



PRESS RELEASE

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CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe
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DIALOGUE IS NOT ENOUGH!

Jewish and Muslim Organisations Join to Create European Platform for Co-operation

Brussels, 21 November 2007 – Driven by the desire to go beyond dialogue to confront prejudice and hatred within and towards their communities, European Jewish and Muslim grassroots organisations have joined to create a European Platform for Jewish Muslim Co-operation, to be launched at an event sponsored by Richard Howitt MEP at the European Parliament on 27 November.

The Platform is a key outcome of the first European Conference on Jewish Muslim Dialogue held in April 2007. It was felt that, whilst dialogue is an important first step in bringing Jewish and Muslim communities together, it is essential to move beyond dialogue to co-operation, to show solidarity with each other and to build trust between the two communities. The Platform was set up to address these issues.

The Platform launch will see the presentation of the results of research demonstrating positive approaches to Jewish Muslim dialogue and co-operation in Europe, examples of which will be on display at the event. Richard Howitt MEP, who is sponsoring the event, says 'In the run up to 2008, European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, I am sure that the European Jewish Muslim Co-operation Platform will be a key tool in bringing together Jewish and Muslim communities, at all levels, to go beyond dialogue to actually working together with a spirit of co-operation and partnership. Too often we focus all our attention on difference and division, today we are working to forge and build alliance.'

The launch will also promote the Declaration of Support for Jewish Muslim Co-operation – the Platform's founding document. The Declaration pledges support for Jews and Muslims 'committed to foster positive intercultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic relations based on mutual acceptance, respect and understanding', and has to date been signed by representatives of some 26 organisations in 8 countries. Signatories include Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid, Chief Rabbi of Strasbourg René Gutman, CIDI (Centre for Information and Documentation on Israel) Director Ronny Naftaniel, musician Sara Alexander, Schech Bashir Ahmad Dultz of the German Muslim League and Islam and Citizenship (Islam en Burgerschap) representative Famile Arslan.

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As Platform Chair Bashy Quraishy explains, 'Signing the Declaration of Support for Jewish Muslim Co-operation is a simple way for everyone, whatever their religious or cultural background, to show their commitment and support for this initiative aiming to help Jewish and Muslim communities to work together and stand in solidarity against all forms of racism and discrimination.'

The European Platform for Jewish Muslim Co-operation aims to support and empower grassroots dialogue and co-operation initiatives between European Jewish and Muslim communities while providing a forum to showcase good practice at a European level. Open to new members and countries, the Co-operation Platform is currently facilitated by *CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe* with the guidance of joint Jewish Muslim Steering Group. ENDS

For additional information or to arrange an interview please contact:

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

- The launch of the European Platform for Jewish Muslim Co-operation will take place on **Tuesday 27 November 2007 at 18.00** at the **European Parliament (Alterio Spinelli Building), Brussels**. Light refreshments will be provided.
- The event is open to all. Entry to the Parliament for those without prior authorisation can be gained by sending the following to events@ceji.org: full name, address and date of birth.
- The full text of the Declaration of Support for Jewish Muslim Co-operation and the list of signatories can be found at <http://www.ceji.org/dialogue/declaration.php>, where it is also possible to sign the Declaration.
- Further details of such initiatives in Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom can be found in the Mapping Reports of Jewish Muslim Dialogue, which can be downloaded from http://www.ceji.org/dialogue/mapping_reports.php.
- For more information about the Platform please visit www.ceji.org/dialogue or contact Co-ordinator Ruth Friedman at ruth@ceji.org.

About CEJI:

CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe stands with individuals and organisations of all religions, cultures and backgrounds to promote a diverse and inclusive Europe. CEJI works to combat prejudice and discrimination and to promote social cohesion through training and education, dialogue initiatives and advocacy at a European level.