

# **EURO-ARAB MEETING AND PLATE-FORME COMMUNIQUE**

Some twenty Muslims and Christians from Europe and the Middle East met at the Ecumenical Institute, Chateau de Bossey, Switzerland, 9-11 July 2012. The meeting was motivated by the continuing dangers that current developments in the Middle East and Europe pose to our various communities. While Christians are concerned with threats to Christians in the Middle East, Muslims worry about discrimination against Muslims in Europe. The participants agreed that this is much too simple a way to understand what is going on. We need a deeper mutual understanding among our various communities across the region. We need Muslims worrying about the negative consequences of these threats on the Christian presence and role in the Middle East and on the Christian-Muslim conviviality in the region and the world over, as we need Christians concerned with the situation of all religious communities and the human rights of any individual.

We discussed a number of ways in which we can build bridges to combat misconceptions. We agreed that the common ground for our joint action is shared citizenship based on equal rights and mutual respect.

We decided to focus on a number of plans of action working with others who share our concerns:

1. Consider producing a set of guidelines and advice on how Muslims and Christians can deal with the media to ensure fair reporting on issues of joint concern.
2. Encourage a strong interreligious dimension in the initial and continuing training of religious leaders.
3. Participate in continuing debates about religion and citizenship, plural societies, and concepts of integration.

It was agreed that the convenors should coordinate further thinking on these plans of actions.

We also encourage the creation of a Group for Muslim-Christian Dialogue at the European level.

We decided to meet again within twelve months to consider proposals for these projects and how to put them into effect. To this meeting we will invite representatives of organizations and projects with relevant experience.

We appreciate the initiative of the Arab Group for Christian-Muslim Dialogue (Beirut) and the Association for the Development of Interreligious Dialogue (Geneva) in organizing this meeting; we are grateful to the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Humankind (FPH) and to the Conference of European Churches (CEC) for sponsoring it and look forward to continuing and extending the cooperation with other institutions and NGO concerned with interreligious and intercultural cooperation.

Bossey/Geneva, July 11, 2012

[Arabic and French translations available]