



Call to Europe

For Interfaith dialogue

Considering that

1. Faith, rituality and devotion are often faced at the transcendent level, but they also – and perhaps above all - concern the immanence of the social and daily life of people and communities.
2. Addressing the issue of interfaith dialogue by focusing on man and the right to full citizenship can contribute to build inclusive cities that are respectful of human rights.
3. Globalization has reshaped urban centres also through the increase in the presence of different faiths in the same city with the consequence of making mutual knowledge and dialogue necessary.
4. Alongside the plurality of beliefs, there is a tendency towards a materialist pragmatism that permeates contemporary European culture with the risk of underestimating religion and treating it as a cumbersome survival of a past perceived as primitive and superstitious.

Conscious that

1. On the one hand secularization has the merit of having contributed to non-discrimination and inclusion, but on the other hand, considering religion as a backward practice can have the effect of underestimating its importance - not only spiritual, but also social - and, therefore, to fall back into the fallacy of cultural evolution.
2. Religions are also an expression of a way of perceiving oneself, one's body, one's identity and one's social relations with others and with the world.

We think that

1. taking into account the above in structuring our cities means respecting and welcoming the Other's way of staying-in-the-world, strengthening social cohesion and building a plural and inclusive society, so to make respect for human rights a real practice and not simply an ethical aspiration.

In light of the above,



We call on the EU and submit it the following proposals:

- A) In line with the need for spiritual spaces and practices in hospitals, prisons and all the places that could be defined as "painful", it is proposed that European institutions urge Member States to develop procedures that allow citizens of all faiths to enjoy the right to religious assistance systematically.
- B) With reference to the need for spaces designed to prayer and worship that are functional and adequate we are aware of the heterogeneity of legislation of the Member States, for that very reason we ask the EU to initiate a reflection among the Member States on the need to guarantee spaces for worship (even in shared form such as the rooms of silence), as well as encouraging exchanges of good practices between European local authorities, guaranteeing visibility to the most inclusive and innovative best practices.
- C) The EU is asked to include specific references to religious heritage in the documents and programming lines concerning tourism and the enhancement of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, especially the vestiges that testify to the cultural contribution from minority groups to local communities and national.
- D) The EU is asked to introduce specific lines in the financing programs for international cooperation, for local development and for intra-European cooperation aiming at financing activities focused on interfaith dialogue. By way of example, but not limited to, the Union could introduce a specific Key Action on interreligious dialogue in programs such as Erasmus+; Creative Europe; Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values. In this way it would be possible to finance training activities, exchanges of good practices, pilot projects and enhancement of the religious heritage.
- E) We suggest that the EU takes into account what we could define "interfaith mainstreaming" in the elaboration of all the provisions and communications addressed to the Member States, stimulating and promoting actions, regulations and practices that have a positive impact on the lives of citizens, to whatever religion they belong, and such as to guarantee substantial equality of treatment between citizens of different faiths.
- F) In order to make European civil society, state and Non-State actors and local authorities of the Member States aware of the regulatory and financial tools available to carry out initiatives on interfaith dialogue, we propose the EU to organize specific info days, informative videos and webinar.

