



Conference Description

**Learning to live in a Multicultural World:
Fundamental Rights and Multiculturalism in Europe
2-7 July 2010, Caux, Switzerland**

Introduction

Issues related to religious and cultural diversity are becoming increasingly important in European societies. Not only has Europe become more culturally and religiously diverse, providing a rich opportunity for intercultural dialogue and understanding, but it has also undeniably become the scene of many modern-day conflicts in intercultural relations. This fact is reflected in the current debates on the protection of fundamental rights. On one hand, in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union launched in 2000, member states have agreed that to be able to share a peaceful future based on common values, the protection of fundamental rights is essential and needs to be strengthened. On the other hand there are ongoing discussions about implementing laws, banning minarets or forbidding headscarves, which often infringe crucial aspects of fundamental rights. As a result, emotional discussions between host communities and immigrants on religious freedom, gender equality, minority rights, anti-discrimination and freedom of speech have become a reality and are posing a challenge to the protection of fundamental rights on both sides.

Aim

The conference is a sequel to the successfully launched 2009 conference "Learning to live in a Multicultural World". The aim of the 2010 conference is to find ways and means of reconciling a respect for diversity with the protection of fundamental rights. A broad commitment is needed from governments, civil society and also on a personal level to build a common and peaceful future for everyone. We all have to take on responsibility to engage in the protection of fundamental rights so that it becomes a uniting and integrating force in our society.



The conference will tackle crucial issues in the current debate on fundamental rights in Europe: rights pluralism, children's rights, gender and the European migration policy. Through training Modules on religious diversity and anti-discrimination, intercultural mediation, citizenship, intercultural teaching and media ethics in a pluralist society, the conference provides an in-depth reflection on the individual's contribution to defending fundamental rights in Europe.

Who should attend

- Experts and practitioners in the field of fundamental rights and /or intercultural dialogue searching for exchange and networking possibilities both within their own fields as well as with people in other disciplines, at both national and international levels
- NGO representatives who are active in the field of fundamental rights and/or intercultural dialogue.
- People who are interested in this issue and want to start their own initiatives
- Open-minded people who are aware of the opportunities and challenges of a multicultural society
- Students and young adults who are willing to take responsibility for better cultural understanding

Intended Outcomes

- Defining fields of action in which joint commitment is needed.
- Empowering participants to start their own projects and initiatives.
- Sharing experiences between *Initiatives of Change* and other organizations.
- Preparation of a common European campaign on fundamental rights in a multicultural society.

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