

# ●●INTERCULTURAL●●AND INTERFAITH●●DIALOGUE: ENRICHING●●FUTURE●● ●●COMMUNITIES●●

Organized by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the  
Czech Republic, Institute of International Relations  
Prague, Prague Office of the Organization of  
Islamic Cooperation, Anna Lindh Foundation

# SPEAKERS

# INTERCULTURAL AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE: ENRICHING FUTURE COMMUNITIES

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TOMÁŠ PETŘÍČEK

Tomáš Petříček, PhD, is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. He previously served as Deputy Minister of Social Affairs of the Czech Republic. He is a member of the Czech Social Democratic Party.

Before joining the government, Mr Petříček was a senior advisor in the European Parliament and had a successful career in local government in the City of Prague. He also served as a lecturer in International Political Economy at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University. He holds a PhD in International Relations and is fluent in English and conversational in French.



SUNDUS OMAR ALI ALBAYRAQDAR

Sundus Omar Ali Albayraqdar is the current Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the Czech Republic. She is also the Chairperson of the Organisation of Islamic Corporation – Prague Group (OICPG).

She is the first female ambassador of the Republic of Iraq and has served as ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway, where she was the official dean of diplomatic corps and a founder of the female ambassadors' group. She has served as head of the International Organisations, Americas, and Engineering departments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Baghdad.

Since 2003, Ambassador Albayraqdar has worked multilaterally with the Iraqi government, international organisations, and the private sector on Iraq's reconstruction and the building of its democratic institutions. She was nominated to the post of Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and has considerable experience with civil society, NGOs, inclusion and diversity, national reconciliation, and peacebuilding. She is a firm believer in the importance of education in society and the vital role of interfaith dialogue in bridging the gaps between cultures.

As an advocate of human rights, Ambassador Albayraqdar is committed to gender equality,

social justice, and true citizenship. She believes in female participation in leadership and peacemaking and is a role model for Iraqi women.



MONS. CHARLES DANIEL BALVO

Charles Daniel Balvo is the Apostolic Nuncio to the Czech Republic. He started his theological education in the North American College in Rome and, in 1972, obtained the Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University. He was accepted into the priesthood on 6 June 1976. After many priestly assignments in NY state, he entered the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Rome in October 1984 and obtained a doctorate in Canon Law in 1987. In the same year he entered the diplomatic service of the Holy See, after which he served many diplomatic assignments (in the Czech Republic, Jordan, Ecuador, Ghana, etc.).

On 1 April 2005, he was appointed by Pope John Paul II the Titular Archbishop of Castello, the Apostolic Nuncio to New Zealand and the Apostolic Delegate to the Pacific Ocean with residence in Wellington. He was ordained to the episcopate on 29 June 2005 in the Cathedral of St. Patrick in New York. In 2013, he was appointed, by Pope Francis, the first Apostolic Nuncio to South Sudan, with residence in Nairobi. He presented his credentials to His Excellency Salva Kiir Mayardit, the President of the Republic of South Sudan, on 18 June 2014.

On 21 September 2018 he was appointed to the Czech Republic, where he presented his credentials to the President Miloš Zeman on 6 December 2018.



AZZA KARAM

Prof. Dr. Azza Karam is the Secretary General of Religions for Peace International, and Professor of Religion and Development at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Previously, she served as the Senior Advisor on Culture at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the Coordinator/chair of the

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United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development; a Senior Policy Advisor at the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Regional Bureau for Arab States; and the President of the Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations. She was the Lead Facilitator for the United Nations' Strategic Learning Exchanges on Religion, Development and Diplomacy, building on a legacy of serving as a trainer cum mediator in intercultural leadership and management in the Arab region as well as in Europe, Africa, and Central Asia.

Professor Karam has served in various positions in the United Nations since 2004, and also did so in other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, such as International IDEA, and Religions for Peace, since the early 1990s. Simultaneously, she lectured at various academic institutions in Europe, North America (including the United States Military Academy/West Point), Africa and the Middle East.



EMIL ASLAN

Doc. PhDr. Emil Aslan (Souleimanov), PhD is a research director of the Institute of International Relations Prague and an associate professor at Charles University in Prague. In his research he focuses on social aspects of political science and on asymmetric and irregular conflicts, i.e. terrorism and counterterrorism, civil wars, ethnic conflicts, etc. He is an expert in political ethnography and microdynamics of armed conflicts and groups, e.g. radicalization, mobilization, jihadists or sociocultural aspects of violence. The main territorial area of his research is the post-Soviet countries, Iran and Turkey.

Under the pseudonym Souleimanov he published six English written monographs (including those published by Palgrave Macmillan and U.S. Army War College), around 30 articles in international impact journals such as World Politics, International Security or Terrorism and Political Violence, and many other texts.



GILLES KEPEL

Prof. Gilles Kepel is chair of Middle East and Mediterranean studies at the Université Paris Sciences et

Lettres and director of the Middle Eastern Mediterranean Freethinking Platform at the Università della Svizzera italiana in Lugano. He is the author of many widely acclaimed books, including Terror in France: The Rise of Jihad in the West (2017), which was most recently translated into English, and the latest one, Away from Chaos: the Middle East and the Challenge to the West (Columbia University Press, 2020), which was reviewed by The New York Times as "an excellent primer for anyone wanting to get up to speed on the region".



WALTER HOMOLKA

Rabbi Walter Homolka, PhD, PhD, D.H.L. is a full research professor of Jewish theology at the University of Potsdam (Germany). He is Director of the Abraham Geiger College Potsdam, and is responsible for the training of rabbis and cantors in continental Europe. He is also an advisor to Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, and a Chairman of the Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe (CCEE).



HUSAM S. ZOMLOT

Ambassador Dr. Husam S. Zomlot is the Head of the Palestinian Mission to the United Kingdom. Prior to his appointment to the UK, Dr. Zomlot served as Ambassador to the United States (Head of the PLO General Delegation to the United States), and Strategic Affairs Advisor to the Palestinian President. Dr. Zomlot's previous official roles include serving as Ambassador-at-large for the Palestinian Presidency and Director of the Fatah Foreign Relations Commission.

Dr. Zomlot holds a PhD in Economics from the University of London, was a professor of Strategy and Public Policy at Birzeit University, where he co-founded and chaired the Birzeit School of Government, and held a number of teaching and research positions at Harvard University and the University of London. His professional experiences include working as an economist at the United Nations and an Economic Researcher with the London School of Economics and the Palestine Policy Research Institute.



ZORA HESOVÁ

Zora Hesová, PhD, is a research fellow at the Philosophy Institute at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and an assistant professor at the Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University in Prague. Her work pertains to Islamic intellectual tradition, modern Islam in Europe and the rise of religion in contemporary politics.



EGEMEN BAĞIŞ

As the current Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the Czech Republic, H.E. Egemen Bağış started his post in November 2019. Born in Bingöl, Turkey in 1970, he studied at Bernard M. Baruch College of the City University of New York, where he received a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Human Resources Management (1993) and a Master of Public Administration degree (1996). He is in the thesis-writing phase of his PhD in Management at Istanbul Aydın University.

He served as the President of the New York based Federation of Turkish American Associations and returned to Turkey in 2002 upon invitation from the Founder of the Justice and Development Party Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Bağış was elected to the Turkish Parliament, representing Istanbul, and served as Chief Foreign Policy Advisor of the AK Party Chairman and Prime Minister Erdoğan. In 2007, he was re-elected to the Parliament and served as the AK Party's Vice Chairman in charge of international relations. In 2009, he became a State Minister and the Chief Negotiator, and in 2011, he was re-elected to the Parliament and served as the founding Minister of Turkey's very first European Union Affairs Ministry and the Chief Negotiator until December 2013.

Mr. Bağış was named a 'Young Global Leader' by the World Economic Forum in 2010. The Italian government awarded Bağış with the 'Cavaliere' Order of Merit in 2006 and the 'Commendatore' in 2011. He is married and has two children.



ROBERT ŘEHÁK

Robert Řehák, PhD, is a Special Envoy for Holocaust, Interfaith Dialogue and Freedom of Religion, the Head of the Czech Delegation to the IHRA, a Czech career diplomat, an official Hebrew interpreter, and a published scholar of biblical proper names and the Dead Sea Scrolls. A graduate of Charles University in Prague (M.A. and PhD), he also studied at Ruprecht-Karls-Universität in Heidelberg and Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and is an external lecturer at New York University in Prague. He served as a Deputy Spokesperson of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2018–2019), a Cultural Attaché at the Czech Embassy in Washington, D.C. (2012–2016), a Cultural and Press Attaché at the Czech Embassy in Israel (2005–2009), the President of the Society of Christians and Jews in the Czech Republic (2000–2005), and the General Secretary of the Center for Biblical Studies at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (2000–2002). In recent years, he has worked with young people and lectured in the United States, Europe and the Middle East. As a researcher, he participates in several international research projects in the field of interfaith dialogue and the sociology of religion. He is proficient in Czech, English, Hebrew, German and Russian, and reads classical Latin, Greek and Arabic. He lives in Prague with his wife and four children.



MERETE BILDE

Merete Bilde is policy advisor at the European External Action Service (EEAS) of the European Union. She works on issues at the cross section of religion and foreign policy. She is the driving force behind the EEAS Task Force on religion and culture as well as the EEAS training course on Religion and Foreign Policy. Ms. Bilde is one of the two co-founders of the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Foreign Policy, which was founded in 2015.

She has been engaged in initiatives relating to freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief as well as in networks of diplomats and faith-based political actors meeting regularly in an effort to bridge the gap in understanding between religious and secular worldviews. Ms. Bilde was a Bosch Public Policy Fellow at the Transatlantic Academy during its 2014–2015 fellowship

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year, which focused on religion and its role in the liberal order. She wrote a short piece on the Brussels perspective on religion and diplomacy in the resulting publication 'Faith, Freedom and Foreign Policy – Challenges for the Transatlantic Community'. Ms. Bilde recently gave an interview to Religions for Peace on 'Why Faith Matters'.



PETER MANDAVILLE

Dr. Peter Mandaville is Professor of International Affairs in the Schar School of Policy & Government and Senior Fellow at the Ali Vural Ak Center for Global Islamic Studies, both at George Mason University. He is also a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and a Senior Research Fellow at Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs. From 2011–2012 he was a member of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's Policy Planning Staff, where he was involved in shaping the U.S. response to the Arab Spring. From 2015–2016 he served as a Senior Advisor in the State Department's Office of Religion & Global Affairs, where he led work on the intersection of religious actor engagement and the prevention of violent extremism. His previous affiliations have included the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), the Pew Research Center, and the University of Kent at Canterbury. He is the author of the books *Islam & Politics* (2nd edition, 2014) and *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* (2001) in addition to several co-edited books, and many journal articles, book chapters, and op-ed/commentary pieces in outlets such as *Foreign Affairs*, *The Guardian*, *The Atlantic* and *Foreign Policy*.



ELHAM A. ALSHEJANI

Ms. Elham A. Alshejani holds a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from John Cabot University in Italy and a Master's degree in Public Administration from the American University of Cairo. She joined the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) in October 2016, where she holds, to date, the position of Director of Executive Management. Prior to joining KAICIID, she had been a career diplomat for the League of Arab States from 1991 until 2016. She held various posts throughout her twenty-five year career within the system of the League, handling a wide range of issues from multilateral affairs, disarmament, and regional

security to partnerships with civil society, gender integration and human rights. Her last position at the League was Director of the Human Rights Department, which she was appointed to in 2009 and where she remained until she joined KAICIID. As part of her last post, she participated in a number of fact finding missions in Sudan, Gaza, and Bahrain and the League's observer mission in Syria.



HAYDER AL-KHOEI

Hayder al-Khoei is Director of Foreign Relations at the Al-Khoei Institute in Najaf, a traditional Islamic seminary in Iraq that is combined with an interfaith academy. He is a member of the Iraqi Council for Interfaith Dialogue and a former fellow of the Middle East and North Africa Programmes at Chatham House and the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Hayder holds a Master's degree in International Studies and Diplomacy from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and a Master's degree in Islamic Studies from the Islamic College, London.



JAN ŠNAIDAUF

Jan Šnidauf is the Head of Policy Planning at the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs as of 1 November 2020. He has so far served as Chief Advisor to the Foreign Minister. From 2014 to 2018 he headed the Political and Economic Section of the EU Delegation to BiH. Earlier he dealt with the Middle East at the European External Action Service, a position which followed on from his assignment to the Policy Unit of EU High Representatives J. Solana and C. Ashton. Before that, Jan worked for President Vaclav Havel's Forum 2000 Foundation as well as the Association for International Affairs, Prague. Jan has lectured at several universities in Prague and the French Sciences-Po. He used to be frequently featured as a media commentator and published a number of articles. Jan graduated from SOAS, London, as well as from Charles University in Prague. He also studied in Cairo, Berlin and Washington, D.C.



ELISABETH GUIGOU

Elisabeth Guigou is a Founding President of Europartnaires and a President of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures.

She was formerly the President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of France; the Vice-President of the National Assembly; a Deputy at Seine-Saint-Denis (2002–2017); the Minister of Employment and Solidarity (2000–2002); the Minister of Justice (1997–2000); a Member of the European Parliament (1994–1997); a Minister Delegate for European Affairs (1990–1993); a Chargé de mission to the President of the Republic (1982–1990); an Advisor to Jacques Delors, the Minister of Finance (1981–1982); the Secretary General of the Paris Club; and an Administrator at the Ministry of Finance.



DODIK ARIYANTO

Dr. Dodik Ariyanto joined the General Secretariat of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in June 2014, where he initially served as the Head of the Cultural Affairs Department up until July 2016. In parallel, he was also helping the OIC Islamophobia Observatory, a center within the OIC General Secretariat which monitors the Islamophobia trend around the world. Later on, in 2015, Dr. Ariyanto was appointed as Head of the center, an assignment which continues until today. He makes regular analyses of the trend of Islamophobia to be reported to the Member Countries, as well as to other mechanisms within the OIC. He also writes the Annual Report of Islamophobia and policy recommendations to be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. Since January 2016, Dr. Ariyanto bears an additional responsibility as the OIC Focal Point for the Alliance of Civilizations, whose main task is to bridge the interactions between the OIC and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC); and to coordinate the OIC General Secretariat's relevant programs, activities, and cooperation with the UNAOC.



ZINAB ABDELFATAH ZIDAN

Ms. Zinab Abdelfatah Zidan is a debate trainer and facilitator at the projects Young Mediterranean Voices and Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange, leading various intercultural dialogue and debate sessions and trainings on issues related to global challenges and the Euro-Med region. As an Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange ambassador, she collaborates with many universities and local organizations in Egypt to disseminate the culture of virtual exchange as an effective method of learning about new topics and serving our cause in society. Since 2019, she has trained more than 500 young people from across the Euro-Med region in dialogue and debates and connected them with more than 200 students from across Egypt. During the COVID-19 lockdown, she built a small initiative on a university campus called "Friends of Peace," which aims at engaging university students of humanities in various Erasmus+ VE and other online activities.



VIET DO PHAM

Viet Do Pham is a young lawyer and entrepreneur belonging to the generation of "banana kids". He was born in Vietnam and moved with his family to Czechia when he was 6 years old. Since then, Viet was raised here, graduated from law school, married a Czech woman and set up a law firm and a shoe company. Moreover, Viet is one of the founders of the Association of Young Vietnamese Entrepreneurs and participated in building the Viet Up Organization and the Czech Viet Education Institution.

Since his childhood Viet has been helping Vietnamese people in Czechia with translations and administrative matters. Based on this experience he soon realized the need for better integration of Vietnamese people into the Czech society. Therefore, the Association of Young Vietnamese Entrepreneurs is not only a place for young people to develop their business ideas but also an intercultural place where Czech and Vietnamese people can get to know each other and understand the differences between the two cultures through social events and conferences. The goal of the Czech Viet Educational Institution is to provide education in

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Vietnamese culture especially to the “banana kids” so that they don’t forget their roots, but also to anyone interested in both Czech and Vietnamese culture.



JAKUB MŮČKA

Jakub Můčka, a PhD candidate in Philosophy at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University, has recently completed his MA in Russian Studies (cultural area studies). He specialises in modern Christian philosophy, particularly in the Russian tradition. He focuses mainly on Christian social and political teaching.

Simultaneously, he has been actively connecting theory with practice within his studies, which resulted in the foundation of the Atlas of Today’s World. This non-profit project wants to provide the general public with a systematic expert reflection on the current political and social situation in the world, particularly at the global level.



NIKOLA STRACHOVÁ

Nikola Strachová has joined the Anna Lindh Foundation as a Head of a National Network in 2019. Simultaneously she is a PhD candidate in Diplomacy at the Faculty of International Relations, University of Economics, Prague. She focuses mainly on the diplomacy of subnational units, especially cities and NGOs, and their role in global governance.

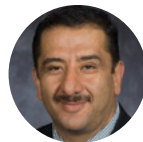


EKMELEDDIN M. İHSANOĞLU

Prof. Ekmeleddin M. İhsanoğlu is an academic, a diplomat, and a director of international cooperation projects with long and multidimensional experience in representing the Islamic culture and civilization in numerous inter-cultural forums.

Prof. İhsanoğlu pioneered activities relating to research and publishing, and organized congresses in various fields, including history of arts and sciences, and intercultural relations. He is the author of numerous books, articles and papers in different languages on science, history of science, Islamic culture, Turkish culture, relations between the Muslim world and the Western world and Turkish-Arab relations. He has earned the recognition of intellectual circles as a leading contributor to the rapprochement between cultures, particularly between the Muslim and Western worlds. He is the recipient of numerous awards and honours.

He is the first ‘democratically elected’ Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the second biggest intergovernmental organization after the UN. As the 9th Secretary General, he coordinated the preparations, drafting, adoption and implementation of an essential ‘reform’ program for the OIC aiming to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the 57-member Organisation. Based on the two core guiding concepts of moderation and modernization, the reform program incorporated universal norms, values, and practices such as democracy, good governance, rule of law, freedom of expression, respect for human rights, women’s empowerment and participation in the political process, protection of minority rights, and freedom of religion.



MOHAMMED ABU-NIMER

Prof. Mohammed Abu-Nimer is a Senior Advisor at the KAICIID Dialogue Centre and a Professor of International Peace and Conflict Resolution at the American University. He served as the Founder and Director of the Salam Institute for Peace and Justice, and a co-founder of the Journal of Peacebuilding and Development. He has worked for over three decades in a number of conflict areas, including the Middle East, Chad, Niger, Mindanao, and Sri Lanka, among others, on issues related to conflict resolution; Islamic models of peacebuilding; inter-religious dialogue; civic education; forgiveness and reconciliation; and evaluation of peacebuilding programs. He has published many scholarly books and articles, and his most recent book is Making Peace with Faith (2018).

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## MILOŠ TOUŠEK

Miloš Toušek has been in the position of the Head of a Strategic Unit in the Czech MFA – the Department of Foreign Policy Analysis and Planning – since mid-2019. Previously he was posted as the Deputy Head of the Mission at the Czech Embassy to the United Arab Emirates (2008–2012) and as the Second National Expert – Strategic Analyst in the MENA.2 Division of the European External Action Service in Brussels (2012–2017) during the tenures of HR/VP Catherine Ashton and HR/VP Federica Mogherini. Earlier he had served in short-term diplomatic postings at the Czech Embassies in Beirut and Kuwait. Besides his relatively long-term expertise related to Middle East politics, he has dedicated his professional attention to the European Union Common Foreign and Security Policy, intercultural and interfaith dialogue, development cooperation, sustainable development goals and climate change. Miloš graduated from the University of Economics in Prague, namely its Faculty of International Relations, and spent a significant part of his PhD studies at Cairo University before entering the Diplomatic Academy of the Czech MFA.



## JAN DANIEL

Jan Daniel, PhD, works as a researcher at the Centre for the Study of Global Regions, Institute of International Relations Prague. He obtained his PhD in International Relations at the Institute of Political Studies, the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University with a thesis on practices and narratives of peacekeeping in South Lebanon. His professional interests include politics and security in the Middle East with a focus on Lebanon and Syria, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and statebuilding (primarily in the context of the Middle East and the global agenda for the prevention of violent extremism), Czech foreign and security policy towards Middle Eastern countries and the debate on hybrid warfare. Theoretically, he is mostly interested in anthropological and post-structuralist approaches to international politics and international political sociology.

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5. 11. 2020  
THURSDAY

## INTERCULTURAL AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE: ENRICHING FUTURE COMMUNITIES

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🕒 9:30 – 10:25

### OPENING REMARKS

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Chair

**Dr. Emil Aslan**  
(Institute of International  
Relations Prague)

Speakers

**H.E. Tomáš Petříček** (Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic)  
**H.E. Sundus Albayraqdar** (Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq in the Czech Republic)  
**H.E. Mons. Charles Daniel Balvo** (Apostolic Nuncio to the Czech Republic)  
**Dr. Azza Karam** (Religions for Peace International)

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🕒 10:30 – 12:00

### PANEL I: FAITH BASED SOCIETIES IN THE (DE)GLOBALIZED WORLD

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Chair

**Dr. Zora Hesová**  
(Charles University  
in Prague)

The coronavirus outbreak has brought about an unexpected level of disruption to many areas of social and political life. Believers and religious communities around the globe have been since then separated and isolated by lockdowns, social-distancing measures, and international travel regulations. Although it may seem too early to tell whether this state of affairs would be remembered as a mere temporary inconvenience, or if it could generate a profound transformation of our way of living, it has already had a significant impact on daily practice of world's religions and their adherents. Ranging from numerous care and solidarity initiatives reacting to emergency needs to unprecedented moves like closing of places of worship or restrictions of this year hajj, the faith-based communities have had to find innovative ways to adapt to the novel conditions and limitations imposed in the public sphere; also in anticipation of a major economic crisis. This panel seeks to assess the role and creative responses from diverse faith-based societies in the current context. Which key examples, role models and best practice can we identify by now? What could we learn from the new trends? How to define opportunities and capacity to enrich our future communities?

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Speakers

**Prof. Gilles Kepel** (Université Paris Sciences et Lettres)  
**Dr. Walter Homolka** (University of Potsdam)  
**H.E. Hussam Zomlot** (Ambassador, Palestinian Mission to the United Kingdom)

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🕒 12:00 – 13:00

### CONCERT – CIVILIZATIONS CHOIR OF ANTAKYA

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Presentation by

**H.E. Egemen Bağış** (Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the Czech Republic)

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🕒 13:00 – 14:30

### PANEL II: THE RELEVANCE OF RELIGION IN DIPLOMACY TODAY

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Chair

**Dr. Jan Šnidauf**  
(Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs of the Czech  
Republic)

Intercultural and interfaith dialogues have become integral parts of political and diplomatic efforts as they offer ideas and practical tools to enhance understanding among nations and diverse communities. There is no doubt that they require sustained attention, professional support and continuous advancement at both national and international levels. Its value has been acknowledged by most of national governments, religious authorities and international

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organization, and most importantly by respective civil societies and exposed individuals. This conference panel aspires to highlight particular worldwide experience and lessons learned so far and to feed into these efforts by bringing together dedicated personalities focusing on following topics and questions. What is the understanding, acceptance and personal experience – in general term relevance – of religion among diplomats today? What kind of change or adjustment can we observe in this respect due to the current pandemic? What role might religious authorities and institutions have in the up-coming socio-economic crisis? Are we able to identify particular opportunities to share our expertise gained after years of working to help diplomats and foreign affairs professionals better understand the relevance of religions and cultural diversity?

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#### Speakers

**Dr. Robert Řehák** (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic)  
**Dr. Merete Bilde** (European External Action Service of the European Union)  
**Prof. Peter Mandaville** (George Mason University)  
**Elham Alshejri** (KAICIID Dialogue Centre)  
**Hayder al-Khoei** (Al-Khoei Institute)

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🕒 14:45 – 15:15

### PANEL III: MULTILATERAL YOUTH NETWORKS AND FUTURE COMMUNITIES

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#### Chair

**Nikola Strachová**  
(Institute of International Relations Prague)

Civil society networks and organizations are an integral part of the global dialogue among cultures. Their capacity to assist the marginalized and vulnerable reflects the core values of our society – such as mutual respect, social inclusion, justice, and equity. Community work and initiatives bring people together and organize them to resist and overcome difficult situations, such as the one we are facing now with the ongoing pandemic. Covid-19 has had a major global impact, and several negative implications for deepening inequalities and protectionism, and in parts of the world it even contributed to the rise of xenophobia, racism, and distrust. Among the crucial challenges and questions we face today belongs a transition towards better connectivity, including connections and exchanges between world cultures. Can the situation we are experiencing over the last couple of months help create a new kind of solidarity? An in-depth and broad reflection within an inter-connected world, as well as sincere efforts to foster open dialogue channels, seems essential. Similar is the role of civil society on the frontline when advocating incremental policy change and progress while engaging with governments and institutions to identify and protect those who need it the most. What kind of support — or extra free space — does civil society require, or deserve, to deliver its best?

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#### Speakers

**H.E. Elisabeth Guigou** (Anna Lindh Foundation)  
**Dr. Dodik Ariyanto** (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation)  
**Zinab Abdelfatah Zidan** (Young Mediterranean Voices)  
**Viet Do Pham** (Czech Viet Education Institute)  
**Jakub Můčka** (Atlas of Today's World)

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🕒 16:15 – 17:00

### CLOSING REMARKS

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#### Chair

**Dr. Jan Daniel**  
(Institute of International Relations Prague)

#### Speakers

**H.E. Ekmeleddin M. İhsanoğlu** (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation)  
**Prof. Mohammed Abu-Nimer** (KAICIID Dialogue Centre)  
**Miloš Toušek** (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic)

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# INTERCULTURAL AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE: ENRICHING FUTURE COMMUNITIES

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## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Covid-19 pandemic might have been our generation's most formative crisis experience. We have navigated through unprecedented lockdowns of our societies and immense economic shocks.

We witnessed international interaction downgraded close to zero as well as vacant churches, mosques and synagogues. We understood the great value of communication, social interaction and open world.

Similar to past lessons of this scale and human impact, the crisis made us feel fragile or even fearful, it uncovered some dead-ends of our socio-economic evolution and yet offered inspiration for the future. Sustainable development, security and prosperity, social coherence and solidarity as well as identity and moral integrity – all these values need to be re-assessed now with fresh emphasis and urgency. We believe that such a task is best done through a comprehensive, open and honest dialogue.

The fifth successive conference dedicated to the intercultural and interfaith dialogue, hosted by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Prague based Ambassadors of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation member states, Institute of International Relations and Anna Lindh Foundation; provides a platform for expert, policy makers, youth and general public exchange.

We aspire to contribute to long-term global efforts enhancing mutual understanding and multilateral cooperation while at the same time focus our attention on very present opportunities and threats which need to be addressed in a consensual, peaceful and creative ways. Reflecting upon Future Communities, young people participation, opinions and ownership seem indispensable and beneficial. Community life needs care and constant effort to flourish. The Conference aims to contribute to this end by providing a platform to debate and identify potential ways how to reach there.

Key axes of the Conference discourse, i.e. three main methodical perspectives, could be described as:

- 1/ Academic descriptive as well as normative evaluation of the post-crisis situation we have faced including a positive role of the faith-based communities;
- 2/ Diplomats – interfaith and intercultural dialogue professionals' assessment of what should be done in practice for the sake of social resilience and prevention of

possible further deterioration;

3/ Civil society – in particular youth – perception and reflections and their expectations vis-à-vis the future.

Let us proceed from a common starting point – crisis as an opportunity – via an outstanding gathering of experts and public at the Conference towards a shared global responsibility and intentional actions. Unlike embarrassing populist or malign radical voices, let us esteem our enriching and mutually inspiring potential while respecting – not ignoring – our diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

Some framing questions suggested to possibly steer participants thinking ahead of the Conference: How did you perceive pandemic lockdowns and disconnection in your home community and abroad? What have you done to overcome these limits in your professional as well as personal lives? Which short- and long-term trends (both positive / negative) seem to have enforced over the last year? Could the globally shared sense of uncertainty bring about any positive sentiments of global solidarity? What particular values and strengths could be associated with the resilience of the faith-based societies? Which key takeaways shall be controlled and/or further promoted within expert and public debates?

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## ONLINE CONFERENCE

05. 11. 2020 ☉ 9:30