



**Pre-invitation to
The Arab-Europe Citizens' Dialogue
Peaceful Coexistence**

How can people of different faiths live peacefully together?

14 to 17 October 2019 – in Cairo, Egypt

In the globalized context of today, in both Europe and the Arab region, there are a multitude of perceptions when it comes to religion, politics, social development, leadership, democracy, etc. Most of these perceptions are formed in specific cultural contexts, but they are also challenged by and developed in a larger social and cultural context.

One challenge in this situation is to explore how people with different political perspectives and different cultural backgrounds, and not least people of different faiths, can live peacefully together. This is of course a main objective on the macro level and thus the responsibility of politicians.

The role of civil society is however also pivotal in this context. Peaceful coexistence concerns actual people living together. Thus, actual people not only could, but should, be engaged in the dialogue around how we can live peacefully together despite a wide variety of cultural, social, political and religious differences. Therefore, we need dialogue among the citizens of the Arab and European regions. We need dialogue among representatives for civil society in the two regions.

The need is not only dialogue within the Arab region, and within the European region. The need is dialogue between the two regions contribution. This especially concerns the religious dimension of the dialogue. The development of the relation between religion and society has been very different in Europe and the Arab region. But, there is no absolute and straight forward right or wrong in these developments. There are good reasons for Europe to learn from the experiences in the Arab region, and likewise good reasons for the Arab regions to learn from the European experience.

A pre-invitation

We are delighted to invite you to participate in the upcoming Arab-Europe Citizens' Dialogue Conference under the theme:

Peaceful Coexistence – How can people of different faiths live peacefully together?

The primary objective of the Arab-European dialogue in the coming year is creating spaces for understanding and implementing changes to increase human rights in both regions. This focus stems from the *Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS)* Forum strategy, which emphasis on coexistence, pluralism and inclusion - not exclusion methodologies in the religious context. The other objective is the interactions between religion, civil society, and politics; integration and participation of refugees; and production of media and images — which follow from an increased focus on human rights. By making human rights the focus of our efforts, the Forum for Intercultural Dialogue aims to bring this ever-important principle to the forefront.

The Arab-Europe Citizens' Dialogue

The Arab-European Citizens' Dialogue was established in 2010 at *the Orthodox Academy of Crete* (OAC) as an expansion of a previous Egyptian-German dialogue. The main counterparts are the *Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services* (CEOSS) in Cairo, Egypt, and *Oikosnet Europe*, an association of faith-based educational and dialogue institutions in Europe with its office at the Sigtuna Foundation, Sweden. From 2010, there has been a series of consultations in Europe and in the Arab region. The last conference, the 6th from the initiation of this dialogue, was held at the Sigtuna Foundation, Sweden, 1-4 May 2018. We are already also planning for an event in 2020 taking place at OAC.

The 2019 event of this initiative, announced in this pre-invitation, will be the 7th Dialogue Conference, and it will be hosted by CEOSS. The conference location will be Cairo, Egypt.

Dates and Times

Participants are welcome to arrive during **Monday 14 October**, and the first thing in the conference agenda will be a Welcome Reception on Monday evening. The formal program will start in the morning of Tuesday 15 October, and the program will end by lunchtime **Thursday 17 October**. There will be an optional excursion on Thursday afternoon. More information about the conference and a more detailed program will be distributed later.

Registration and Costs

This is a pre-invitation, and a proper invitation with more details on registration and costs will follow. Here, we only want to indicate the conditions for participation.

- The cost for participation, after subsidies by the conference organizers, will be app: USD 260.
- On both the Arab side and the European side, there are furthermore some possibilities for subsidies regarding travel and participation. This is handled separately by the two regions. For questions about financial support, you can contact the following persons respectively:
 - For the Arab region: *Samira Luka* (samira.luka@ceoss.org.eg)
 - For the European region: *Karin Sallander* (karin.sallander@sigtunastiftelsen.se)

Conference Organizers

The Arab-Europe Citizens' Dialogue Conference on Peaceful Coexistence is organized jointly by the *Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services* (CEOSS), *Oikosnet Europe*, and *the Sigtuna Foundation*.

Feel free to contact any of the following persons if you have general questions about the conference and/or about the conference organizers:

For the Arab side: *Samira Luka* (samira.luka@ceoss.org.eg)

For the European side: *Alf Linderman* (alf.linderman@sigtunastiftelsen.se)

