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Intercultural Dialogue for the Greater Europe

The European Union and the Balkans

Zagreb, 23-24 june 2008



☛ Programme

☛ Participants

☛ Contributions

In light of the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the pertinence of intercultural dialogue for peace and stability in the Balkans, the first Global Jean Monnet Conference was held this year in Zagreb on 23-24 june in cooperation with the Center for EU Enlargement Studies of the Central European University in Budapest.

The Conference was organised by Jean Monnet Unit under the auspices of the Education and Culture Directorate General and it brought approximately 150 high-level representatives from the Balkan countries and the European Union, in the honourable presence of M. Jan FIGEL, member of the European Commission.

This landmark event of the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue included speeches, presentations and several panel discussions centred on three main topics :

- **Peace and reconciliation** between nations and cultures;
- **Reintegration of the Balkans** : Europe and solidarity;
- **Role of academics in the Intercultural Dialogue** in the enlarged Europe.

Through the Conference, the European Commission could create a **unique forum of dialogue** between leading opinion-makers from all Western Balkan countries. Moreover, that was the opportunity to have an **inter-religious dialogue** between high level representatives of three major religions. The discussions highlighted the usefulness of dialogue characterised by freedom of expression, diversity and respect for each other's opinions.

The encounters between academics and cultural actors resulted in several collaborative projects and exchanges of ideas on intercultural dialogue. In this sense, the Conference underlined the importance of organising concrete **people-to-people contacts** between opinion-makers.

Along the discussions, the Intercultural Dialogue could be draw as a **strategic instrument for peace, stability and conflict prevention**, forging effective partnerships for the mutual respect of fundamental rights, thereby influencing well-being and security of citizens both inside and outside the EU.

As Director General for Education and Culture, Ms Odile QUINTIN, said : "*the academic community and civil society have a crucial role in helping us to bring such a spirit of dialogue, mutual respect and compromise into practice. They are essential actors to turn the promise for dialogue into a reality and in preparing candidate countries for EU membership by raising the levels of knowledge and awareness*".

For the participating Jean Monnet professors and other academics, the Conference served as useful stimulus to **educate in the spirit of dialogue**.

The results of the Conference will be published soon in **book form**.

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News

Intercultural Dialogue for the Greater Europe: The European Union and the Balkans

Academics, religious leaders, policy-makers and NGO representatives came together at a conference in Zagreb on 23-24 June 2008 to discuss the role of intercultural dialogue for the Balkan region and for Europe as a whole.



The theme of this conference, organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture, was chosen in light of the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. It also follows the tradition to discuss this subject at Jean Monnet Conferences, annual high-level events on current policy priorities in the field of European integration. The relevance of intercultural dialogue both for peace and stability in the Balkans and for the European perspective of the Balkan countries was an important reason to hold the conference in this region.

Keynote speeches by leading policy-makers and high-level representatives of major religions centred on issues such as peace and reconciliation between nations and cultures, the reintegration of the Balkans and the role of academics in the intercultural dialogue in the wider Europe.

The Conference constituted the main event outside the EU, organised by European Commission in the framework of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

To know more:

- [The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue \(EYID\) 2008](#)
- [Past Jean Monnet Conferences](#)

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