



COMECE–CSC-KAS project

ISLAM, CHRISTIANITY AND EUROPE

BACKGROUND

The European Union has declared the year 2008 “European Year of Intercultural Dialogue”. The initiative aims at reinforcing social cohesion and civic peace in Europe. It stems from the acknowledgement that Europeans must learn to live together in diversity increased by circulation of people and ideas. An important aspect of this increased diversity is the growth of the number of people of Muslim origin in a traditionally majority Christian space. With regard to EU’s external policy, the year 2008 seeks, among other things, to develop EU’s relations with Mediterranean partner countries, anchored in the Arab-Muslim civilisation.

As a part of their contribution for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community (COMECE), the Church and Society Commission (CSC) and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), in association with Muslim partners, will organise a series of seminars under the overall theme of “Islam, Christianity and Europe”.

- The target audience of the seminars are EU politicians and civil servants. The main rationale is to expose the complexity of issues linked to Islam, Christianity and Europe and by doing that to question stereotypes.
- Each seminar is to be arranged in the form of a panel discussion with a moderator, an academic expert, a Muslim speaker, a Christian speaker and a Member of the European Parliament in charge of the synthesis.
- The seminars are hosted by the European Parliament in Brussels.
- Interpretation is provided in English, French and German.

Further information:

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17 April, 15:00-17:00

**Intercultural dialogue: response to which problems?
Christian and Muslim perspectives**

Which, out of the problems faced by Muslims living in Europe, are directly related to religious and cultural aspects and which are essentially socio-economic? What is the specific contribution of Muslim and Christian communities, and intercultural dialogue, to the solution of these problems?

29 May, 15:00-17:00

**Visibility of religion in the European public space:
the question of worship places
and religious symbols in clothing**

Why are religious symbols, for example, the symbols of Christianity and Islam, perceived so differently in the European public sphere?

3 July, 15:00-17:00

'Christian Europe' and Islam in Europe

How does 'Christian Europe' receive Islam in Europe? How to address the fear of 'islamisation of Europe'? What are the chances for 'Europeanisation' of Islam? Which are the driving forces within the Islamic communities which foster this development? Should public authorities encourage 'Europeanisation' of Islam?

11 September, 15:00-17:00

**The external relations of the European Union with Muslim countries
and international responsibility
of religious communities**

What contribution can religious communities do in promoting reciprocity, reconciliation and solidarity?

