (2004 - 2009); advisor and Head of the Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia (1990 - 1995); archivist/Senior Librarian (1981 - 1990). Member of the Croatian Parliament for two terms (1995-2003): First term – President of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation; Head of the Croatian delegation to the Parliamentary Dimension of the Central European Initiative; Vice President of the Committee on Foreign Affairs; Deputy Head of the Croatian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; Member of the Delegation of the Croatian Parliament in the Inter-Parliamentary Union; and Member of the Sub-Committee for Cooperation with the European Parliament; Second term – Vice-president of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation; Member of the Croatian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; the Inter-Parliamentary Union; and the Sub-Committee for Cooperation with the European Parliament; Vice-president of the Committee on Migration; Refugees and Demography of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.



**Bishop Porfirije, Metropolitan
of Zagreb and Ljubljana of Serbian
Orthodox Church**

Metropolitan of Zagreb and Ljubljana dr. sc. Porfirije (Peric) was born on 22 July 1961 in Becej, northern Serbia. He finished primary school in Čurug, and the “Jovan Jovanovic Zmaj” Grammar school in Novi Sad. He graduated from the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Belgrade in 1986, and after that he attended postgraduate studies in Athens from 1986 until 1990. That year, upon the blessing of Bishop Dr. Irinej

of Backa, he joined the monastery of Holy Archangels in Kovilj, near Novi Sad, where he was ordained as hieromonk and became its abbot. During the ordinary meeting of the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the SOC in Belgrade on 14 May 1999 he was elected as Bishop of Jegar, Vicar of the Bishop of Backa. He defended his PhD thesis Possibility of knowability of God in St. Paul's understanding according to the interpretation of Saint John Chrysostom at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Athens in 2004. He became a lecturer at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology - Department of Pastoral Psychology - succeeding famous psychiatrist, academician Dr. Vladeta Jerotic. The Assembly of the Republic elected him as representative of all Churches and religious communities, to be a member of the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency, and in 2008 the RBA elected him its president. His expert theological works Bishop Porfirije published in magazines both in Serbia and abroad. He participated in quite a number of scientific conferences and symposia throughout the world.



**Karsten Dümmel, Director of the Kon-
rad Adenauer Foundation Office in Sa-
rajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina**

Dr. Karsten Dümmel was born in German Democratic Republic. At 17 he became one of the co-founders of an autonomous literary group. At 23 he was a leader of a human rights protection based opposition group. He was arrested four times by STASI, GDR's secret police, under accusation of taking subversive actions against the state, and put through “Zersetzung” a psychological warfare technique used by the secret

police against political opponents. He was condemned to six years of forced labour as a train cleaner, including ban on leaving his place of residence, house arrest, general ban on freedom of movement, and deprivation of his civil rights. In spring, 1988, he was ransomed by the Federal Republic of Germany. Following this, he enrolled to studies in rhetoric and literature. Nowadays, he is a writer, human rights activist, and a witness to the history of GDR. He acts as a spokesperson for Writers-in-Prison of the German Exil-P.E.N. He is also a member of the Circle of Authors of the Federal Republic of Germany and a visiting lecturer at the University of Mostar and the University of East Sarajevo. Since 1997 he is working for the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation in Leipzig, Stuttgart, Hamburg, Dakar, Bamako, Nairobi and an acting director of the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation office in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

COLLECTED SPEECHES

20TH ANNUAL EPP GROUP INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE WITH CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

**FROM UNDERSTANDING TO COOPERATION
PROMOTING INTERFAITH ENCOUNTERS TO MEET GLOBAL CHALLENGES**

Mairead McGuinness, First Vice-President of the European Parliament, responsible for dialogue with religions

Prime Minister,

Your Eminence, Excellencies,

EPP Party President

European Parliament colleagues, our colleagues on the Croatian delegation,

Dear friends,

Good morning to you all in beautiful Zagreb.

I would really love to be with you in the European Union's newest Member State in its historic capital city.

It must be particularly beautiful to visit Zagreb at this time in the run-up to Christmas. Unfortunately, I can't be with you for this very special 20th Anniversary event of the EPP Group's Intercultural and Religious Dialogue due to commitments on behalf of the European Parliament in Brussels and further afield. The 20th anniversary celebrations now being concluded have run throughout 2017 and I was delighted to have taken part in so many of the events.

Great credit is due to my colleagues György Hölvényi and Jan Olbrycht, Co-Chairs of the Working Group, as well as Paolo Licandro and the entire secretariat. The programme of activities for this anniversary year has been truly impressive.

At the beginning of the year President Tajani appointed me as Parliament's Vice-President responsible for implementing Article 17 of the Treaty, which is the legal basis for the EU's dialogue with churches and religions on the one hand, and with philosophical and non-confessional organisations on the other.

This role has allowed me become more and more aware of the rich mosaic that is Europe's diversity of religion and belief. It has also given me a deeper appreciation for the important role played by faith leaders in their communities, but also at national and international level.

On behalf of, or together with President Tajani, I have hosted a number of dialogue seminars for the Parliament this year, bringing together Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish leaders to discuss some of the major issues facing the EU, and Europeans, today. In June, in cooperation with our colleague Danuta Hubner and other Members of Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee, we discussed the Future of Europe.

It is clear that we cannot plan for what kind of Europe we want to build together without asking ourselves what values are at the foundation of the project, what is the moral and ethical framework that supports it. It is clear too that the contribution of people of faith matters a lot in this context.

Just yesterday on 6 December President Tajani and I hosted a further institutional dialogue with religious partners, this time with the focus on EU foreign policies. As food for thought for yesterday's seminar, the European Parliamentary Research Service produced a number of very interesting and relevant publications looking at:

- *The role of religious actors in peace and reconciliation*
- *The role of faith-based NGOs in humanitarian and development aid*

What is fascinating in looking at foreign policy issues is the major role that religious actors play in helping the EU achieve its goals. In foreign policy, religion is very much back on the agenda. This is not just the EPP group, or the European Parliament saying this. The European Commission and the EU's External Action Service are saying it too. Both in words and actions on the ground.

The 20th anniversary of the EPP Working Group offers an occasion to look back as well as look forward and I am delighted to see on the programme so many of those colleagues who played such a role in developing the Dialogue to where it is today. 20 years ago religion was in some ways marginalised from the European public space. The EPP Group has contributed in no small way to keeping religious dialogue in the public view and the public space.

It is important that we make the work of the European Parliament more widely known, whether at an institutional level or by the EPP Group. I am aware that there is sometimes a perception in some circles that the EU is no longer true to the values of the founding fathers, most of whom were deeply religious.

So the message must also be spread in those parts of Europe where this notion is taking root: that the EU is strongly committed to dialogue with churches and religions; that the EU respects the unique contribution of religion to European society; that the EU welcomes the contributions of faith-based actors both to shaping policy and helping make it a reality on the ground.

The choice of Zagreb for the 20th anniversary conference is a symbolic one as Croatia is our newest EU Member State, and it sends a message about the future where we seek to integrate the states of the Western Balkans. Here again churches and religious communities can play a crucial role, particularly in healing the wounds of past conflicts.

I have seen a similar role played by the churches in my own country, Ireland, in the context of the Northern Ireland Peace Process. Only last week I hosted a delegation of the Irish churches in Brussels where they came to discuss their worries about the negative impact of Brexit on community relations. They also came to talk about broader European issues, such as migration, where the Irish churches want to play a very positive and Christian role in welcoming those fleeing war, persecution and poverty.

Apart from the structured dialogue seminars which I host with religious leaders at the European Parliament, my role is also a representative one. I must be available to meet religious and non-confessional leaders and hear their concerns about all things European. This involves going out to meet faith communities in their places of worship or when they gather to carry out their own reflections.

Last month I participated in a “think-in” on the Future of Europe conducted by the Catholic Church at the Vatican. Quite a number of my EPP colleagues were also present at that great gathering, including our Group Chair Manfred Weber. The Vatican conference brought together political and religious leaders, including a number from other Christian churches, as well as civil society.

The Parliament has engaged in reflection and consultation on the challenges that lie ahead for Europe, and on what kind of Union is required to face those challenges. It is my sincere hope that churches and religious organisations can contribute to the public debate by underlining what the peoples of Europe have in common, starting with the human dignity of each and every person.

I referred already to the “Re-thinking Europe” conference held at the Vatican last month. Allow me to conclude with a quote from the speech delivered to us by Pope Francis. He said that: “Person and community are the foundations of the Europe that we, as Christians” - though the same could be said of all faiths - “want and can contribute to building. The bricks of this structure are dialogue, inclusion, solidarity, development and peace.”

I would add patience and perseverance.

In 20 years of activity the EPP Group's Intercultural and Religious Dialogue has allowed for dialogue, learning and reflection.

On that note, I wish all of my colleagues and friends gathered in Zagreb for this special occasion every success with the 20th anniversary conference.

Your work is so important not just for the EPP, but for Europe.

I wish you well.

Session I - MEMORIES AND LESSONS LEARNED DURING 20 YEARS OF DIALOGUE

Mons. Prof. Tadeusz Pieronek, Chairman of the International Krakow Church Conference Organizing Committee

PER L'EUROPA UNITA

(CONCLUSIONI DELLE 17 CONFERENZE DI CRACOVIA)

La Pontificia Università Giovanni Paolo II di Cracovia organizza ogni anno, a partire dal 2001, una conferenza internazionale intitolata 'Il ruolo della Chiesa Cattolica nel processo dell'integrazione europea'. L'obiettivo di tali appuntamenti annuali è quello di diffondere informazioni sul processo di integrazione europea, sui suoi molteplici vantaggi culturali ed economici, sulla sua importanza nel dissipare i dubbi e le paure che accompagnano i cittadini dei paesi che aderiscono all'Unione Europea. Proprio tale era il ruolo delle conferenze iniziali organizzate prima del referendum nazionale sull'adesione della Polonia alle Comunità europee nel quale nel 2003 la maggioranza dei polacchi si è espressa a favore dell'adesione. Allorquando nel 2004 la Polonia è diventata membro a pieno titolo dell'Unione, è entrata nella cerchia dei paesi responsabili per la struttura e le politiche di questa organizzazione. Ciò ha dato un nuovo, forte impulso a pianificare le conferenze successive che così continuano a svolgersi con scadenza annuale sempre in autunno; la prossima avrà luogo nel 2018.

Le tematiche vengono scelte ogni anno in modo molto semplice: basta seguire con attenzione tutto ciò che accade in Europa e nell'Unione europea per trovare sempre nuovi, interessanti spunti di riflessione e di confronto con la dottrina sociale della Chiesa cattolica, ed anche per avere l'occasione di suscitare giusti atteggiamenti dei cittadini verso le sfide che l'Unione europea, e quindi tutti gli abitanti degli stati membri, devono affrontare.

All'inizio i partecipanti cercavano soprattutto di trovare risposte alle domande sulle garanzie dell'identità nazionale e religiosa espresse dall'Unione, sulle difficoltà derivanti dalla presenza di milioni di musulmani e dai processi di laicizzazione in Europa. Gli argomenti discussi durante gli altri incontri sono stati i trattati europei, i momenti di crisi, la solidarietà europea, migranti, rifugiati e profughi, la dignità, la libertà e i diritti umani, la dimensione etica della politica, la crisi della famiglia contemporanea, la Brexit e l'incertezza sul futuro dell'Europa. È capitato di dover ritornare ad alcuni temi già discussi in precedenza, come la questione della migrazione di massa o della solidarietà europea, in quanto essi richiedevano un nuovo sguardo.

Gli organizzatori ed i partecipanti alla conferenza si adoperano per considerare e presentare questi eventi e problemi alla luce dei principi della dottrina sociale della Chiesa cattolica. Essi cercano anche di trarre conclusioni dal fatto che i valori fondamentali del cristianesimo e della cultura che ne è scaturita sono in contrasto non solo con l'islam e con la visione laica del mondo, ma anche con i valori professati dall'Unione che non di rado si oppone al cristianesimo. Desideriamo trovare un nostro spazio nella pluralistica comunità europea, rivendicando la libertà che ci spetta e non negandola agli altri.

Da Cracovia cerchiamo di apprezzare i successi, di osservare le vittorie e le sconfitte dell'Unione, con chiara consapevolezza che sono anche le nostre gioie e i nostri problemi, visto che facciamo parte della stessa famiglia degli Stati e delle nazioni libere. Tentiamo, in particolar modo, di mostrare che cosa la Chiesa cattolica, ma anche le altre Chiese e comunità religiose, possono offrire alla vita e alla crescita dell'Unione, nonostante la sua indifferenza, e a volte perfino ostilità nei confronti

del cristianesimo che per secoli ha plasmato la civiltà e la cultura europea. E continua a forgiarla, non ne è stato cancellato; milioni di cittadini dell'Unione sono cristiani delle varie confessioni.

Vale la pena di notare che le conferenze di Cracovia suscitano grande interesse. Ciò è comprensibile in quanto ogni volta affrontano le più attuali tematiche europee ed i relatori sono persone con elevate competenze e vasta esperienza. Da parte della Sede Apostolica vi hanno partecipato Segretari di Stato, dalla parte polacca presidenti e deputati europei, l'Unione è stata rappresentata da commissari ed eurodeputati, vi hanno preso parte specialisti e studiosi di tutta Europa la cui conoscenza diretta delle problematiche europee è di altissimo livello. Per 17 anni il numero dei conferenzieri è arrivato a circa 200 persone. L'atmosfera degli incontri di Cracovia è specifica, essendo soprattutto risultato della premura degli organizzatori e dei partecipanti per quel bene comune che è l'Europa unita. Quest'anno alla conferenza hanno preso parte 320 partecipanti.

I co-organizzatori della conferenza sono la Fondazione Konrad Adenauer in Polonia, la Fondazione Robert Schumann di Lussemburgo, Edizioni "Wokół Nas" di Gliwice, Frazione del Partito Popolare Europeo nel Parlamento Europeo, la delegazione polacca del Partito Popolare Europeo nel Parlamento Europeo, la Commissione degli Episcopati della Comunità Europea COMECE di Bruxelles. Con gli organizzatori collaborano anche le autorità locali del presidente della regione Małopolska e del sindaco di Cracovia.

Stephen Biller, former EPP Group Adviser responsible for Interreligious Dialogue

Your Eminences, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

all of life is a pilgrimage. Dialogue meetings of the group of the European Peoples' Party are staging posts on the pilgrimage of public service – time out from the hurly burly of political life – a sort of spiritual exercise for public service. Unlike any other group in the European Parliament, the European Peoples' Party bases its electoral programme around the transcendent dimension of the human person. Thus parliamentary Members of the European Peoples' Party offer Jewish, Christian and Muslim pastors a unique forum, as a bridge between the spiritual and worldly dimensions of the issues of our time.

So what are the seeds of and signposts for the group's religious dialogue? Where has the group come from in evolving religious dialogue? Where did I come from in supporting it? To my mind, to be fruitful this conference must follow-up on the discourse on 'thinking Europe' by Pope Francis, six weeks' ago! We need at the same time to take a look at the two religious dialogue processes pursued by the European People's Party. But you need to know from where I am coming! In 1969 on my appointment as first secretary at the British embassy in Bonn, and in the absence of the Anglican chaplain, the ambassador tasked me alongside economic work to take on ecumenical affairs. In the same year, on holiday in Rhodes, coincident with the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, I had a private audience with Metropolitan Spyridon, Archbishop of Rhodes and the Dodecanese.

My first immersion in Eastern Christianity was in 1976, when I was recruited by the European parliament to serve British parliamentarians in committee work. Sir Peter Kirk, British leader in the European Parliament, a man close to Prime Minister Edward Heath, told me that the party leadership wanted initiatives from me for new relations with the Vatican. It was only in 1981, for the first time since the reformation, that the United Kingdom reestablished ambassadorial links with

the Vatican. Now Lord Plumb, former British President of the European Parliament, has authorised me to disclose to this meeting, for the first time, this special duty in my work in the European Parliament, but safeguarding pontifical secret. With me as a non-Irish Roman Catholic, the party leadership aimed for closer relations with European Christian Democracy and for a special building block in what would become the good Friday agreement for Northern Ireland. Then in 1978 the Conclave of Cardinals elected Saint Pope John-Paul as Supreme Pontiff. For the next 27 years this great pope touched most of us and much of the world with his love. This great pope changed our history. Saint pope John Paul would provide signposts for the route to be taken in dialogue, a dialogue that the group of the European Peoples' Party would start in 1996. In July 1979, following the first direct elections to the European Parliament, the newly constituted group of European Democrats wanted an initiative for Poland. I was asked to take a sounding about it with the new pope. Henceforward polish affairs would be matters of the pontifical household. The pope already then indicated preparedness to accept an invitation to address the European Parliament. As an example of the Pope's priority for dialogue, he encouraged the setting up of the European Parliament ecumenical prayer group in 1980, administered by my office. Now in 2017 the prayer group continues to meet on Wednesday morning of every plenary session in Strasbourg.

Parliamentarians of all Christian traditions contribute to the monthly meditations. Later, in summer 1988, as a service for lord plumb, ahead of the historic papal address in the European Parliament, Marian Apostol and I mounted a special embassy to the pope. We took briefing material for the pope and his speech writer. During his address, the pope made the appeal to "enable both lungs of Europe to breathe." In effect the pope gave the leitmotiv for the group of the European Peoples' Party in accepting in 1995 the invitation from the Ecumenical Patriarch for dialogue. It was also the pope's wish that there should be an annual dialogue in Cracow on the role of the church in the process of European Integration. The

annual programme continues to be designed by Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek. In 1993 Saint Pope John Paul gave the world veritatis splendor, the splendour of truth. This gift takes on new significance in our time when 'fake news' confuses peoples' minds. For the religious dialogue of the group of the European Peoples' Party, adherence to truth about good and evil, about solidarity and justice, became signposts in dialogue with the churches. Veritatis splendor is indeed, for Jews, Christians and Muslims, a tool for dialogue. Later, in his encyclical letter in 1995, 'Ut unum sint', that all may be one, Saint Pope John Paul, referring to the last prayer of Jesus Christ, drew attention to the vistas that can be opened up through dialogue, vistas which might otherwise be closed to the human mind.

Thus inspired Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe might walk new paths together, address shared challenges together and identify solutions. Such inspiration needs courageous spiritual guidance and responsive believers. When in 1995 the Greek Parliamentarian, Nana Mouskouri, delivered to the group Chairman, Wilfried Martens, an invitation for dialogue from the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, I was asked to help. The result of reflections then with group Chairman Wilfried Martens centred on the following:

1 The group would assert the spiritual diarchy for Europe in the successors of the apostles Andrew at Constantinople and Peter at Rome

2 Through regular dialogue, under the aegis of the ecumenical patriarchate, the group would renew its political support for Christians in Turkey, and in particular for the ecumenical patriarchate, which is often under duress from the Turkish authorities

3 The prospective enlargement of the European Union to embrace nations, where the Orthodox Churches were repairing spiritually, required a dialogue platform on

pastoral issues faced by the churches

4 The traditional relationship of Orthodox Churches with temporal power would need to change, such that clergy would be free and independent for healthier spiritual and moral development of people

5 Through the themes of the annual dialogue, the group would provide flanking support for the Ecumenical Patriarchate for the eventuality of a pan-orthodox council – the holy and great council of the orthodox took place finally in 2016 in Crete.

Through the Robert Schuman foundation, the group would provide stagiaireships for young Orthodox men and women aspiring for public service. Again, through the foundation the group would provide leadership training for young people in new European Union member states. Such initiatives were seen as political seed for future Christian Democrat-type associations, associations which would grow organically in place of former communist structures. Summaries of the annual dialogue meetings organised under the aegis of the Ecumenical Patriarchate reveal a concentration on human values, rights and duties, on church state relations and on social policies. But let nobody take for granted the safety of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in turkey. One year after my retirement, in 2008, I made an own initiative visit to Ankara for a private audience of the Grand Mufti, Ali Bardacoglu, and for a meeting with the Minister for religious affairs, Mehmet Goermez. Among other things I suggested to them, in the context of Istanbul as a European city of culture in 2009, that Christianity should be featured with a particular role for the ecumenical patriarchate. Ankara did not want to favour one Christian tradition over another, and in any case there were only 3000 Orthodox Christians in Turkey. I sensed sadly that the Turkish authorities would prefer to forget the Christian memory of their country. Separated from the group's work with faith communities for

eleven years, I am nonetheless aware that you have devoted considerable human and financial resources to sustaining interreligious dialogue.

Thank you for that! Let me project ideas for future work! As Pope Francis, said at the recent meeting “Thinking Europe,” favouring dialogue in any form whatsoever is a fundamental responsibility of politics.

In the light of the pope’s remarks, the group should reconfigure the two existing annual dialogue processes, the annual international conference on the role of the Catholic Church in the process of European integration in Cracow, and this annual interreligious dialogue.

Reconfiguring each dialogue process must take into account the mission of each of the churches involved, but also the political aims of the group.

Discernment is called for in justifying the reconfiguration of each dialogue process, thus correlating church and group aims.

In “thinking Europe”, pope Francis suggested that Europe should be built of the bricks of dialogue. Inclusion, solidarity, development and peace. They are the core values of the fathers of Europe, the self-same fathers of European Christian democracy.

Pope Francis advised help for people in recovering their sense of community, a community with which they can feel connected. Thus a reconfigured Europe becomes a union of communities.

The Cracow dialogue process, which began in 1996, could be usefully developed as the foundation for the European community of Slavic peoples, as proposed in the nineteenth century by the Ukrainian writer, Taras Shevchenko. This process would embrace orthodox and catholic Christians, whose baptismal path was lit by patron saints of Europe Cyril and Methodius.

The title of the dialogue must then reflect the group’s ambitions for the process of European integration – which would take the title “dialogue for the bequests of the saints Cyril and Methodius for the process of european integration.”

With this title the group can at the same time cut the bickering as to whether we talk about the Roman Catholic Church, the uniate church or the orthodox church.

The second process began in 1996, would be renewed under the aegis of the ecumenical patriarchate.

This dialogue would involve spiritual and political leaders of the descendants of the prophet Abraham, ‘the father of all nations.’ May the image of Abraham in discussion with three strangers beneath the tree at Mambré inspire new ambitions for the group in this particular religious dialogue!

Now let me now come to what I believe to be the burning issue for this second process. There is an historic Muslim presence in west European states going back decades, dramatically increasing in recent years. Anxiously we note rising hostility to Muslims, even hate, in the host societies, reflected in new racist political movements now with parliamentary representation.

The Muslim umma in Europe has a grave responsibility to ensure that young Muslims learn, respect, and assimilate the culture and traditions of the nations that welcome them.

We as Christians, and Jews among us too, now have an opportunity to prove to you Muslims, that, as in the words of the prophet, we are your best friends.

Muslim religious life is healthy for a moral society. Muslim teaching must now

meet the needs of our time in European societies. In his 2017 New Year address to ambassadors accredited to the Holy See, Pope Francis drew attention to a ministerial recommendation of council of Europe for new educational material promoting religious tolerance and for educational initiatives involving religious communities. Based on evidence to the US congress, since 9.11 successive US governments have failed to persuade Saudi Arabia to undertake a root and branch revision of religious textbooks distributed to mosques throughout the world.

In this context I congratulate the government of Austria for implementing legislation for university qualification of the imamate, empowering preaching and teaching in German – a paradigm for other European governments.

The latest textbooks for 2016-2017 advise young Muslims not to befriend the enemies of Muslims and of Allah. The encouragement of violence is still on the curriculum. Treating a kufer – that is you and me- is not now considered a forbidden loyalty. But Saudi Arabia refuses to withdraw old textbooks from circulation.

In Europe, like other believers. Muslims benefit from religious liberty, while some among them attack our right to life.

I make you mindful of an answer given by the late king Abdullah, in an interview, that Saudi Arabia is to world Islam what the Vatican is to Catholicism.

It is time to involve the Saudi national council of Ulema and the world Muslim league in the second process of dialogue.

Together we can draw out the right references from the Koran in teaching coexistence, compassion, tolerance and peace.

Through its dialogue work, the group can prove that it has religious sensitivity and the religious knowledge to serve Europe’s Muslims and to bring about social harmony.

Then our new Muslim neighbours can stimulate a vast zone in Europe of prayer and work.

Muslims should know that prayer and work is the foundation on which saint benedict set Europe before the birth of Islam.

May the holy spirit, may sekina (Hebrew), may shakinah (Arabic) respectively inspire Christian, Jewish and Muslim contributions to the religious dialogue of the group of the European Peoples’ Party – Christian democrats for the greater glory of god and a for a more solid humanity!

AMEN.

Session II - NEW CHALLENGES

Rev. Dr. Manuel Enrique Barrios Prieto, Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue, Spanish Bishops' Conference

*Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Authorities,*

Dear friends,

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to participate in this 20th Annual Meeting of the Interreligious Dialogue and Intercultural Activities Service of the European People's Party. The title given to this meeting is: «From understanding to cooperation, promoting interfaith encounters to meet global challenges». The first two sessions of this meeting are dedicated to: «The role of religion in European integration process: expectations, potentials, limits», and the title of this present session is: «new challenges». It is also an honour and a pleasure for me to share this session with Mr. Drazen Bosnjakovic; Fr. Olivier Poquillon and Fr. Laurent Bassanese. My kindest regards to all of you.

What are the new challenges that we face in Europe? How do we, religious people belonging to different Churches and religious traditions, interpret these challenges and how can we come to terms with them? These are the questions I will try to answer in this brief speech.

I would like to start by quoting Pope Francis in his address some weeks ago at the conclusion of the Dialogue (Re)Thinking Europe – a Christian Contribution to the Future of the European Project. He asked the participants in this Conference: «What is our responsibility at a time when the face of Europe is increasingly distin-

guished by a plurality of cultures and religions, while for many people Christianity is regarded as a thing of the past, both alien and irrelevant?».

For Pope Francis, then, two new challenges that we face in Europe are the plurality of cultures and religions and the declining presence and relevance of Christianity. A very harsh diagnosis of the situation that we cannot ignore as believers and as Churches.

I would like to add to this picture of Europe that Pope Francis offers what I think is the best contribution for understanding modernity and the role of religion in our world, a contribution that the well-known sociologist of religion Peter Berger, who died a few months ago, offers in his last book: The many altars of modernity - toward a paradigm for religion in a pluralist age.

In this publication he argues that the inevitable consequence of modernity is not the decline of religion, as the proponents of the secularization theory thought, but pluralism, a pluralism that is not only characterized by the presence of different religious options co-existing in the same society, but also by the presence of what Berger calls the «secular discourse», a way to see and treat reality etsi Deus non darétur – as if God did not exist. This secular discourse is very influential in important areas of our lives, such as technology, bureaucracy and market economy, and it co-exists together with religious worldviews in the mind of individuals and societies, frequently in a difficult balance.

Therefore, another important challenge together with the two mentioned by Pope Francis -pluralism and the decline of Christianity- is the presence of the powerful

secular discourse that excludes God, initially for a methodological reason, but finally altogether from the lives of individuals and societies.

The two main reactions to this pluralism, motivated by the doubts it produces and the anxiety that it generates, are, according to Peter Berger, relativism and fundamentalism. Relativism, that can present itself in very sophisticated forms, denies the existence of objective truth or the ability to know it. Fundamentalism, on the other hand, tries to restore the taken-for-granted truth that pluralism has undermined. Both are dangerous for individuals and society as relativism tends to nihilism, undercutting the moral basis of society, and fundamentalism to fanaticism. For this reason, a very important challenge we face in Europe and all the modern world, is finding a way to live in a pluralist context, where different religious options are present, together with the powerful secular discourse, without falling into either, relativism or fundamentalism.

I think that this is the great challenge of our time in Europe and the world. Evidently there are also other challenges that we have to face, more sociological or political in nature, like the migration and refugee crisis that will be considered this afternoon in this meeting, the situation of family and the respect for human life, the identity of Europe, the presence of Islam, etc. As I am more philosophically minded than political or sociological, and as I think that the contribution that as Christians we can give to the European project is mainly in the areas of values and conscience, of being the soul of Europe as Pope Francis said quoting the author of the Letter to Diognetus in the speech I mentioned, I emphasize very much

pluralism, the decline of Christianity in the West and the secular discourse as the main challenges we are called to face as Europeans, as Christians, and as men and women that are both religious and sons of modernity.

What are possible ways to face these challenges in Europe? I will mention briefly four that I consider important. These are: respect for religious freedom, respect for the history and the social identity of Europe, a revitalization of the Churches in the line of what Saint Benedict did in the 6th century, and a strong personal conviction based on solid religious education.

Starting with religious freedom, we have to clearly state that this is a fundamental human right based on human dignity that is of paramount importance for peace. We have to defend this right always and everywhere, even when we wouldn't be inclined to do so, as when other religions occupy spaces in our cities and institutions that we cherish, or ask us to respect their traditions that are in conflict with ours, or propose to their faithful believes that we consider false or possibly harmful for their human growth as individuals. As long as other fundamental human rights are not compromised, we have to guarantee this right for all, as the Second Vatican Council demanded in its declaration on Human Dignity, a document that was promulgated in the last session of the Council after much discussions and clarifications.

Secondly, the right to religious freedom has to be respected in a specific context, not in an imaginary one or one that we artificially want to create for ideological

reasons. Our countries in Europe have their history and culture, a history and culture marked deeply by Christianity and in many of them the overwhelming majority of the population regards itself as Christian. This, in justice, cannot be ignored and must be taken into account when laws are passed. Religions are equal in terms of religious freedom but are not equal with regards to a specific place with its history, its culture and its population. Sometimes one has that impression that what motivates certain laws are ideological reasons with a secularistic bias that seek to make all religions equal under the umbrella of the secular discourse, rather than an honest attempt to improve the common good of the people respecting their beliefs and values.

Thirdly, I think that in this historic moment the Churches are called to be a «creative minority» in our society, to use an expression that Pope Benedict XVI used. Creative minorities as were the monasteries founded by Saint Benedict in the twilight of the ancient world. Being a creative minority means having something different and authentic to offer to our world in terms of values and way of life. This implies shifting from a comfortable sociological Christianity where one is born Christian and takes it for granted, to a more personal and committed one, fruit of a clear personal choice. This is an inevitable process in the modern world, though some Churches might not like it. I think it can be considered a sign of the times calling us to a change in the way we live our Christian life and our belonging to the Church. Peter Berger thinks that modernity can be defined as a shift from destiny to choice and that voluntary association is the typical social form of religion in our times. Personal choice then, willingly or not, will be a characteristic of Christianity in the near future and this, instead of being something negative, can lead us to a more authentic form of religion that can give a real contribution to

the future of Europe, as the monasteries founded by Saint Benedict did in the past. Small creative Christian communities where we experience being recognized and accepted as persons in genuine relations to others and open to the transcendent, can help to «revitalize Europe and to revive its conscience».

Finally, I believe it is important to favour serious religion education capable of giving a solid ground for adult faith in the modern world, a faith that can keep together the secular discourse that is so effective in different realms of our life, with the transcendent dimension of existence. This solid religious education should be as serious and well founded as the education people receive in the secular dimensions of reality if we want to avoid the risks of relativism, fundamentalism and populism that are the new «spectres» that are haunting Europe today.

Thank you very much!

Rev. Laurent Basanese SJ, Director of the Centre for Interreligious Studies at the Jesuit University 'Gregoriana' of Rome

« La tâche du prochain siècle... va être d'y réintroduire les dieux », estimait André Malraux, ancien Ministre de la Culture du Général de Gaulle. Le prochain siècle, nous y sommes. Probablement Malraux n'avait pas prévu que les dieux reviendraient de manière aussi violente, peut-être à force d'être ignorés. Mais les dieux, ce sont les hommes qui les font vivre, qui les incarnent par leurs revendications et leurs comportements individuels et communautaires. Quelle société voulons-nous pour nous et pour nos enfants ? Il faut bien faire attention à ne pas réintroduire n'importe quel dieu (n'importe quelle idéologie), ou au moins être conscient de ce qu'ils nous demanderont une fois qu'ils prendront la parole, une fois qu'ils seront installés dans les temples de nos sociétés.

J'estime que les défis que nous devons affronter aujourd'hui (et non pas demain) sont spirituels et politiques. La portée éthique et sociale des croyances et des politiques est le critère le plus immédiatement visible de la cohérence d'une foi, d'une philosophie, d'un système de pensée. Il s'agit, en outre, d'un terrain concret (cette portée) sur lequel les religions aiment se retrouver, se stimuler, voire se défier. Car, bien sûr, la question de Dieu (la « réintroduction des dieux ») n'est pas seulement théorique, mais éminemment pratique : l'« incarnation » d'une spiritualité dans les actes est un argument majeur qui permet de sonder ses fondements. Pour autant, il ne faudrait pas faire « comme si » seule l'orthopraxie importait, et laisser les questions philosophico-théologiques à d'autres experts : orthodoxie et orthopraxie vont de pair car ce sont les croyances qui informent des attitudes concrètes, qui sont à l'origine et donnent forme à des comportements bien visibles. Ce serait aussi une erreur de mettre entre parenthèse les credos, sous prétexte qu'ils sont jugés sources de conflits : la vanité, les mauvaises passions et les calculs machiavéliques en sont bien plus l'origine, comme l'avait parfaitement compris Thomas Hobbes au XVII^e siècle :

Car telle est la nature des hommes que, quelque supériorité qu'ils puissent reconnaître à beaucoup d'autres dans le domaine de l'esprit, de l'éloquence ou des connaissances, néanmoins ils auront du mal à croire qu'il existe beaucoup de gens aussi sages qu'eux-mêmes.

D'où son souhait d'instituer un « dieu mortel », Léviathan, pour maintenir toutes les parties en respect, par la crainte du glaive.

L'acte de croire n'est pas une « valeur pure », une élévation purement spirituelle, une simple conviction absolument respectable en soi, car il n'est jamais déconnecté d'un contenu sur lequel il se fonde : tout croire est intimement lié à ce qui est cru et ne se résume jamais à un simple abandon de confiance. Certes, il ne s'agit pas de porter directement un jugement de valeur sur la « conviction personnelle » d'un croyant, mais les « raisons de croire » peuvent et doivent être soumises à l'analyse et à la critique. Il existe, de fait, des croyances qui conduisent à soutenir des philosophies absurdes ou à poser des gestes insensés. Le médiéviste Rémi Brague note, avec pertinence, que l'« on peut « croire » aux soucoupes volantes ! Il y avait des nazis sincères et des léninistes convaincus. Et les pères carthaginois qui faisaient brûler vifs leur fils en sacrifice au dieu Moloch... devaient très fort « y croire »... Une croyance vaut ce que vaut son objet, ni plus ni moins... On ne peut respecter que des personnes. »

Les positions théologiques sont variées aussi bien en christianisme qu'en islam au sujet de la croyance au Dieu unique, mais il n'est pas possible de dire tout et son contraire, surtout lorsque l'on prend au sérieux les textes fondateurs et les interprétations officielles ou celles des docteurs : il existe, bel et bien, des courants dominants – des écoles – qui font autorité et emportent l'adhésion d'un grand nombre. Mais avant de penser l'avenir, il faut déjà connaître son passé et être éveillé sur

son présent. Pour ce qui est de l'Europe, si elle veut imaginer un « au-delà » d'elle-même dans le temps et dans l'espace, elle doit d'abord connaître, estimer voire rendre justice à la pensée chrétienne qui comporte également une grande tradition historiographique, artistique, exégétique, théologique, juridique et mystique. Non plus « mettre de côté » donc, mais « mettre à plat », repartir sur des bases saines, considérer – si possible – de manière dépassionnée cet héritage, pour pouvoir ensuite estimer les croyances de l'autre, afin de juger raisonnablement ses promesses.

Pratiquement donc, les croyances – religieuses ou philosophiques – informent des attitudes concrètes, politiques, par exemple en matière de pardon, de sagesse, de charité, et donc de vivre-ensemble. Ces valeurs se retrouvent dans les deux systèmes principaux de pensée religieuse présents en Europe, l'islam et le christianisme, mais ils ne recouvrent pas identiquement les mêmes domaines. S'ensuivent alors immédiatement des questions fondamentales pour l'homme et pour l'avenir de notre civilisation : [Quant au pardon :] est-ce que je dois pardonner seulement à mes amis, ou bien irais-je jusqu'à mes ennemis ? [Quant à la sagesse :] est-ce que je me contente de rendre grâce en considérant l'harmonie de la création et la beauté du monde, ou bien je reconnais que la sagesse de Dieu veut se communiquer en personne aux hommes, qu'elle est accessible mais souvent rejetée ? [Quant à la charité :] est-ce que, finalement, je décide de vivre et d'aimer à la manière d'un héros en étant prêt à mourir pour la Nation, pour les miens voire même pour le Dieu-démon-peuple, ou bien à la manière du Christ en étant prêt à mourir pour Dieu et pour tout homme, même l'étranger, même l'homme méchant et injuste ?...

Débattre ne signifie pas forcément se battre, et le silence n'est pas automatiquement synonyme de paix ou de compréhension mutuelle mais peut très bien, aussi, être source ou signe de violence et d'injustice. Pour cela, il ne suffit pas de se contenter

du « plus petit commun credo », une sorte de noyau rationnel et naturel comme base de tolérance, une « religion de Noé » où l'on préfère considérer l'orthopraxie plutôt que l'orthodoxie. Le vivre-ensemble dépendra de notre attitude spirituelle, intérieure, et pour choisir cette posture spirituelle et intérieure, il faut faire silence et réfléchir. La raison humaine – tout comme le christianisme et l'islam – a vocation à l'universalité : l'homme ne peut se satisfaire d'un abandon de la quête du vrai, ni d'être enfermé dans un système injustifié, qui refuse de rendre compte de ses fondements, au risque de devenir un système injuste. Et ce qui était valable hier l'est peut-être encore plus aujourd'hui, à l'heure de la mondialisation, où il est incomparablement plus aisé d'obtenir une connaissance objective de « l'autre », de personnes ou de communautés différentes.

Les défis sont spirituels (intérieurs) et politiques (pratiques). Ils interpellent tous les jours notre conscience d'homme. Pas seulement l'un ou l'autre (défis spirituels ou politiques), mais les deux ensemble, qui se soutiennent et s'entraident : le défi spirituel empêche le politique de sombrer dans l'activisme et la course en avant ; le défi politique empêche le spirituel de s'enfermer sur soi et de tomber dans la science-fiction. Tous deux doivent être passés au crible de la raison, le plus grand don que Dieu ait fait aux hommes, raison rigoureuse et optimiste. Optimiste, à condition que nous la formions, que nous prenions le temps et les moyens – y compris financiers – pour la former, et que nous l'exercions pour le bien de tous.

Session V - INTERFAITH RELATIONS IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, Ecumenical Patriarchate

Mesdames et Messieurs les Députés européens,

Honorables représentants des Eglises et communautés religieuses,

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Avant d'offrir ces quelques réflexions en introduction à notre session, permettez-moi de vous transmettre les meilleures salutations du Patriarcat œcuménique qui suit avec le plus grand intérêt les travaux de cette 20^e réunion annuelle du Groupe PPE pour le dialogue interculturel avec les Églises et Institutions religieuses.

L'objet de notre session est dédié aux relations interreligieuses dans le sud-est européen. Comme vous les savez aussi bien que moi ces relations ne vont pas de soi. Elles ont souvent été entachées de conflits, malheureusement sanglants, au point qu'un terme peu flatteur sera consacré à ce phénomène : la balkanisation. En effet, la montée du nationalisme au cours du 19^e siècle, les guerres balkaniques de 1912 et de 1913, les deux guerres mondiales du 20^e siècle, les conflits en Ex-Yougoslavie, les tensions turco-grecques, tous ces événements – et bien d'autres que j'ometts par manque de temps – ont affreusement complexifié, non seulement l'équation géopolitique régionale, mais aussi la capacité de cette riche mosaïque ethnique et religieuse à coexister.

J'aimerais dire ici qu'il ne s'agit pas tant d'une question religieuse que d'une question de représentation, c'est-à-dire de l'emploi de la dimension religieuse pour se définir, et en se définissant pour se distinguer de l'autre. Cette capacité à dire l'autre tout en se définissant soi-même appelle la qualité de séparation du fait religieux dans son expression identitaire. Les appellations politiques prennent une

dimension sacrée. Les discours nationaux sont autant de catéchismes. Les lieux de mémoires deviennent des chapelles. Les symboles organisent le tissu social. Le pluralisme religieux sur lequel s'appuient les relations entre les différentes traditions spirituelles rend parfaitement compte de ces difficultés. Les mémoires sont encore porteuses des douloureuses cicatrices de l'histoire. L'Union européenne peut alors y jouer un rôle déterminant. Pour cela, il faut dépasser les thèses de Samuel Huntington à propos du « choc des civilisations » théorisé dans le prolongement des conflits yougoslaves. Penser l'intégration régionale des Etats doit donc être lié au traitement de l'interreligieux et de l'interculturel. Le contexte européen doit servir de facilitateur à cet objectif.

Mais la réalité résiste souvent aux désirs les plus bienveillants. Les mouvements les plus nationalistes attisent la peur en Europe et font planer sur l'islam et sur les immigrés la responsabilité de ses propres faiblesses en ne se rendant pas compte qu'il existe une Europe pluraliste et interreligieuse. Le sud-est du continent, malgré les violences et difficultés que j'ai mentionnées, n'en est pas moins représenté par une diversité religieuse qui est aussi caractéristique d'une position géographique au croisement de l'Occident et de l'Orient. Judaïsme, christianisme (orthodoxe, catholique et même protestant) et islam y sont représentés à des degrés divers dans une tension toujours complexe et souvent héritée de la fin de la période ottomane. Le rapport de force entre minorités et majorité est conditionné par plusieurs siècles de cohabitation et de coexistence qui ne vont pas non plus sans une forme de domination à laquelle a répondu le désir de liberté et d'indépendance. Cependant, placés sous influence communiste, de nombreux pays de la région à l'exception de la Grèce, voire de la Turquie, ont vu la question religieuse puissamment opposée par le pouvoir politique. Les irrédentismes nationaux de la fin du 19^e siècle ont ressurgi telle d'une boîte de Pandore en attestant de la fusion du religieux et de

l'ethnique. C'est à cette question, d'ailleurs, que le Concile de Constantinople a tenté de répondre en 1872 en condamnant l'ethnophylétisme comme « hérésie ecclésiologique » selon les termes de l'Encyclique du Saint et Grand Concile de l'Église Orthodoxe de juin 2016.

Le Saint et Grand Concile de souligner l'importance du dialogue interreligieux dans ce contexte : « Le dialogue interreligieux franc contribue au développement d'une confiance mutuelle dans la promotion de la paix et de la réconciliation. L'Église lutte pour rendre plus tangible sur terre la 'paix d'en-haut'. La véritable paix n'est pas obtenue par la force des armes, mais uniquement par l'amour qui 'ne cherche pas son intérêt' (I Co 13, 5). Le baume de la foi doit servir à panser et à guérir les plaies anciennes d'autrui et non pas à raviver de nouveaux foyers de haine. » (par.17)

Mais l'équation géopolitique régionale a besoin d'être décryptée pour mieux en comprendre les enjeux religieux et interreligieux. Un peu schématiquement, les appartenances religieuses organisent les appartenances nationales. On dira que les Grecs, les Roumains, les Serbes, les Monténégrins, les Bulgares sont orthodoxes ; que les Croates sont catholiques, de même que les Slovènes, les Hongrois et que les Bosniaques, la grande majorité des Albanais et des Kosovars sont musulmans, et avec eux les Turcs. Aussi, les alliances géopolitiques qui naissent de cette répartition confessionnelle, somme toute un peu rapide, s'expliquent en partie, et en partie seulement, à l'aune du paysage religieux de la région. D'ailleurs, la religion n'est certainement qu'un marqueur identitaire parmi d'autres, au même titre que la langue, par exemple. Il est intéressant de noter que le maillage confessionnel ne se superpose pas parfaitement au maillage linguistique. Il existe des bulgarophones musulmans. Le serbo-croate est parlé au-delà des frontières de la Serbie et de la Croatie.

Je l'ai dit, l'argument religieux possède une place centrale dans le développement des idéologies nationales, il sert aussi à définir les représentations antagonistes de l'Autre à partir des différentes mémoires confessionnelles. L'opposition entre catholiques et orthodoxes continue à être nourrie par les événements de la quatrième croisade de 1204. Au-delà même de la religion en soi, les symboles religieux sont un vecteur particulièrement puissant du rapport de force existant entre les peuples. Il suffit de voir comment certains lieux de culte ont changé d'allégeances confessionnelles. D'autres ont d'ailleurs été tout simplement détruits. Ces politiques hégémoniques rendent bien compte de la difficulté qu'il y a à distinguer le religieux de l'ethnique.

Il faut mettre ici un bémol. Car l'approche jusque-là proposée n'aborde que trop peu la dimension infra nationale et minoritaire qui structure les rapports de forces et alliances régionales. En effet, à la suite de la chute du mur de Berlin, la recomposition politique des Balkans a ajouté à l'opposition orientale et occidentale, une fracture de la réalité pluriethnique de cet espace géographique, héritier de l'Empire ottoman. La géopolitique du sud-est de l'Europe est avant tout une géopolitique des minorités. Je veux dire par là que les États sont rattrapés par le réel. Comme l'indique le Dictionnaire de géopolitique à propos du terme « minorités » : « La grande variété de types de minorités se résume géopolitiquement à quelques schémas de comportement. Une minorité peut être utilisée par un pays de façon offensive pour déstabiliser un voisin (...), soit de façon défensive pour se protéger, ce qui est plus rare (...) Quoi qu'il en soit, le fait minoritaire sous toutes ses formes demeure un levier géopolitique majeur. » On le comprend suffisamment bien, les minorités sont trop souvent instrumentalisées au profit des agendas politiques des États. Indépendamment de cela, les Balkans sont pluriels et la survie des minorités religieuses constitue la clé pour comprendre son passé et certainement aussi son futur.

Il y a ici une opportunité pour redécouvrir le lien de proximité qui existait entre les populations, lien marqué par les mariages, voire par une forme de syncrétisme religieux créant une véritable circulation d'une religion à l'autre. Je mentionne juste pour exemple et désirant n'établir aucune règle : les linovamvaki à Chypre. Certes, les institutions religieuses n'apprécient guère ce type de rapprochement le plus souvent déterminé par des conversions. Mais les faits existent et témoignent bien de proximités intercommunautaires qui, même si elles ne sont pas généralisées, tendent à attester d'une perméabilité communautaire et religieuse pouvant servir de point de départ pour un dialogue renouvelé. Elle atteste aussi de la réalité du vivre ensemble.

D'autres interrogations émergent peu à peu : quelle place de la religion dans les définitions de l'identité nationale à l'heure où la religion est elle-même en crise ? Si les gens croient de moins en moins, comment cela influe-t-il sur les questions identitaires ? Comment intégrer à cette réflexion le dialogue interreligieux ? Enfin, il nous faudra aussi réfléchir à la place de la crise migratoire en Europe en articulant l'interreligiosité et les questions d'intégration dans le sud-est européen.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Chers amis,

Je tiens seulement par ces quelques réflexions en guise d'introduction à offrir une perspective d'ouverture permettant aux intervenants d'engager un dialogue les uns avec les autres. Permettez-moi enfin de terminer ma communication en vous citant les propos du professeur de géopolitique, Georges Prévélakis : « Comment expliquer le comportement balkanique ? Pourquoi ces explosions de passion, dont toute l'Europe subit l'influence déstabilisante ? Contrairement à d'autres régions du monde, dans les Balkans, l'analyse économique explique peu de choses. Plus qu'ailleurs, les réactions politiques y sont conditionnées par des facteurs culturels, comme la religion, l'histoire, le sentiment identitaire. »

Merci de votre attention!



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l-r: Karsten Dümmel, Director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Office in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Zdravka Bušić, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Ivana Maletić MEP (EPP Group, Croatia), Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, Ecumenical Patriarchate, and Bishop Porfirije, Metropolitan of Zagreb and Ljubljana of Serbian Orthodox Church



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