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MJC recommendations to the 10th Anniversary of the OSCE's Berlin Declaration on Anti-Semitism High-Level Commemorative Event and Civil Society Forum Introduction of the Muslim Jewish Conference

The Muslim Jewish Conference (MJC) is a grassroots dialogue and leadership organization that targets future Muslim and Jewish leaders from the academic and political sectors.

The annual conference brings together students and young professionals from around the world to step beyond the boundaries of ignorance and stereotyping in order to build a new global political movement of young Muslim and Jewish leaders, activists and experts who are committed to mutual respect. Today, with the spread of critiques regarding Israel's actions towards Palestinians, Anti-Semitism is a rising feeling in the Muslim World. Islamophobia is also a growing sentiment within Jewish communities. Therefore a huge part of fighting Anti-Semitism as well as Anti-Muslim sentiment is to promote and conduct interfaith and intercommunal exchange between Jews and Muslims. Antisemitism, as any other form of racism is not a rational behavior and thus cannot be countered by rational arguments only. Prejudice stems from the limitation of our experience and person to person dialogue can broaden our perceptions and help humanise "the Other".

The Conference participants have worked together and collaborated to shift their attitudes towards each other, develop joint projects and outline recommendations on how to constructively bring Muslim and Jewish communities together and deal with key issues affecting both communities, such as, Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, the role of the media in promoting hate, and the importance of education. Here are some of the general and specific recommendations that the Muslim Jewish Conference, through its alumni network, has elaborated.

Policy recommendations

The MJC recommends Governments to:

- Support and increase funding for education, which promotes inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue
- Establish and support partnerships for Civil Society Organizations fighting against racism and create networking platforms for the exchange of best practices



Specific projects

The MJC is recommending support for the following projects, focusing specifically on Muslim - Jewish relations :

International Rapid Response Alliance against hate crimes

With rapid globalization, disparate communities come into closer contact with each other. While that presents immense opportunities for learning, it also increases the potential for friction and intolerance. Reports of hate crimes, discriminatory acts or racist events both in Europe and around the world, are on the rise. The goal of the IRRA would be to create an alliance of faith-based or faith-linked organizations that unequivocally condemn hate crimes, racism and discrimination, wherever they target people's faiths, on a joint platform. Such a joint platform would be represented openly and actively speak out against racism of all forms by using traditional and online media.

Jewish-Muslim encounters and joint initiatives

Throughout History, the relations between Muslims and Jews used to be complex and diverse. In general they were of a positive nature and were characterized by mutual dialogue. For the last decades, however, their relationship is constantly challenged by intolerance and radicalism. But this state of the relationship is not inevitable. Jewish-Muslim encounters need to multiply, both at the global and local level, if we are to counter the rise of hatred on both sides. Such encounters can provide a unique opportunity for young people to talk to each other, instead of about each other, dialogue about social, cultural, political or religious issues that are of mutual concern and initiate joint projects to address common challenges. After meeting and conceptualizing joint projects, participants need assistance for refining their project proposals and support in securing resources and funding to actually implement these projects. Experience has proven, it is crucial to support grassroots initiatives, in order to provide unbiased and safe platforms of communications.

Highlighting positive interactions

There is a need to increase cooperation between Muslim and Jewish communities locally, by highlighting this cause in the media and providing coverage about existing opportunities of interfaith and inter-religious activity. The news media tend to focus its attention on political and global issues or problems within communities, giving little attention to cooperation and positive interaction between different religious groups and minorities. To improve Muslim-Jewish cooperation, it is important to present real stories, both historical and contemporary, about positive interaction, coexistence and cooperation between Muslims and Jews. This needs to be supported and promoted throughout the OSCE region.

Sharing information and facts on Muslim and Jewish communities

Internet and social media can be a place for inter communal hate and violence but they also provide great platforms for building bridges and sharing valuable information on faith-based identities and culture. Blogs, chats and video-conferences can be some of the virtual places where real people talk without intermediary or bias. Sharing personal stories on cultural,

