

International conference

NEW PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM DIALOGUE

**Hotels Bernardin,
Portorož, Slovenia,
May 27-29, 2019**

Today, few would disagree that interreligious dialogue is an indispensable tool (or medium) for mutual coexistence, acceptance and peace. In recent times, the importance of such dialogue has been highlighted by the revival and the resurgence of religion (de-secularisation), relevant in variety of contexts – e.g. in the context of democratic politics, the context of political extremism and terrorism, or that of integration or non-integration of immigrants who are often of different faith and/or culture than that of the host communities.

At the same time, we should also ask critically whether interreligious dialogue has indeed been as beneficial and useful as the dialogue activists claim it has and as they want it to be. While dialogue between the religions can be understood as a pressing step in the modern development of intercultural relations, it can only work when it is founded on careful investigation of their foundations.

At this conference, we want to reconceptualize the question of the importance of an active and well informed interreligious dialogue. The focus will be on in-depth, philosophical-theological conversation between Christians and Muslims. We will explore new ways in which philosophical theories can foster Christian-Muslim understanding.

Examples of the questions to be addressed are:

- Can Christian and Muslim theologies as equal partners in conversation, and as comparative theologies, help us foster better intercultural understanding?
- What are best philosophical models and theories of dialogue for framing the theological conversation between European Christians on one hand and Iranian and other Middle Eastern Muslims on the other?
- Is it the Aristotelian, Platonist, one of the modern philosophical foundations (Continental,

Analytical, Wittgensteinian, Phenomenological, Deconstructivist, Pragmatist, or other), or a combination of these?

- How can the experiences and perspectives of the relevant “in-house” minorities (Muslim minorities in Europe, Christian minorities in the Middle East), as well as those of Christians and Muslims in special social and political circumstances (refugees, migrants, displaced persons), inform contemporary philosophical-theological dialogue between Christianity and Islam?

- And, how should philosophical and comparative theologies address the contemporary criticisms of interreligious dialogue, which brand it as a failed tool for better understanding between cultures, or as a Western invention and tool for cultural domination, or as a cover-up for power-relations between groups in power, as opposed to empowering those who are often voiceless and excluded from interreligious dialogue (“heretical” sects, secularists, women, sexual and other minorities, migrants)?

At the conference, we will address these and related questions in carefully prepared lectures, delivered in pairs during thematically ordered 1,5 hour sessions of two speakers, with ample time for responses and discussions.

CONFERENCE CO-ORGANIZED BY:

Science and Research Centre Koper (Slovenia)
Iranian Association for Philosophy of Religion (Iran)
Centre for Comparative Theology and Cultural Studies, University of Paderborn (Germany)
European Academy of Sciences and Arts (EASA) –
World Religions Class (Austria)

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

MONDAY, 27 MAY

14.00-15.00 **Welcome buffet** (Hotel Bernardin)

15:00-15:50 **Protocolar Speeches and Conference Opening**

Protocolar speeches:

Prof Dr Rado Pišot, Director of the Science and Research Centre Koper

Prof Dr Nadja Furlan Štante, Science and Research Centre Koper, Leader of Research Project on Interreligious Dialogue (Slovenian Research Agency)

Msgr Dr Jurij Bizjak, Bishop of Koper

Prof Dr Nedžad Grabus, Mufti of the Islamic Community in Slovenia

Conference Opening:

Prof Dr Lenart Škof, Head of the Institute for Philosophical Studies, ZRS Koper and the Chair of the Conference Organizing Committee

Prof Dr Elmar Kuhn, European Academy of Sciences and Arts - Dean of Class World Religions

Prof Dr Hamidreza Ayatollahy, Head of Iranian Association for Philosophy of Religion, Emeritus professor of Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

Assoc Prof Dr Gorazd Andrejč, ZRS Koper, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor and Woolf Institute, Cambridge, Chair of the Conference Programme Committee

16:00-17:30 **Panel 1**

Klaus von Stosch: Comparative Theology and Christian-Muslim dialogue. A relationship of mutual foundation

Hamidreza Ayatollahy: The Purpose of Interreligious Dialogue: Coexistence or Cooperation?

17:45-19:15 **Discussion Panel / Round table**

On the Futures of Islam and Muslims in Europe's Democracies (moderators: **Gorazd Andrejč** and **Carool Kersten**)

Participants: **Elmar Kuhn** (EASA Dean of Class World Religions), **Rasoul Rasoulipour** (Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran), **Mari Osredkar** (Univ. of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology), **Anja Zalta** (Univ. of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts), **Maurits Berger** (University of Leiden)

19:30 **Dinner**

TUESDAY, 28 MAY

9:00-10:30 **Panel 2**

Seyyed Hassan Hosseini: The Islamic Foundations of Religious Pluralism

Nadja Furlan Štante: Women's Voices in Christian-Muslim Interreligious Dialogue - A Venue for Religious Peace-Building

9:00-10:30 **Parallel panel 2A: Postdoc & PhD students**

Maja Bjelica: The Turkish Alevi and Their Interreligious Dialogical Inclination

Javad Taheri: Possibility of a Comparative Theology According to Allamah Sayyed Muhammad Hossein Tabataba'i's Philosophy

Saida Mirsadri: Process Islam - Towards a Metaphysical Foundation for Interreligious Dialogue

10:30-11:00 **Coffee Break**

11:00-12:30 **Panel 3**

Nedžad Grabus: Ethical Monotheism and the Concept of Justice

Mohsen Javadi: The Priority of Justice over Generosity in Islamic Social Ethics

12:30-14:30 **Lunch Break**

14:30-16:00 **Panel 4**

Carool Kersten: Of Double Genealogies and East-West Investigations: Resetting the Muslim-Christian Encounter

Lenart Škof: The Right of Belonging: On The Future of Political Theology of Cohabitation

16:00-16:30 **Coffee Break**

16:30-18:00 **Panel 5**

Maurits Berger: What Do We Mean by 'Radical Islam': A Dutch Case Study

Janez Juhant: Religion, Society and Mystics: The Spiritual Ground(s) of the Societal Life

18:30-19:30 **Christian-Muslim prayer (Church of St. Bernardine)**

Hosted by **Elmar Kuhn**, with the cooperation of **Janez Juhant** and **Reza Akbari**

19:30 **Dinner**

This conference is financially supported by Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS projects J6-8265 and J6-9393) and The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

WEDNESDAY 29 MAY

9:00-10:30 Panel 6

Mohammad Saeedimehr: Islamic Mysticism and Muslim-Christian Dialogue

Joshua Ralston: Bearing Witness: Contestation After Polemics

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:30 Panel 7

Gorazd Andrejč: Religious Freedom and the Epistemic Limitations of Religious Belief

Jafar Morvarid: Language Games Philosophy as a philosophical foundation for interreligious dialogue

12:30-14:30 Lunch Break

14:30-16:00 Panel 8

Elmar Kuhn: Is the Clash of Religions the Future of Our World?

Reza Akbari: The Role of Conceptual Metaphors for the Fruitfulness of Interreligious Dialogues: Interreligious Dialogue as Friendly Co-Travelling

16:00-16:30 Coffee Break

16:30-18:00 Panel 9

Bojan Žalec: Religious Exclusivism, Dialogue and Coexistence

Rasoul Rasoulipour: Interfaith Dialogue; an Existential Approach

18:15-19:00 Concluding Remarks

19:30 Dinner

21.00 Musicking sound-dialogue performed by A Muzofil collaboration

The sound event will offer a musicking experience, exploring the dialogue between music and religion. The intent of this experience is to dissolve through a sound dialogue the borders that separate the performers and the audience.

THE LIST OF SPEAKERS

Slovenian group

Prof Dr Lenart Škof, Head of the Institute for Philosophical Studies, ZRS Koper and Alma Mater Europaea ECM/ISH

Prof Dr Klaus von Stosch, Head of the Centre for Comparative Theology and Cultural Studies of the University of Paderborn

Prof Dr Nadja Furlan Štante, ZRS Koper, Institute for Philosophical Studies

Assoc Prof Dr Gorazd Andrejč, ZRS Koper, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor and Woolf Institute, Cambridge

Dr Maja Bjelica, Institute for Philosophical Studies, SRC Koper

Prof Dr Bojan Žalec, EASA and University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology

Prof Dr Anja Zalta, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts

Prof Dr Mari Jože Osredkar, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology

Emer Prof Dr Janez Juhant, EASA and University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology

Iranian group

Prof Dr Hamidreza Ayatollahy, Head of Iranian Association for Philosophy of Religion, Emeritus professor of Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

Prof Dr Mohammad Saeedimehr, Professor at Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

Prof Dr Mohsen Javadi, Professor at University of Qom, Iran

Prof Dr Reza Akbari, Professor at Imam Sadiq University, Tehran, Iran

Prof Dr Seyyed Hassan Hosseini, Professor at Sharif University of Technology Tehran, Iran

Prof Dr Rasoul Rasoulipour, Professor at Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

Prof Dr Jafar Morvarid, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Faculty of Theology, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran

Ms. Saida Mirsadri, Ph.D. Candidate in Philosophy of Religion at Tehran University, Farabi College

Mr. Javad Taheri, Director of Iranian Association for Philosophy of Religion, Ph.D. Candidate in Philosophy of Religion at Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Other speakers

Prof Dr Elmar Kuhn, European Academy of Sciences and Arts – Dean of Class World Religions

Prof Dr Maurits Berger, University of Leiden

Prof Dr Nedžad Grabus, Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Sarajevo

Prof Dr Carool Kersten, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, King's College London

Prof Dr Joshua Ralston, Faculty of Divinity, University of Edinburgh



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Iranian Association for Philosophy of Religion



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