

DIMECCE project conference

26-27 May 2015

Call for Papers

'Middle Eastern Christians in diaspora: past and present, continuity and change'

The DIMECCE research team invites proposals for research presentations at a two-day international conference on Middle Eastern Christian diasporas, to be held on 26th -27th May 2015 at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. The conference will provide a singular setting in which to meet and engage with a wide array of actors working with Middle Eastern Christian migrant communities in Europe and beyond, including: prominent religious and community representatives, state actors and civil society organisations, and scholars in disciplines across the social sciences, humanities and theology.

The event is being organized by the research team working on the EU-funded international comparative project 'Defining and Identifying Middle Eastern Christian Communities in Europe' (DIMECCE).

The scope of the conference is wide-ranging and seeks to explore various themes relating to Middle Eastern Christian diasporic communities. While the primary focus will be on Europe, we are also interested in comparative cases from other regions. The themes identified for discussion are deliberately broad and include:

- history of settlement of Christians from the Middle East in the 'lands of immigration'
- internal debates and dynamics of Middle Eastern Christian communities in the diaspora
- Middle Eastern Christians' engagement with and consideration by surrounding actors in countries of residence: in local neighbourhoods, in ecumenical and inter-faith cooperation, in the media, in civil society, and as citizens vis-à-vis political institutions at different levels of government
- perspectives of diasporic Middle Eastern Christians regarding their countries of origin and, in the opposite direction, perceptions of actors in countries of origin regarding Middle Eastern Christian communities abroad
- questions of identity and (mis)identification, as Middle Eastern Christians attempt to reconcile competing ethnic, religious, national and other identities

To initiate discussions among conference participants on these topics, the DIMECCE team will showcase the principal end-of-project findings from their research, comparing the experiences of Coptic Orthodox, Iraqi and Assyrian/Syriac Christian migrants (and their descendants) living in the UK, Denmark and Sweden. Selected presenters will further elaborate and deepen the discussion by presenting their own research with diasporic Middle Eastern Christian communities, in Europe or further afield. In addition, a number of distinguished invited experts have agreed to share their own insights. Those currently confirmed as attending include:

- Ghassan Hage (Professor of Anthropology and Social Theory, University of Melbourne)
- Yvonne Haddad (Professor of the History of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Georgetown University)

- Håkan Sandvik (Middle East advisor, Church of Sweden)
- Nora Stene (Associate Professor, Dept. of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, University of Oslo)
- Anthony O'Mahony (Director, Centre for Eastern Christianity, Heythrop College – University of London)
- Naures Atto (Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in World Christianities, Cambridge University)

Practical details and how to apply

To propose your contribution to the conference, please submit an abstract (up to 300 words) along with a short biography (up to 100 words) to the conference organizers Dr Fiona McCallum and Dr Alistair Hunter, via email to dimecce@st-andrews.ac.uk. The deadline for submitting these documents is 30 January 2015. Successful applicants will be notified by 16th February 2015.

There will be no conference fee and we will provide conference materials, as well as beverages and lunches during the conference. There will be a separate fee to attend the conference dinner. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered for successful applicants. A full written paper is not required for the conference.

If you would like additional information about the conference, please contact the organizers as above.