

European Council of Religious Leaders



European Religious leaders prepare for World Assembly of Religions for Peace

Leading European representatives of the major world religions have been meeting in Brussels this week to prepare for the 10th World Assembly of Religions for Peace (RfP) in Lindau, Germany. At the World Assembly, which will be opened by Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, up to 1000 religious representatives from 100 countries are expected to convene with the collective concern *Caring for our Common Future*.

World meetings of "Religions for Peace" are held approximately every five to seven years. The tenth meeting takes place in Lindau from the 19th to the 23rd of August 2019, for the first time in Germany.

The European branch of "Religions for Peace", the "European Council of Religious Leaders" (ECRL), includes leaders from Judaism, Christianity and Islam as well as Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs and Zoroastrians. At ECRL's preparatory meetings in Brussels, they debated the five themes that the Lindau Assembly will use to substantiate concerns about our shared future, including *Protecting the Planet*, the concept of *Positive Peace*, *Transforming Conflict*, *Building Just and Harmonious Societies* and *Sustainable and Integral Human Development*.

Ultimately, it is about "taking care of questions from our religious roots, asking what could be our contribution to solving the urgent problems in the world," said the President of the ECRL, the Swiss Protestant theologian Revd Dr Thomas Wipf. "For example, religions could contribute to positive peace in the fields of reconciliation and healing", commented ECRL Secretary General Dr Mark Owen.



The meeting was opened by Christoph Heider, Head of Unit at the Representation of the State of Hessen to the European Union, where the meeting was hosted alongside also the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Protestant Church in Germany - EKD). Towards the end of their meeting in Brussels, the ECRL invited representatives of key partners in the City to share their progress and priorities in the area of inter-religious cooperation and to explore possibilities for closer working. Guests included Mr Vincent Depaigne (European Commission Coordinator for the dialogue between the European Commission and churches, religious associations or communities, philosophical and non-confessional organisations), Ms Aikaterini Pekridou from the Conference of European Churches and Fr Olivier Poquillon OP, General Secretary of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU (COMECE).

The ECRL's meeting in Brussels of its members followed a meeting of RfP Women and Youth in Warsaw held in May 2019. Also convened by ECRL, the Warsaw meeting provided a forum for European RfP Women and Youth to debate the same five themes and contribute to the worldwide process of consultation. You can learn about their successful meeting [[here](#)].

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