

Oslo Statement on Muslim Leaders' Letter, 2007

European Council of Religious Leaders (ECRL) Ex.com 2007: Statement on Muslim Leaders' Letter

Oslo, 18 October 2007

The Executive Committee of the European Council of Religious Leaders, meeting in Oslo on 18 October 2007, welcomes the open letter to Christian leaders issued last week by 138 Muslim leaders. The letter represents a positive and constructive spirit and comes at a crucial time for Muslim-Christian relations.

The European Council of Religious Leaders further welcomes the positive responses already offered by a number of church leaders and encourages all Christian leaders to study the document and give further responses.

The Muslim leaders' letter is theological in nature. It explores the scriptures that are holy to Islam and Christianity in order to emphasise similarities in the understandings of love for God and love for fellow human beings. These convictions inspire values that are also deeply held and widely shared by many other great religious traditions: the responsibility to care for all people and to work for peace, justice, righteousness and protection of the environment. On this convergence of moral commitment by faiths that remain genuinely diverse, a coalition of cooperation can and should be built. Interreligious dialogue can fruitfully build on what we as religious people share, but we need also to address in openness and honesty the issues on which we disagree and even those that can be the cause of conflict among us. In such a process also belong initiatives to explore how and why our religions can be used to further conflict and violence, and to speak out against these misguided forms of religion.

Acknowledging that a leadership role should be taken by Muslim and Christian leaders, the European Council of Religious Leaders calls upon the World Conference of Religions for Peace – the world's broadest coalition of religious leaders working for peace and reconciliation – to take a role in facilitating a process to further enhance dialogue and common action. The European Council of Religious Leaders is ready to offer this service to the religious communities in Europe.

The European Council of Religious Leaders also encourages Christian and Muslim leaders to make the letter known to the faithful of churches and mosques throughout the world.