

‘Transformative dialogue’: Political and religious leaders gather in Lisbon.

By Joseph Tulloch: 14 May 2024

Representatives from almost all of the world’s major religions – including the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Imam of the Grand Mosque of Mecca – are gathering in Lisbon this week. They will be joined by a number of high-profile political leaders, including officials from the EU, the UN, and the African Union, and the former heads of state of several European countries.

KAICIID – officially the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue – was founded in 2011, with Saudi Arabia, Spain, and Austria as founding states, and the Holy See as a founding observer. Since then, it has been hosting regular conferences aimed at promoting interfaith collaboration on issues from peacebuilding to climate change.

This most recent meeting was themed “Transformative Dialogue: Building Alliances for Peace in a Rapidly Changing World” and it took place from 14-16 May. There were three main topics of discussion- ‘Peacebuilding’, ‘Inclusive Cities’, and ‘Sacred Ecology’. Among the political invitees were Mónica Ferro from the United Nations Populations Fund, the African Union’s Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa, and Ambassador Frans van Daele, EU Special Envoy for Religious Freedom. Matteo Renzi, Francois Hollande, and Heinz Fischer, former leaders of Italy, France, and Austria respectively, were also in attendance.

The ‘transformative’ power of dialogue:

KAICIID’s website says this dialogue forum aims to “harness the transformative potential of dialogue, exploring its effectiveness in advancing human rights, enhancing social cohesion, promoting reconciliation, and facilitating environmental cooperation.”

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/world/news/2024-05/lisbon-kaiciid-interreligious-dialogue-2024.html>