



PRESS RELEASE

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CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe
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Jewish Muslim Co-operation Platform Launched

Brussels, 30 November 2007 – Representatives of Jewish and Muslim organisations and the European institutions came together in Brussels on Tuesday to pledge their support for Jewish Muslim Co-operation in Europe.

The launch of the European Platform for Jewish Muslim Co-operation, held at the European Parliament in Brussels, was attended by 85 people, including MEPs Paolo Casaca (Portugal), Richard Howitt (UK), Gay Mitchell (Ireland) and Jean Lambert (UK); Vladimir Šucha, Head of the Culture Unit of the European Commission; and the Director of the European Network Against Racism, Pascale Charhon.

The launch was sponsored by Richard Howitt MEP, who gave his wholehearted support to the initiative: 'Dialogue and co-operation are important on many levels. They are not simply matters of the communities involved in the dialogue projects, but they also help strengthen social cohesion and civic responsibility throughout society. In this sense, the Co-operation Platform launched here fits nicely with another initiative under discussion, namely that to extend the current EU Equality legislation, to ensure protection from discrimination based on religion or belief, but also from other forms of discrimination.'

The event was also addressed by the Chair of the Platform, Bashy Quraishy, who said: 'Jewish and Muslim communities in Europe have historically interacted and lived in harmony. Our initiative is taking the same path. It is our hope and desire that now is the time to revive the old spirit and move forward. This is a first step in that direction.'

A key moment of the event was the official opening for signature of the Declaration in Support of Jewish-Muslim Co-operation. Open to all, regardless of religious or cultural background, 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'.

The Declaration has been signed by representatives of 35 organisations in 9 countries to date. 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,

More/...

Sheikh Bashir Ahmad Dultz of the German Muslim League and Islam and Citizenship (Islam en Burgerschap) representative Famile Arslan. MEPs Richard Howitt, Jean Lambert and Cem Özdemir have also signed the Declaration.

The European Platform for Jewish Muslim Co-operation is a key outcome of the first European Conference on Jewish Muslim Dialogue, held in April 2007. The Platform 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 a joint Jewish Muslim Steering Group, made up of twelve representatives of Jewish and Muslim organisations from six European countries: Nadine Iarchy (International Council of Jewish Women), Linda Herzberg and Bashy Quraishy (Danish Jewish Muslim Co-operation Platform), Prof. Rabbi Michel Serfaty and Dr Djelloul Seddiki (Amitié judéo-musulmane de France), Olivia Cattan (Paroles de Femmes), Fadila Mehal (Les Mariannes de la Diversité), Prof. Almut Sh. Bruckstein (ha'atelier – Platform for Philosophy and Art), Ronny Naftaniel (CIDI), Famile Arslan (Islam en Burgerschap), Dr Richard Stone (Alif-Aleph UK) and Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid (Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony). ENDS

For additional information or to arrange an interview please contact:

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

- Photographs of the event will shortly be available from www.ceji.org/dialogue. In the meantime, please contact Katy Nicholson at communications@ceji.org for photos.
- 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.
- 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. A Jewish voice at a European level, CEJI works to combat prejudice and discrimination and to promote social cohesion through training and education, dialogue initiatives and advocacy work. CEJI holds Participatory Status with the Council of Europe.