Conference Objectives

Five years into the Arab uprisings the Middle East is a region under great distress: Politically, economically, culturally. The status quo is widely considered to be unsustainable, as the Arab Human Development Reports have warned already a decade ago with a view to the uneasy integration of the region into an increasingly globalized world. The Arab transformation process – triggered by both globalization and the Arab uprisings since 2011 – varies from country to country, ranging from bloody war to laboratories of peaceful change. But one should not get confused. If there is one thing this transformation shows then it is the fact that the region is ripe for a new social contract – one that is more pluralist, human rights based and inclusive than the authoritarian, post-colonial social contract that defined most Arab countries since they gained independence from the erstwhile colonial powers. This post-colonial authoritarian social contract will not endure, yet as in all great transformations the road to a new social order is bumpy and twisted.

This transformation bears uncertainty on many levels. Yet, it affects in particular ethno-national and religious minorities throughout the region. Christians as a particularly important and significant religious minority in the predominantly Muslim Arab countries are central here. And not only because Christianity originates from the Middle East and is, since two thousand years, a cornerstone of the region’s rich social, economic, cultural, and spiritual fabric.
**Day 1: Wednesday 24 February 2016**

3.00 pm Registration of delegates

3.30 pm Welcoming and opening remarks by H.E. Archbishop Ludwig Schick (Archbishop of Bamberg and Chairman of the German Bishops Conference Commission on International Church Affairs)

3.45 pm Welcoming and opening remarks by Professor Stephan Stetter (University of the Bundeswehr Munich)

4.00 pm OPENING KEYNOTE ADDRESS
- Professor Heiner Bielefeldt (Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg and UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief)

4.45 pm OPENING PANEL 1
Five Years into the Arab Uprisings: Stock-taking of the Situation of Christians and Christian Churches in the Region – Chair: Dr. Mitra Moussa Nabo (University of the Bundeswehr Munich)
Roundtable with:
- H.B. Patriarch Bechara Boutros Al-Rai (Patriarch of Antioch and Head of the Maronite Church)
- H.E. Metropolitan Ignatius Alhoshi (Orthodox Church of Antioch, Diocese in Western and Southern Europe)
- Professor Stephan Stetter (University of the Bundeswehr Munich)
- Mr. Ghassan Al-Shami (Journalist, Al-Mayadeen Satellite Television Channel, Beirut)
- H.G. Bishop Pavly (Coptic Orthodox General Bishop, Cairo)

6.00 pm End of today’s conference proceedings

6.45 pm Holy Mass (Latin Rite), Main Celebrant: H.E. Archbishop Ludwig Schick
7.30 pm Dinner

**Day 2: Thursday 25 February 2016**

7.30 am Holy Mass (Maronite Rite), Main Celebrant: H.B. Patriarch Bechara Boutros Al-Rai

8.00 am Breakfast

9.00 am PANEL 2
A Multi-Faith Middle East: Relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims and the Impact on the Societal Coexistence in Times of Domestic and Regional Disorder – Chair: Dr. Thomas Scheffler (Orient-Institute Beirut)
Roundtable with:
- H.E. Archbishop Nikodimos Daoud Sharaf (Syrian Orthodox Church, Mosul and Kurdistan)
- Professor Mahmoud Ayoub (Hartford Seminary)
- Professor David Thomas (University of Birmingham)

10.30 am Coffee break

11.00 am THEMATIC WORKSHOPS
Workshops are scheduled simultaneously and participants can choose to participate in one of them. Each workshop is chaired by a Church representative and an academic.

**WORKSHOP 1:** The Tension between Inclusion and Exclusion of Christians in Everyday Life
- H.E. Archbishop Shahan Sarkissian (Armenian Orthodox Church, Aleppo)
- Dr. Fiona McCallum (St. Andrews University)
**WORKSHOP 2:** The Tension between Integration and Non-Integration of Church/State Relations
- Professor Antoine Messara (University of Lebanon and the Saint-Joseph University, Beirut)
- Father Fadel Sidarous Si (Coptic Catholic Church, Cairo)
**WORKSHOP 3:** The Tension between Modern Christian Subjectivities and Collective Religion
- Professor George Thomas (Arizona State University)
- Ms. Barbara Soliman (Coptic Orthodox Papal Office for Projects and Relations, Cairo)

12.45 pm Lunch

2.15 pm Plenary presentation and discussion of the findings of the workshops

3.15 pm Coffee break

3.45 pm PANEL 3
A Multi-Confessional Christianity: Dialogue and Relations between the Christian Churches in Arab Countries – Chair: Professor Dietrich Jung (University of Southern Denmark)
Roundtable with:
- H.E. Cardinal Leonardo Sandri (Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, Rome)
- Father Michel Jalalh (General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches, Beirut)
- Assistant Professor Mariano Barbato (University of Münster and University of Passau)
- Professor Assaad Elias Kattan (University of Münster)
- H.E. Metropolitan Ignatius Alhoshi (Orthodox Church of Antioch, Diocese in Western and Southern Europe)

5.15 pm End of today’s conference proceedings

7.00 pm Dinner

**Day 3: Friday 26 February 2016**

7.30 am Holy Mass (Latin Rite), Main Celebrant: H.E. Cardinal Leonardo Sandri

8.00 am Breakfast

8.45 am COUNTRY WORKSHOPS ON THE SITUATION OF CHRISTIANS AND CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
Workshops are scheduled simultaneously and participants can choose to participate in one of them.

**WORKSHOP 1:** The Holy Land (Israel, Jordan, Palestine)
- Father Rifaaat Bader (Director of the Catholic Press Office, Amman)
- Dr. Walid Shomaly (Bethlehem University)

**WORKSHOP 2:** Lebanon
- Professor Charles Chartouni (Lebanese University, Beirut)
- Father Karam Rizq (University of the Holy Spirit, Kaslik)

**WORKSHOP 3:** Egypt
- Dr. Vivian Ibrahim (University of Mississippi)
- Assistant Professor Angie Hieo (University of Chicago)
- Mr. Guirgis Saleh (Coordinator Coptic Orthodox Church and the Middle East Churches, Cairo)

**WORKSHOP 4:** Countries in Civil War (Iraq, Syria)
- Mr. Ghassan Al-Shami (Journalist, Al-Mayadeen Satellite Television Channel, Beirut)
- Father Amir Jajé OP (Provincial Vicar of the Vicariate of the Arab World, Iraq)

**WORKSHOP 5:** Gulf Countries
- Professor Hilal Khashan (American University of Beirut)
- H.E. Bishop Paul Hinder (Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia, United Arab Emirates)

10.30 am Plenary presentation and discussion of the findings of the workshops

11.15 am Coffee break

11.45 am CLOSING PANEL 4
Christianity between Orient and Occident: Social, Political, Economic, and Religious Implications – Chair: Professor Stephan Stetter
Roundtable with:
- Professor Georges Tamer (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)
- Professor Harald Suermann (Director of the Scientific Institute, Pontifical Mission Societies Missio, Aachen)
- H.E. Bishop Paul Hinder (Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia, United Arab Emirates)
- H.E. Bishop Antonios Aziz Mina (Coptic Catholic Church, Guizeh)

1.00 pm Summary remarks by Professor Stephan Stetter
1.15 pm End of conference - lunch and departure