

Future of Europe: Commission brings together religious leaders to discuss a value-based and effective Union

This 13th annual high-level meeting took place in the context of the ongoing debate on the Future of Europe, launched by President Juncker with the Commission's White Paper on 1 March.

First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** said: *"The future of Europe is in the hands of its citizens. Shaping that future is our collective responsibility, our shared values our compass. The regular dialogue with confessional organisations, like the one with non-confessional organisations, allows us to address the issue of our common future from different perspectives. It is through inclusive dialogue that we can chart the best course for our common future."*

Today's high-level meeting, part of the regular dialogue with churches, religious communities, philosophical and non-confessional organisations foreseen by Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty, provided an occasion to hold in-depth discussions on questions addressing issues of values and governance. The current discussion on the future of Europe is about making Europe more united, stronger and more democratic. The participants also looked at the human dimension of Europe, in particular its social and environmental dimensions and how Europe can be built on principles of solidarity, social justice and sustainability. The leaders present were invited to work with the Commission throughout the reflection process on the future of Europe. It was agreed that the dialogue on the issues discussed today should continue.

Background

High-level meetings and discussions are held regularly between the European Commission and churches and religious associations and communities as well as philosophical and non-confessional organisations.

Today's high-level meeting with religious leaders is the 13th annual high-level meeting organised by the Commission. Since 2009, the dialogue with churches, religious communities, philosophical and non-confessional organisations is enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty (Art 17 TFEU). The dialogue is under the responsibility of First Vice-President Timmermans. The Commission held its annual meeting with non-confessional organisations on 19 June 2017 on the same topic of the Future of Europe (see the [press release](#)).

In March, the Commission presented the White Paper launching a reflection process on the Future of Europe. The Commission committed then to carrying out dialogues across European cities and regions with different groups to encourage the debate on the outlook for Europe in 2025. In his [2017 State of the Union address](#), President Juncker further detailed his vision of the future of Europe, underlining that Europe is first of all a Union of values.

President Juncker also set out a Roadmap for a more united, stronger and more democratic union.

For More Information

[State of the Union 2017](#)

[White Paper on the Future of Europe and the way forward](#)

[European Commission' dialogue with churches, religious communities and philosophical and non-confessional organisations](#)

List of Participants

- Imam Seyran ATEŞ, Founder of the Ibn Rushd-Goethe mosque in Berlin
- Metropolitan CLEOPAS of Sweden and all Scandinavia, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
- Elder Massimo DE FEO, Europe area Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints
- Mr Ron EICHHORN, President of the European Buddhist Union
- Metropolitan EMMANUEL of France, Vice-President of the Conference of European Churches, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
- Rabbi Albert GUIGUI, Chief Rabbi of Brussels
- Bishop Jean-Claude HOLLERICH, Archbishop of Luxembourg
- Imam Tareq OUBROU, Grand Imam of Bordeaux
- Ms Irmgard SCHWAETZER, President of the Synod of the Evangelic Church of Germany (EKD)
- Bishop Noel TREANOR, Bishop of Down and Connor
- Archbishop Urmas VIILMA, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia