



URI Europe Dialogue-Letter No. 4

March/April 2005

Contents:

1. **[Welcome and news from the URI EEC \(European Executive Committee\)](#)**
 - a) [URI Europe-conference will take place in Brussels September 22-24, 2005](#)
2. **[European URI CC-activities – invitations, introductions, reports](#)**
 - a) [Report of the meeting of the URI Berlin CC on 19th February 2005 in a Hindu temple in Berlin-Kreuzberg, Germany](#)
 - b) [Invitation to Interreligious Peace Celebration 050505 in The Hague, The Netherlands](#)
 - c) [Sharing news of URI Activities in Finland](#)
 - d) [Diary of Events of the URI UK CC, United Kingdom](#)
 - e) [Report about the Jewish Christian Muslim House of Learning; November 19-21, 2004, Arnoldshain, co-organized by the German Muslim-League Bonn CC, Germany](#)
 - f) [Tatomir Ion-Marius, new URI-affiliate from Romania, is looking for pen-pals](#)
3. **[URI global](#)**
 - a) [New URI Global Council elected in April 2005](#)
 - b) [List of all URI CCs is online](#)
 - c) [7 new CCs \(Cooperation-Circles\) approved in March 2005](#)
4. **[European Interfaith-News](#)**
 - a) [Book introducing the European Union concept to children](#)
 - b) [The Sun and the Sunday Times agree to pay substantial libel damage to Yusuf Islam](#)
 - c) [The Unity that underlies all Religions](#)

[Back to the top](#)

[1. Welcome and news from the URI EEC \(European Executive Committee\)](#)

Dear friends,

hoping that this communication finds you in the best state of body, mind and heart, we are happy to present you the 4th edition of our URI Europe Dialogue-letter. - As always feel free to contact us with any suggestions and constructive criticism.

Important – please notify us of any change in your e-mail-address

If you have a new e-mail-address and would like to be in touch, please notify us.

Currently we do not get an error-message on this list, when an email-address is wrong or no longer valid. I.e. we would not know that we are using a wrong e-mail-address.

So please let us know, if your e-mail-address changes.

URI Europe-assembly will take place in Brussels September 22-24, 2005 (Thursday – Saturday).

Our European assembly will take place this September in Brussels, Belgium. You are cordially invited. For your information we include further details [below](#).

Welcome to 7 new CCs

We extend a cordial welcome to 7 new CCs (CC = Co-operation-Circle = URI membership-group), one of which – the URI Germany CC – belongs to the European region! Read about the 7 new CCs [below](#).

New Global Council elected

A new Global Council was elected at the beginning of April 2005, after an electoral process of several months.

The European region will be represented by Shaikh Bashir Ahmad Dultz, Heidi Rautionmaa and Dr. Raschid Bockemuehl. They will serve as European trustees for a 3-year-term from 2005-2008. Annie Imbens-Fransen, Deepak Naik and Karimah Stauch have served on the Global Council from 2002-2005.

The new Global Council again comprises a wide variety of religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions – see further information below.

We would like to thank all CCs from the European region for taking the time and consideration to participate in this election.

Peace and blessings to you!

Mr. Dr. Raschid Bockemuehl, Dortmund/Germany, Treasurer URI Europe

Mr. Shaikh Bashir Ahmad Dultz, Bonn/Germany, Member URI Europe

Mr. Patrick Hanjoul, Antwerp/Belgium, Member URI Europe

Ms. Annie Imbens-Fransen, Eindhoven/The Netherlands, Member URI Europe

Mr. Jean-Mathieu Lochten, Brussels/Belgium, President URI Europe

Mr. Deepak Naik, Coventry/United Kingdom, Vice-President URI Europe/Global Council member

Ms. Heidi Rautionmaa, Espo/Finland, URI Global Council at-large-trustee

Ms. Karimah Stauch, Bonn/Germany, Co-ordinator URI Europe



Left picture (left to right): Shaikh Bashir Ahmad Dultz, Annie Imbens-Fransen, Dr. Raschid Bockemuehl, Heidi Rautionmaa, Patrick Hanjoul, Jean-Mathieu Lochten.

Right picture (left to right): Patrick Hanjoul, Jean-Mathieu Lochten, Karimah Stauch, Shaikh Bashir Ahmad Dultz, Annie Imbens-Fransen

[Back to the top](#)

1. a) News from the EEC – European URI-conference will take place in Brussels, Belgium, September 22-24, 2005

We herewith most cordially invite you to our URI Europe Assembly, which will take place September 22-24, 2005, in Brussels!

Following some further information on the conference - a more detailed invitation with a reply-slip will follow soon.

SUBJECT / TITLE: Overcoming irritations and prejudices between people of different cultures, religions and convictions in the EU enlargement-process

CONFERENCE-VENUE: Franciscan conference-centre "Maison ND du Chant d'Oiseau", Avenue des Franciscains, 3 A, 1150 Bruxelles, Belgium.

CONFERENCE-DATE: September 22-24, 2005 (beginning Thursday early afternoon, ending Saturday late afternoon).

Participants will be able to stay at the conference-venue for an additional night (Saturday - Sunday), but have to carry the additional cost (approx. EUR 30,-).

CONFERENCE-COST: Conference-fee, including accommodation, lodging and coffee-breaks, is EUR 120,- per person. We have worked hard to be able to offer this good rate.

(We currently foresee that URI Europe will be able to give partial scholarships to a limited number of individuals who would otherwise be unable to attend the conference. Preference will be given to participants from new European member-states or -candidate-states and from Eastern Europe as well as participants from minorities. We encourage all participants to choose the most economic means of transport (train, APX-flights) and compare prices.)

CONFERENCE-SETTING: We expect 60 people from existing URI-Co-operation-Circles (CCs = member-groups) as well as a number of people who are new to the URI. Places are limited. We will work to make sure that there is a good balance among participants regarding religions, age, gender, countries of residence.

Accommodation will be in double rooms.

As usual the focus will be on inter-action and exchange between conference-participants, many of whom have extensive experience in interfaith-encounters and act as multipliers in their respective networks.

Participants will be invited to bring sacred items and share sacred parts of the programme.

AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE:

- Overcome (at least reduce) tensions, irritations and prejudices between European citizens of different convictions and religions and foster understanding and respect.
- Interaction and exchange of experiences between participants.
- Create tools and collect best-practices for overcoming irritations and prejudices. (Materials will be later disseminated among the wider URI network.)
- Deepen interest in the European Union and its processes, by organizing 1.) a visit to the European Parliament and 2.) a meeting with an expert of the European Commission or the European Parliament.
- Strengthen and expand the URI Europe network and enhance the quality and quantity of its contributions to our over-all European societies.

CONFERENCE-PROGRAMME: The programme will include work-sessions in different formats (plenary, group-work, individual work) as well as a visit at the European Parliament and a meeting with an expert of the European Union.

APPLICATION-MATERIALS: Application-Materials will be sent out by email over this list, soon. Please mark your calendar already now.

We are very much looking forward to meeting you in Brussels!

[Back to the top](#)

2. European URI CC-activities – invitations, introductions, reports

2. a) Report of the meeting of the URI Berlin CC on 19th February 2005 in a Hindu temple in Berlin-Kreuzberg

On February 19th 2005 we were warmly welcomed by the Sri Lankan Tamil Hindu Community in Berlin.

We were invited to participate in a *puja*. A *puja* is a ritualistic worship of deities of the Hindu pantheon. The *puja* consists of the recitation of Vedic hymns in the Sanskrit language in a rhythmical manner and the worship of idols of the gods with flowers, fire water etc.

After the *puja* the Brahmin priest shared *prasad* (blessed food especially water). We were all given the characteristic ashes and the red dot between the two eyebrows. After that we were invited to watch the idols of the deities more closely and members of the community explained to us their meaning and told us mythical stories of different goddesses and gods.

Very often Hinduism is reduced by outsiders to mere idol worship and stigmatised as pantheism. The idol and the gods or goddess it represents is for the spiritual seeker a vehicle to attain a higher all pervading ultimate god. Therefore Hinduism is not pantheism but panentheism.

Five URI adults and five URI children took part in this colourful flowery event. The children liked it and had contact with the children of the Tamil community. The Tamil children helped to present and explain their religion.

After that we went into an Indian restaurant with Johanna, a German member of the community. She was very interested in the URI work and while sharing a wonderful meal we made plans for the future with monthly meetings, interreligious prayers and contemplation and many other exciting projects.

All together we had a wonderful meeting and we are looking forward to our next meeting in the Sikh *gurudwara* of Berlin.

February 24th, 2005
Ralf Mueller-Amenitsch
Mueller-Amenitsch@t-online.de

[Back to the top](#)

2. b) European URI CC-activities – Interreligious Peace Celebration 050505 in The Hague, The Netherlands



INTERRELIGIOUS PEACE CELEBRATION 050505

The 5th of May is the 60th and last great commemoration day of the liberation from World War II in the Netherlands and Indonesia.

There are still eyewitnesses, but their number is shrinking. It is our duty towards them and towards next generations to promote enduring peace and justice for all living beings without discrimination.

URI Netherlands took the initiative for an interreligious universal Peace Celebration in The Hague, city of the Dutch Government and the UN-Peace Palace:

**the 5th of May 15.00-17.00h in the Klooster-kerk/church,
Lange Voorhout 4, in the centre of The Hague.**

Theme of this 050505-Celebration is:

'HEALING THE PAST, SHARING THE FUTURE'

(Het Verleden helen, de Toekomst delen)

Foundation Roos took the initiative for a Peace-Walk during the 5 days preceding the 050505-Celebration.

This Peace-Walk starts at the International Monument for the Unknown Child in National Park 'Hoge Veluwe' near Arnhem. The 4th of May Princess Irene van Lippe-Biesterfeld is in charge of a Peace-Meditation.

Speakers and musicians of different religious and spiritual traditions participate in the 050505-Celebration.

Speakers like Jacqueline Berg, Jedidjah Duindam, Anneloes Eterman, de Life Foundation, Mualla Kaya, Jacob Korf, Huub Kortekaas, Awraham Soetendorp, Johannes Witteveen.

Musicians like: Women-Choir Malle Babbe, Frank Jenniskens, Lenny Kuhr, Maria Rijnbout, Frédéric Steenbrink. Ari van Buuren, chair of URI Netherlands is master of ceremonies.

Healing the Past and Sharing the Future is so essential!

A lot of people hurt each other deeply: historically, culturally and religiously. Children are defenceless victims. The past needs to be healed in a more active and spiritual way! Future starts today. The children in our midst are forerunners of that future. They deserve more our togetherness in sharing the future!

For more information website www.vrede050505.nl or tel.+31.206637155

[Back to the top](#)

2. c) European URI-efforts – Sharing news of URI activities in Finland

Dear friends,

I wanted to share some of the things that take place here in the North.

We have had a good spring in Finland in the field of interfaith.

In February there was an interfaith gathering for the weekend and it was a success. Everyone was pleased about the weekend which was one of its kind in our church life in Finland. (There was an article written about it in the magazine for the Lutheran theologians.)

The participants and some rumours about other religions and convictions were solved. There were Jewish, Lutherans, Catholic, Muslims, Buddhists, people from Christian Science, Baha'is, Unitarian and agnostics, all together 21 people. There were some people who had never talked with Muslims before in their life, but most of the participants were the members of the Bridge-group and the new URI CC, that has been build in Helsinki. (The Religions Forum in Helsinki, HUF is not officially registered as a co-operation circle yet, but the application has been handed in short time ago.)

As a part of the programme we watched the film Mystic Iran, giving insights on the spiritual life of women and men of different faiths in Iran. It gave us lots of things to talk about.

We decided to continue the co-operation and to have such weekend event once a year. This event was sponsored by the Lutheran parish and it was organized by the Bridge-group which holds meetings with participants from different churches and religions. The head priest of the parish visited us and gave his warm greetings. We gave him the peace card which we had built during the weekend. One of

the most beautiful things was that we sang interfaith songs from the URI songbook, and it really touched peoples' heart and mind. (Some people kept singing and drumming till 2 AM.)



In April the Social Forum in Finland was held, and this new coming CC participated of that event by organizing a panel discussion about the Global Ethics. There were a Muslim, a Lutheran, a person form Christian Science, a Bahá'í and a Unitarian in the panel and the audience was also multi-religious.

HUF also had its own stand where the peace card was build by the method of cutting pictures out form the magazines.

There are some more events to look for:

The Bidge-group will organize an happening on the European day with URI's Christian-Muslim - dialogue group in Helsinki and the Forum of Religions in Helsinki under the title "On the Way Towards a Common United Europe". The Event will include some speeches by the head of the Finnish Church Foreign Aid Agency, Finn Church Aid, Mr. Antti Pentikäinen, Theologian of the Church Centre of the Missions, Docent Timo Vasko and the Peace Promoter Helena Kekkonen followed by a common discussion. Members of URI CCs will give their point of views and comments.

There will be barbeque and other refreshments prepared by all the participants together and the people are called to sing songs by the URI interfaith songbook. There will also be Peace Pole and the ending of the event will take place around the Pole.

The Forum of Religions in Helsinki will also take a part of the World Village Festival in May with the stand. That event is run by Kepa, the Service Centre for Development co operation in Finland.

The CCs in Helsinki have also been asked to join the Peace Forum in Loviisa to organize some event there.

In May URI's Christian- Muslim-dialogue group will organize an open walking "tour" to some religious places such as church and mosque. At this time the people might visit synagogue as well.

The URI CC in Turku, The Forum of Religions in Turku, TUF has also met several times during this spring. All these groups tend to have meetings once a month. TUF will hold an open panel discussion seminar next fall in the Folk Collage in Turku.

So, wonderful things are happening here.

I wish you all the best,

with peace greetings

Heidi Rautionmaa

h.rautionmaa@luukku.com

[Back to the top](#)

2. d) European URI CC-activities - Diary of Events of the URI UK CC

A weekend art and meditation workshop on the edge of the Snowdonia Mountains Friday 15th til Sunday 17th April 2005

A weekend retreat organised by:
Art & Spirituality Network
Supported by the United Religions Initiative
Mountains and Meditation

During the weekend we will offer: Walking, Meditation,
Landscape Drawing and Photography workshops.
Cost: £60 including vegetarian food and dormitory accommodation
Enquiries and Bookings to Adam:
adam.boulter@virgin.net, 07957 286 360
Flat 3 Marwell Court, 42 Oakcroft Road, London, SE13 7EE

April 26, 2005 Spiritual Elders meet Emerging Visionaries - Bradford City Hall, 7.00 pm => ATTENTION: this event had to be cancelled!

Following two training courses that empower faith groups to increase and improve their media coverage.
Regular and positive media coverage is crucial to generating the desired awareness and perception of our faith and interfaith activities. Free media coverage is central to organisations with limited advertising and marketing budgets. For religious tolerance and understanding to permeate British society, the media need to reflect these values in their coverage.
How do we get the media to cover our stories? Tolerance training course provide practical techniques and advice for faith and inter faith groups to increase and improve their media coverage.
Journalists from the national and regional media share their experience and suggestions. Filmed interviews, press release workshops and multimedia presentation provide delegates with the practical tips and tools they need to put the theory into practice.

3rd May 2005: 10am to 4pm The National Media Getting on the national media agenda

Guest Speakers:
Stephen Bates (Religion Correspondent, Guardian)
Roger Bolton (Presenter, *Sunday* and *Feedback*, Radio 4)
Cost: £70 per person.
A vegetarian lunch will be provided.

4 May 2005: 10am to 4pm The Regional Media

Securing regular and positive local media coverage.
Guest Speakers:
Mike Anderson (Managing Director, Evening Standard)
Jumoke Fahola (Presenter, *Inspirit*, BBC London Radio)
Ian Pearce (Presenter, *Melting Pot*, BBC Three Counties Radio)
Cost: £70 per person.
A vegetarian lunch will be provided.

For further details of all these events please look onto the website www.uri.org.uk or e-mail: info@uri.org.uk or phone: 0044 (0)17687 77671 the URI UK office

[Back to the top](#)

2. e) European URI CC-efforts - Report about the Jewish Christian Muslim House of Learning; November 19-21, 2004, Arnoldshain, co-organized by the German Muslim-League Bonn CC, Germany

Frankfurt, Germany. Jews, Christians and Muslim meet in Arnoldshain to discuss gender-relations.

On November 19-21, 2004 approximately 100 people from the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith traditions met in the Protestant Academy of Arnoldshain near Frankfurt for discussions on "Women, Men and the Patriarchy of God". This was the third conference of the Jewish-Christian-Muslim House of Learning, sponsored by the Evangelical Academy Arnoldshain, the Rabanus-Maurus-Academy Frankfurt, CIBEDO and the German Muslim-League Bonn CC. The organizers consider it as important that this has been an annual event over the last three years, as it allows for deepening of relationships and a more in-depth exchange and understanding.

The conference began with conversations in pairs. Then the pairs formed into groups of six, where introductions were made by his or her conversation-partner and the group-introductions showed the rich diversity of participants. The rhythm of the week-end was determined by the prayer-times of the three faith-traditions. In these services and prayers - Muslim Friday-prayer, Sabbath meditation, Sufi-dhikr and Christian service, the celebrants included the subject of gender relations.

The children, ages 2-15, participated in a very moving program, which was beautifully led by the husband of one of the conference-team-members. During the course of the weekend the children built their own synagogue, church and mosque (each in one corner of the room) with models of specific items of these prayer-houses also displayed. The children hosted guided tours through their exhibition.



At the end of this rich week-end participants expressed their enthusiasm for the event and the hope that the Jewish-Christian-Muslim House of Learning would convene it again in 2005. Although difficult to guarantee, given the climate of confrontation and budget-shortages in all sectors of society, we pray that this bud will continue to blossom and are proud of the ongoing commitment of so many peace-lovers.

Note: The next Jewish Christian Muslim House of Learning will take place June 16-19, 2005, on the subject of "Power, Authority, and Responsibility"

[Back to the top](#)

2. f) Tatomir Ion-Marius, URI-affiliate from Romania, is looking for pen-pals

Date: Feb 1, 2005

My name is Tatomir Ion-Marius, I am 25 years old, I m from Romania, born in Resita, and living in Sighetu-Marmatiei, the northeast of my country. I am a member of the International Society for Philosophers(Sheffield,UK), member of the Universal Oneness United, a spiritual organization with the motto: "Love is All there is & We are All One", (from Sinton,Texas,USA), and Representative for Romania of the World Peace Prayer Society, spreading with all my efforts the message and universal prayer:

I have many interests in learning foreign languages, getting to know better other cultures, and building bridges of communications with peoples from all walks of Life.

If you would like, please write me. Friendship, Peace and Understanding!

May Peace Prevail on Earth!

Truly,
Tatomir
tatomir@usa.com



The picture is showing the Chief Rabbi of Romania - Menahem Hacohen - and Tatomir Ion-Marius, ans was made on April 16, 2004, at the seminar on the Holocaust from Maramures "Elie Wiesel s world yesterday and today".

Note:

Tatomir has graciously translated the URI Charter into Romanian language. -

Many thanks go to Tatomir for this wonderful contribution!

You can find the Romanian translation online - alongside URI-Charter-versions in different other languages - under: http://www.uri.org/option.com_docman/task.cat_view/gid,24/Itemid,160.html

[Back to the top](#)

3. URI global

3. a) New URI Global Council elected in April 2005

Thema: [uri-contacts] Trustee Election Results
Datum: 06.04.2005 21:31:22 Westeuropäische Sommerzeit
Von: charles@uri.org
An: uri-contacts@uriglobal.org, uri-igc@uriglobal.org

06 April 2005

Dear Members of the URI Global Community,

Greetings of love and peace.

On behalf of the Global Council, I am delighted to notify you of the results of the global voting to select 24 trustees to serve on URI's 2005 – 2008 Global Council. The list of the new trustees includes each trustee's region, name, tradition, CC/MCC affiliation, and city and country or state. Several of the trustees-elect belong to more than one CC, but only one is listed.

The new GC will take office in Seoul, Korea during a joint meeting of the outgoing and incoming Global Councils from June 26 - July 1, 2005.

United Religions Initiative Global Council 2005 – 2008

Africa:

- **Ms. Despina Namwembe**, Orthodox Christian, Interfaith CC Initiative, Kampala, Uganda;
- **Mr. Sabapathy Alagiah**, Baha'i, Associacao Homoeopathia de Mocambique CC, Maputo, Mozambique;
- **Mr. Mussie Hailu**, Orthodox Tewahedo Christian, Addis Ababa CC, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Asia:

- **Ven. Jinwol Lee**, Buddhism, URI Korea MCC, Seoul, Korea;
- **Fr. James Channan**, Catholic, Lahore CC, Lahore, Pakistan;
- **Dr. Mohinder Singh**, Sikh, Religions for Social Justice CC, New Delhi, India.

Europe:

- **Shaikh Bashir Dultz**, Muslim, URI Europe CC, Bonn, Germany;
- **Dr. Raschid Bockemuehl**, Muslim, DML Bonn CC, Dortmund, Germany;
- **Ms. Heidi Rautionmaa**, Christian/Lutheran, Forum of Religions in Turku CC, Espoo, Finland.

Latin America:

- **Mr. Raul Angel Mamani**, Indigenous/Kolla, Qewña CC, Palpala, Argentina;
- **Rev. Elias de Andrade Pinto**, Christian/Independent Presbyterian, CC Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil;
- **Dr. Susi Reich**, Jewish, Proyecto 3rd Milenio CC, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Middle East and North Africa:

- **Ms. Hanan Salem Shahatit**, Orthodox Christian, Quested Peace CC, Amman, Jordan;
- **Mr. Shlomo Alon**, Jewish, Jerusalem Interfaith Encounter CC, Jerusalem, Israel;

- **Ms. Atefah Sadeghi**, Muslim, Iran Youths for Peace and Interreligious Dialogue CC, Tehran, Iran.

Multi-Regional:

- **Ms. Yoland Trevino**, Hinduism/Indigenous Spirituality, URI Council for Women, Altadena, California;
- **Rev. Deborah Moldow**, Interfaith, URI UN CC, New York, New York;
- **Mrs. Elana Rozenman**, Jewish, Women's Interfaith Encounter CC, Jerusalem, Israel.

North America:

- **Ms. Perri Kathryn "P.K." McCary**, Christian/Lutheran, Women's Spirituality CC, Houston, Texas;
- **Ms. Kathy Sandoval**, Native American Acjachemen and Progressive Christian, Alliance for Spiritual Community CC, San Juan Capistrano, California;
- **Rev. Heng Sure**, Buddhist, Bay Area Friends of the Parliament and URI CC, Berkeley, California.

Southeast Asia and the Pacific:

- **Sr. Sandra Clemente**, RSCJ, Catholic, Kalinaw-Cebu CC, Cebu City, Philippines;
- **Dr. Amir Farid Isahak**, Muslim, Kuala Lumpur CC, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia;
- **Dr. Ratnam Alagiah**, Baha'i, Unity, Peace and Multiculturalism Gold Coast CC, Queensland, Australia.

Here are some reflections of the new GC's diversity:

- 8 trustees from the current GC and 16 new trustees;
- 11 women and 13 men;
- 17 countries;
- 9 Christians, 4 Muslims, 3 Jews, 3 Indigenous, 2 Buddhist, 2 Baha'i, 1 Hindu, 1 Sikh, 1 Interfaith (with diversity within traditions).

A few words about the vote-counting process: After an opening prayer to invite the presence of the URI community around the world, the votes from 174 CCs around the world were counted at the URI office in San Francisco, 8 – 10 AM local time, Wednesday, 6 April 2005. Each region easily met the requirement that 50% of the eligible voting members participate. Latin America had the highest percentage participation – 100% of eligible CCs (17 of 17) participated. Asia had the greatest number of participating CCs – 64 CCs voted in Asia.

The ballots were read by Global Council Chair, Rita Semel and Executive Director, Charles Gibbs, alternating region by region, and supported by Sally Mahé and Victoria Smiser. Ray Signer and Barbara Hartford separately recorded the votes as they were announced, and their vote tabulations were compared for accuracy after each region's votes had been read. Iftekhar Hai, Paul Chaffee and Alice Kawahatsu observed all or part of the voting. The three nominees with the highest vote totals in each region were designated as Trustees-elect.

Once the results from a region were confirmed, all those present offered the following prayer, which all of you are encouraged to offer on behalf of all the newly elected trustees and the rest of the URI community:

May these trustees receive blessing and support to fulfill the vision and values of the Preamble, Purpose and Principles of URI. We hold in gratitude all candidates who stood for leadership, and all CCs who voted, and all who collectively serve the URI. May they serve URI with strength, love and joy.

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP: 12

TRADITIONS: Muslim, Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Baptist

GOVERNANCE: Through the process of consultation that reflects our desire for community empowerment and participation.

CC PURPOSE: To promote Unity, Trust and Confidence among Muslims and Christians. To promote Peace and Solidarity in the community

CC DREAM: To bring peace, justice, and healing to the people in Mindanao, the southern region of the country where violence and war is raging between rebels and government troops, and affecting the wellbeing of the Muslim-Christian populace.

CC HIGHLIGHTS:

* Interfaith dialogues among Muslim and Christian leaders conducted last April 21, 29 and May 8, 2004. -

These dialogues cum workshops reaffirmed the "ties that bind" the Christians and Muslims in Kauswagan, Lanao Del Norte in Mindanao. This activity paved the way for the creation of the ad hoc Municipal Inter-Faith Council (MIFC) composed of an equal number of Muslim and Christian representatives (12 each).

* Inauguration of the Peace Center Building of the former combatants and victims of the Mindanao war in Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte -This modest structure now serves as the venue for on-site trainings and baranggay (small community) assemblies. This is where the members of the community gathered to formulate and adopt their first peace and development plan. The Peace Center Building was the site of PAKIGDAIT-initiated organizational capacity-building and livelihood trainings with the support of the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)-TOSCADAR Mindanao and the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD).

* Maranao Language Class-This language class implemented by PAKIGDAIT uses both formal and non-formal education approaches. This is a major component activity of the Capability- Building for Peace Program. This program aims to bridge the "communication divide" in Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte in Mindanao, Philippines.

* Peace advocacy and community mobilization

* Kauswagan Week of Peace 2003-2004-Various activities were held to commemorate the spirit of peace and unity among the people of Kauswagan. (Light a Candle and Prayer for Peace Rally, Peace Summit, On-the Spot Poster Making Contest, War and Peace Memorabilia and Photo Exhibit, Historical Journey for Peace and Unity)

Culture of Peace workshops, Conflict Transformation sessions and Interfaith Dialogues

INTERVIEW

PAKIGDAIT is short for Pakigdait ug Pag-Amoma Alang sa Kalinaw. This is a phrase in the Visayan dialect that means, "to safeguard and nurture peace."

PAKIGDAIT is a civil society organization that was founded in Mindanao on May 21, 2001 by seven people of different faiths who shared the desire to help bring about peace and reconciliation in the war-torn areas of Mindanao, the southern region of the Philippines

Love, Sally
sally@uri.org

I am thrilled to share daughter Ursula's new book (she did the illustrations and a friend did the verbiage) introducing the European Union concept to children. The abstract is below and the book can be ordered in a multiplicity of languages by contacting Edizioni PLUS Publishers at:

Edizioni PLUS
Lungarno Pacinotti, 43
56126 Pisa Italia
Tel: +39 050 2212056
Fax: +39 050 2212945
Website: www.edizioniplus.it
Email: info-plus@edizioniplus.it

The direct link to the book is http://www.edizioniplus.it/inglese/AspFiles/indice_autori.asp?offset=130 and click on *Isaac Ann Katherine (with illustrations by Ursula J. Mathers)* to see the details below. Pass this on to anyone with children or an interest in the EU. And enjoy.

EDIZIONI PLUS PISA' UNIVERSITY

The First Book of Little Dragon Mu. Mu visits Europe
Isaacs Anne Katherine (with illustrations by Ursula J. Mathers)
ISBN: 88-8492-187-2

- 36 pages
- 29,7x21
- 1 volume + CD-ROM
- b/w and colour illustrations
- 10,00 euro

In his first adventure, Little Dragon Mu travels, with his parents, from Dragonia to a faraway country called Europe. He has to look in his Geography book to find where that is. Europe is far from Dragonia in many ways, and Mu experiences the problems of living and going to school in another country. The little dragon finds that there are many languages in Europe, whereas in Dragonia there is only one. Furthermore his favourite characters from history are completely unknown to his new school mates. After a period of homesickness, Mu makes friends with his classmates, telling them about Dragonia. He invites them to visit him in his homeland, but first he and his parents travel to another European country. Young readers are asked to guess where Mu will go next: in the planned sequels to this first volume, Little Dragon Mu will explore each European country with his parents, his sister and his friends. "Mu" is, first of all, a fascinating story for children, particularly for those in the first years of elementary school and in the immediate pre-school years. Ursula Joell Mather's illustrations bring the story to life and are a delight in themselves. The book will interest young readers' parents and teachers as well. It is based on the experience and insight gained by the European History Network, CLIOHnet, a network supported by the European Commission. "The First Book of Little Mu" is an innovative history book for little ones, who will learn from Mu's adventures to prize their own heritage while respecting differences.

Ann Katherine Isaacs teaches history at the University of Pisa. She is the central coordinator of the European History Network and is recognised internationally as a higher education expert. Ursula Joell Mathers is an artist who lives and works in Pisa. Trained as a childrens' book illustrator, before meeting Mu she had already illustrated several children's volumes, receiving significant awards for her watercolours and book designs.

[Back to the top](#)

4. b) European Interfaith News - The Sun and the Sunday Times agree to pay substantial libel damage to Yusuf Islam

THE SUN AND SUNDAY TIMES AGREE TO PAY SUBSTANTIAL LIBEL DAMAGES TO YUSUF ISLAM

IT News, 2/15/05

<http://www.itnews.it/risorse/EuroNews,Zj0xMTc1NjY3>

LONDON -- The UK's Sunday Times and Sun newspapers have agreed to pay Yusuf Islam (formerly known as the singer Cat Stevens) substantial damages in respect of articles published on 17th and 19th October 2004.

Both reports falsely alleged that Yusuf Islam was or had been involved in supporting terrorism and suggested that, as a result, the US authorities had been right to refuse Mr Islam entry into the United States in September 2004.

As well as agreeing to pay substantial damages in relation to these false and highly defamatory allegations, both newspapers also published prominent apologies in which they acknowledged that Mr Islam is not, and never has been, involved in or supported terrorism, and that he abhors all such activities. Indeed, in apologising to Mr Islam both newspapers also pointed out that Mr Islam was recently presented with the "Man for Peace" award by a group of Nobel Peace Laureates. The newspapers have undertaken not to repeat these false allegations and also agreed to pay Mr Islam's legal costs.

Mr Islam said: "It seems to be the easiest thing in the world these days to make scurrilous accusations against Muslims, and in my case it directly impacts on my relief work and damages my reputation as an artist. The harm done is often difficult to repair. However, I am delighted by the settlement, which helps vindicate my character and good name."

Yusuf Islam intends to contribute the damages from both newspapers to relief projects for orphans which he has started in tsunami-hit South East Asia. He visited Indonesia in January and is set to release a charity single entitled Indian Ocean later this month, the proceeds of which will go to the same children's fund...

[Back to the top](#)

4. c) European Interfaith News – The Unity that underlies all Religions

Thema: **The Unity that underlies all Religions**

Datum: 02.02.2005 08:37:00 Westeuropäische Normalzeit

Von: DAGMAR@WORLDPEACE.DE

(Received from Dagmar Berkenberg, Munich, World Peace Prayer Society)

THE UNITY THAT UNDERLIES ALL RELIGIONS

By SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

"All religions are one. They teach a divine life. I respect saints and prophets of all religions. I respect all religions, all cults, all faiths and all creeds. I serve all, love all, mix with all and see the Lord in all".

- Swami Sivananda

At the present moment all religions contain a mixture of truth, which is divine, and error which is human. The fundamentals or essentials of all religions are the same. There is difference only in the non-essentials. The apparent differences in religions are due to a misconception or misconstruction of the long-forgotten truth of the Vedas on which they are ultimately founded. All systems of religion are equally divine and true. The conflicting points are all due to misconception and misconstruction of truths on account of prejudice, bigotry, lack of purity of heart and subtlety and purity of intellect, and perverted condition of the intellect of people.

The great majority of religions had their origin in prehistoric times. Hence there are no genuine documents or trustworthy traditions concerning them.

All prophets are messengers of God. They are great Yogins and realized souls, who have had divine, intuitive perception of God. Their words are infallible and sacred. The Koran or the Zend-Avesta or the Bible is as much a sacred book as the Bhagavad-Gita. All contain the essence of divine wisdom. Ahuramazda, Isvara, Allah, Jehovah are different names for one God.

Truth is neither Hindu nor Muslim, nor Buddhist nor Christian! Truth is one, homogeneous, eternal substance. The follower of the religion of Truth walks on the path of light, peace, wisdom, power and bliss.

Man forgets all about his religion on account of ignorance, or lust for power and greed. He has become irreligious. So he has come down to the level of a brute. He has lost all sense of morality. He does havoc. He creates mischief. He stabs, loots, and burns houses. The law of the jungle prevails.

Many preach Buddhism, but no one gives up desires and Himsa (as opposed to Ahimsa). Many preach Christianity, but no one practices love and forgiveness. Many preach Islam, but no one recognizes the brotherhood of man. Many preach Hinduism, but no one realizes the Divinity in all. Preaching has become the livelihood of men, while practice has become their object of scorn.

Hence the world is wicked, not for want of truth, nor on account of religions; but, alas, it is wicked for the lack of true followers of these ideals and religions.

What is needed is proper education of the followers of all religions. Place the practical tenets of their own religion before the followers of that religion, and devise ways and means of enabling them to express these tenets in their daily life. Without practice, idealism creates fatalism in man. Unless knowledge alters one's life, it is useless.

Selflessness and love are not creeds to be taught, but ideals to be exemplified, demonstrated and radiated. Therefore, let everyone practice his own religion and strive to attain the goal. Let religion create saints and Yogins, rather than Mandirs (Hindu temple), Masjids (Mosque) and Churches.

[Back to the top](#)

THE END