

Press release - June 12, 2015

“Living together and disagreeing well”

European Commission organizes a high-level meeting with religious leaders

A high-level meeting with religious leaders will be held on June 16, 2015 at Berlaymont Palace, the European Commission headquarters in Brussels. This meeting will take place within the framework of the ongoing dialogue with churches, religions, philosophical and non-confessional organisations, based on Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty.

European Commission First Vice-President, Frans Timmermans will host the meeting; Antonio Tajani, Vice-President of the European Parliament is expected to attend. About fifteen religious leaders have been invited to discuss the topic “Living together and disagreeing well”. Cardinal Reinhard Marx, Archbishop of Munich and COMECE president, and Maria Voce, president of the Focolare Movement will participate in the name of the Catholic Church.

The list of participants includes the Rt Revd Christopher Hill CEC president, His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Lutheran Archbishop Antje Jackelén Primate of the Church of Sweden, Rabbi Albert Guigui, Chief Rabbi of Belgium and Imam Khalid Hajji General secretary of the *Conseil Européen des Ouléma Marocains*.

The main outcomes of this high-level meeting will contribute towards the preparation of the First Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights in the European Union to be held in Brussels on 1 and 2 October 2015. The theme will be “*Tolerance and respect: preventing and combating anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred in Europe*”.

Community building through dialogue is one of the Commission’s objectives. Under the “Europe for Citizens” Programme 2014-2020, the Commission co-finances, with a budget of Eur 185,5 million, projects to raise awareness of values such as tolerance and mutual respect. It aims at creating better inter-cultural and inter-religious understanding among citizens.

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