FINAL REMARKS

By

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As we bring the first *Dialogues4Peace* Conference to a close, I would like to offer a few reflections on what these three days of intellectual exchange have taught us, and on the responsibilities that now lie ahead.

We gathered in Athens under the theme **"Dialogues with the Past: Timeless Wisdom for Contemporary Peacebuilding."** Our purpose was neither to idealize the past nor to assume that scholarly dialogue alone can resolve the conflicts of our time. Rather, it was to explore how the accumulated wisdom of humanity, combined with contemporary scientific knowledge and ethical responsibility, can contribute to a more peaceful and sustainable future.

Across our discussions, one central message has emerged: **peace is not simply the absence of war. It is a continuous achievement of human civilization, requiring knowledge, justice, trust, moderation, and institutions capable of managing differences without violence.**

The **philosophical and ethical contributions** reminded us that peace begins with the way we understand ourselves and our responsibilities towards others. Ancient ideas of self-knowledge, moderation, practical wisdom, justice and civic virtue remain remarkably relevant. Yet these principles must be interpreted critically, in light of contemporary realities. History offers guidance, but never ready-made solutions.

Our discussions on **cultural heritage and collective memory** demonstrated that the past can both divide and unite. Archaeology, historical scholarships, religious traditions, cultural exchange and the preservation of heritage can create spaces of mutual recognition. Cultural heritage is not merely a collection of monuments and objects; it is a living resource through which communities can rediscover shared experiences, overcome inherited prejudices and build confidence across political and cultural boundaries.

Another important theme concerned **education and intergenerational responsibility**. Peace cannot be sustained without cultivating the intellectual and moral capacities of future generations. **Education** must encourage critical thinking, empathy, respect for diversity and the ability to disagree without hostility. In a rapidly changing technological environment, dialogue between generations is equally essential. The experience of the past and the creativity of the future must complement rather than oppose one another.

Science and technology occupied a central place in our deliberations. Artificial intelligence, digital communication and emerging technologies offer extraordinary opportunities for human progress, but also create new risks involving manipulation, inequality, surveillance, misinformation and increasingly autonomous forms of warfare. Scientific advancement, therefore, cannot be separated from ethical judgement. **Technological power without moral responsibility may increase humanity's capacity for destruction rather than strengthen its prospects for peace.**

The contributions from the **arts, music, literature and cultural expression reminded us that human understanding** extends beyond rational argument alone. **Artistic creation** can communicate experiences of suffering, belonging and reconciliation that political language sometimes fails to express. **Culture** is therefore not peripheral to peacebuilding; it is an essential dimension of our common humanity.

The discussions on governance, international relations and conflict resolution brought us to the practical challenges of our time. Peace requires more than goodwill. It depends upon credible institutions, the rule of law, respect for human dignity, inclusive decision-making and international cooperation. Reconciliation after conflict demands not only the cessation of violence, but also justice, accountability, restored trust and the rebuilding of social relationships.

We were reminded, particularly **through historical experiences** of conflict and post-war reconstruction, that agreements may end hostilities, but lasting peace requires sustained political commitment and social engagement.

Taken together, these perspectives demonstrate the importance of **interdisciplinary dialogue**. No single discipline, institution or country possesses all the answers. The challenges of peace are interconnected with those of ***education, health, environmental sustainability, cultural identity, technological development and human security.***

The most valuable outcome of this conference should therefore not be merely the exchange of ideas, but the willingness to transform knowledge into responsible action.

In this spirit, the proposed *Athens Manifesto for Peace* offers a framework for continuing our common reflection on knowledge, reason, human dignity and shared responsibility. Its significance will depend not simply on the principles it expresses, but on our willingness to carry them forward through education, research, institutional cooperation and concrete initiatives.

Dear colleagues,

Athens has provided the setting for our first encounter. Looking towards the future, **Delphi, with its universal legacy of self-knowledge, moderation and dialogue, would offer a particularly meaningful setting for a second Dialogues4Peace Conference in 2028.**

Such a continuation is an aspiration that I sincerely hope we can realize. However, experience has also taught us that scientific ambition must be accompanied by sound organizational planning and financial responsibility. **We would therefore envisage convening Dialogues4Peace 2028 in Delphi, provided that adequate financial support and institutional commitments have been secured sufficiently in advance.** This would allow us to guarantee the quality, accessibility and sustainability that such an international initiative deserves.

Before concluding, I wish to express my warm and sincere gratitude to all our speakers and contributors for their valuable insights, intellectual generosity and commitment to constructive dialogue. I also thank our organizing institutions, supporting bodies, partners and everyone who contributed to bringing this conference to life.

I wish to convey **particular appreciation to ZITA Congress & Event Management** for the tremendous effort, professionalism, dedication and tireless work invested in the organisation and successful delivery of this demanding international event. Their contribution, often extending far beyond what is visible to participants, has been invaluable.

Finally, I thank all of you for your presence, your engagement and your belief that dialogue remains both possible and necessary, even in an increasingly divided world.

Finally, should there have been any organisational shortcomings, unforeseen difficulties, or inconveniences, I assume full responsibility as Conference Chair and sincerely ask for your understanding. In the very spirit of dialogue and mutual respect that has guided our gathering, **I kindly invite you to open the compass of your tolerance and understanding just a few degrees wider**, and to remember our shared purpose above any imperfections in its realization.

Let us leave Athens **not with the illusion that peace can be achieved through declarations alone,** but with the conviction

that knowledge, ethical responsibility and sustained cooperation can make a difference.

May the dialogue that began in Athens continue beyond this conference, and may the wisdom of the past help us shape a more peaceful future. Thank you very much. Have a safe trip back home.

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