

Declaration on Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue

Following is the full text of the Declaration on Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue signed by the European leaders in the presence of His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan.

Noting that approximately 55 per cent of the world's population is either Christian or Muslim; and that perhaps 80 per cent of the world's population is either Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist or Confucian;

Concerned about the ever-renewed tensions between adherents of different religions and in particular between Christians, Muslims and Jews;

Realising the impossibility of true peace and harmony in the world without harmonious relations and understanding between adherents of the world's religions;

Mindful of the possibility of misusing, "cherry-picking" and citing out of context selected quotations from any Scripture to increase religious tension, hatred and violence;

Appreciating the efforts of His Majesty King Abdullah II Ben Al Hussein of Jordan in launching the historic Amman Message in November 2004 and in particular the unanimous international Islamic Consensus on its "Three Points" which proved and reestablished the fallacy of illegitimate and unqualified fatwas calling for hostility and aggression in Islam and, in the words of the late Grand Imam and Sheikh Al Azhar Professor Dr Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, constitute:

"The best resource for all those who wish to travel along the straight path in their words and in their actions, and in their spiritual and religious life."

Acknowledging that despite the many irresolvable and unbridgeable theological and religious differences and disagreements between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, there is nevertheless a central and essential common ground of faith, hope and love between these three monotheistic and Abrahamic religions - as proposed by the historic A Common Word Open Letter of October 13th 2007 - in the greatest Two Commandments of Love of God and Love of the Neighbour (Matthew 22:34-40 and Mark 12:29-31), however differently they be understood;

Echoing the words of His Holiness Pope Benedict at the King Al Hussein Ben Talal Mosque in Amman, Jordan, on Saturday, 9 May 2009, when His Holiness said:

"Of great merit too are the numerous initiatives of inter-religious dialogue supported by the Royal family [of Jordan]... and the more recent Common Word letter which echoed a theme consonant with my first encyclical: the unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbour, and the fundamental contradiction of resorting to violence or exclusion in the name of God (cf. Deus Caritas Est, 16)."

And likewise the words of His Grace Dr. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2010:

“The appearance of the A Common Word [Open Letter] of 2007 was a landmark in Muslim-Christian relations and it has a unique role in stimulating a discussion at the deepest level across the world.”

Believing, moreover, that all the peoples of the world are bound together not only by their common humanity and their common planet Earth, but also by either Love of God and Love of the Neighbour or Love of the Good and Love of the Neighbour;

Supporting United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/65/PV.34 of October 20th 2010 establishing a voluntary World Interfaith Harmony Week as proposed by His Majesty King Abdullah II Ben Al Hussein of Jordan on September 23rd 2010 at the United Nations General Assembly, and calling for:

“The world’s people, in their own places of worship, could express the teachings of their own faiths about tolerance, respect for the other, and peace.”

Hoping that observance of the World Interfaith Harmony Week will prove to be, in the words of His Grace Bishop Munib Yunan, president of World Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilus III:

“An integrated international renaissance of spirit and intellect to save the world from the scourge of sectarian tensions, consequent communal violence and hatred.”

Call upon all governments, peoples and religions of the world to - in the words of the A Common Word Open Letter:

“Let our differences not cause hatred and strife between us. Let us vie with each other only in righteousness and good works. Let us respect each other, be fair, just and kind to one another and live in sincere peace, harmony and mutual goodwill.”

16 December 2010
European People’s Party Summit
Castle of Bouchout
Meise
Belgium

On behalf of the European People’s Party Presidency
EPP President Wilfried Martens,

In the presence of His Majesty King Abdullah II Ben Al Hussein of Jordan

In the presence of the following EPP leaders:

Wilfried MARTENS	EPP President
Jose Manuel BARROSO	President, European Commission
Jerzy BUZEK	President, European Parliament
Herman VAN ROMPUY	President, European Council
Traian BASESCU	President (Romania)
Silvio BERLUSCONI	Prime Minister (Italy)
Boyko BORISSOV	Prime Minister (Bulgaria)
Valdis DOMBROVSKIS	Prime Minister (Latvia)
Lawrence GONZI	Prime Minister (Malta)
Jean-Claude JUNCKER	Prime Minister (Luxembourg)
Angela MERKEL	Federal Chancellor (Germany)
Viktor ORBAN	Prime Minister (Hungary)
Fredrik REINFELDT	Prime Minister (Sweden)
Iveta RADICOVA	Prime Minister (Slovakia)
Jyrki KATAINEN	Deputy Prime Minister (Finland)
Maxime VERHAGEN	Deputy Prime Minister (Netherlands)
Nicos ANASTASIADIS	Opposition leader (Cyprus)
Janez JANSNA	Opposition leader (Slovenia)
Enda KENNY	Opposition leader (Ireland)
Mariano RAJOY	Opposition leader (Spain)
Antonis SAMARAS	Opposition leader (Greece)
Michel BARNIER	EPP Vice President, UMP (France)
Mario DAVID	EPP Vice President, PSD (Portugal)
Peter HINTZE	EPP Vice President, CDU (Germany)
Rumiana JELEVA	EPP Vice President, GERB (Bulgaria)
Jacek SARYUSZ-WOLSKI	EPP Vice President, PO (Poland)
Antonio TAJANI	EPP Vice President, PDL (Italy)
Corien WORTMANN-KOOL	EPP Vice President, CDA (Netherlands)
Ingo FRIEDRICH	EPP Treasurer, CSU (Germany)
Antonio LOPEZ-ISTURIZ	EPP Secretary General, PP (Spain)
Karel SCHWARZENBERG	Deputy Prime Minister (Czech)
Mikheil SAAKASHVILI	President (Georgia)
Sali BERISHA	Prime Minister (Albania)
Nikola GRUEVSKI	Prime Minister (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
Jadranka KOSOR	Prime Minister (Croatia)
Bakir IZETBEGOVIC	Bosnia Member of the Presidency of BiH (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Alaksandar MILINKIEVIC	Opposition Leader (Belarus)
Vlad FILAT	Prime Minister (Moldova)