

Regional Session 2: The Mediterranean and South East Europe

Moving from “Talk” to “Action”

Panelists:

Trond Bakkevig, Pastor Lutheran Church of Norway and Convener of the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land

Father Fadi Daou, Maronite Catholic Church, President and CEO of Adyan Foundation

Joke van der Leeuw-Roord, Founding President and Executive Director, EUROCLIO - The European Association of History Educators

Taulant B. Hoxha, Founder of Kontour, Come and Discover

Eduardo Lopez Busquets, Founder Casa Arabe

Tevfik Ziyaeddin Akbulut, Head of Delegation to PAM and President of the PAM 3rd Standing Committee

Ajsela Spahija, Project Coordinator, Albanian Forum for Alliance of Civilizations (AFALC)

Moderators:

Helena Barroco, UNAOC

William Infante, UN Resident Coordinator in Serbia

Session Summary

The Session evaluated the role and relevance of the presence of initiatives in order to connect the communities in the area around the Mediterranean Sea and South East Europe . During the conference the action plan for this region was ratified, which includes sustainable development goals to build on a broad complex of strategies for the region. Eduardo Lopez Busquets underlined the holistic approach of Casa Arabe in teaching Islamic and Arabic studies through three aspects, which include politics, economics, and cultural/social studies to build future on a basis of dialogue.

Joke van der Leeuw-Roord noted the importance of history teaching in the sense of identity and narratives. Integrative perspectives have to be emphasized and multiple views to be recognized. Furthermore she underlined that within history education nationalism and victimization are two tenuous points of fraud. History education needs to implement new strategies and technologies of learning to lift the quality level of teaching.

It was agreed by all participants that intercultural dialogue can only lead to a successful action plan if religious leaders of communities participated in this dialogue. Therefore Pastor Trond Bakkevig underlined the network building efforts between various leaders of different religion groups and the interconnection in the conflict regions of the middle east being achieved so far. The importance of inclusion and cross cultural communication lies within the engaging role of religion in the civic societies. The impact of the action plan on the region was and still is connected to the work of UNAOC and its intergovernmental role to build a strong platform for the exchange of experiences, ideas and knowledge. The UNAOC can additionally contribute by creating value and collecting synergies to transform this gathered information into actions.