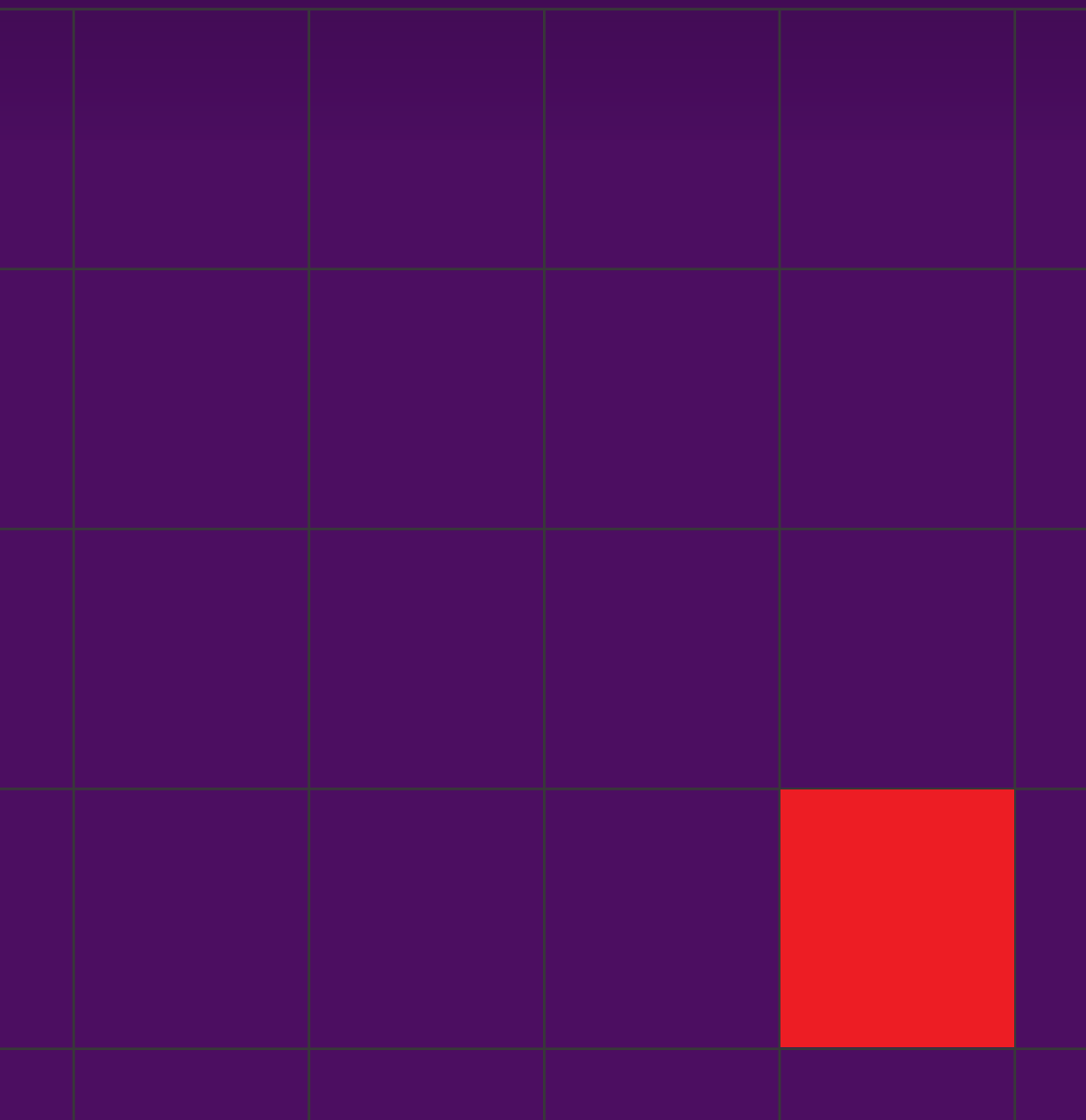


THE CODE

on Holy Sites

Final Text and Report from the International Conferences
2008 and 2009 in Trondheim, Norway



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■ The Initiative Holy Sites, Places for Conflict or Dialogue

The aim of the initiative Holy Sites, Places for Conflict or Dialogue has been to work towards an agreement on international commitment to a convention on holy sites that can contribute to preventing or solving conflicts related to holy sites and strengthen them as places for dialogue and reconciliation.

The initial focus of the initiative was the fact that holy sites, in many cases, are sources of conflict between individuals, national groups and international alliances of both religious and political character. Consequently, it is of the greatest importance to reach a praxis that ensures that people can have access to their holy sites, that they use each others' holy sites with deep respect and that these are taken care of for future generations.

The process towards achieving this goal has fallen naturally into two stages. The first phase consisted of two conferences. To these were invited religious leaders, prominent academics and politicians from Christian, Jewish and Muslim denominations in Europe and the Middle East. The first conference was held in Stiklestad and Trondheim in 2008. This culminated in the production of a "Statement of Intention"(see the appendix 1 document) The approved Statement of Intention created the basis for the work towards a new conference in Trondheim in 2009. At this conference full agreement on the aim of the first phase, a Code on Holy Sites, was attained.

Together with this code an action plan for the last phase of the work was approved. This consisted of making the approved code known internationally and to seek as much commitment to it as possible. Among other things, this is going to happen by seeking support for the Code from religious leaders and authorities from Christian churches and Jewish and Muslim communities and by holding a signing ceremony with religious leaders from Europe and the Middle East. After that we will initiate dialogue with other religious traditions. Finally a UN body will be invited to take note of the Code and consider adopting its contents as an international convention.

On the following pages we present the approved Code on Holy Sites and the action plan, as well as a report on the work leading to these two documents and plans for further work.

■ Initiativet Hellige steder, steder for konflikt eller dialog

Målet med initiativet Hellige steder, steder for konflikt og dialog, er å komme fram til enighet om en internasjonalt forpliktende konvensjon om hellige steder, som kan bidra til å forhindre eller løse konflikter knyttet til hellige steder og styrke dem som steder for dialog og forsoning.

Utgangspunktet for initiativet har vært det faktum at hellige steder i mange tilfeller er en kilde til alvorlige og langvarige konflikter mellom enkeltmennesker, nasjonale grupper og internasjonale sammenslutninger av både religiøs og politisk karakter. Det er derfor av største betydning å finne fram til en praksis som sikrer at mennesker har tilgang til sine hellige steder, at man omgås hverandres hellige steder med dyp respekt og at disse blir tatt vare på for fremtidige generasjoner.

Proessen fram mot målet har naturlig falt i to faser. Den første fasen bestod av to konferanser. Til disse ble det invitert religiøse ledere, fremstående akademikere og politikere fra jødiske, kristne og muslimske miljøer i Europa og Midt-Østen. Den første konferansen ble avholdt på Stiklestad og i Trondheim i 2008. Denne munnet ut i en intensjonserklæring (se appendix 1), som dannet grunnlaget for arbeidet fram mot en ny konferanse i Trondheim i 2009. På denne konferansen oppnådde man full enighet om målet for denne første fasen som var en erklæring om hellige steder.

Sammen med erklæringen ble det vedtatt en handlingsplan for den siste fasen av arbeidet. Denne består i å gjøre den vedtatte erklæringen internasjonalt kjent og forpliktende for flest mulig. Det skal bl.a. skje gjennom å søke tilslutning til dokumentet fra religiøse ledere og myndigheter innenfor islam, jødedom og kristendom og avholde en signeringsseremoni med ledere fra Europa og Midt-Østen. Deretter vil det bli tatt initiativ til en dialog med andre religiøse tradisjoner. Til slutt vil et FN-organ bli invitert til å gjøre seg kjent med Erklæringen og overveie å gjøre dens innhold til en internasjonal konvensjon.

På de neste sidene gjengir vi den vedtatte Erklæringen om hellige steder sammen med en handlingsplan. Deretter følger en rapport om arbeidet for å komme fram til disse to dokumentene og planene for arbeidet fremover.

■ THE CODE ON HOLY SITES

PREAMBLE

We, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim religious leaders, academics, politicians, and members of civil society from different parts of Europe and the Middle East, **RESOLVED** to cooperate in the spirit of dialogue and a search for common ground, based on respect for each other, for the freedom of religion or belief, and for the integrity of each religious tradition,

SHARING THE VISION of a world where holy sites are universally acknowledged as sacred to their respective religions or faith traditions, and where the attachment of persons and communities to their holy sites is respected by everyone, regardless of their belief,

ACKNOWLEDGING that holy sites have been foci of contention or targets of destruction in many conflicts around the world, and bearing in mind the particular vulnerability of the holy sites of religious minorities,

SEEKING to set out a framework of principles for preserving holy sites, guaranteeing the religious freedom to use them, and promoting them as places of peace and reconciliation,

RECOGNISING the positive role religious leaders can play in addressing conflicts pertaining to holy sites, and reaffirming the moral responsibility to speak up for the protection of the holy sites of others, regardless of religion,

BUILDING ON international conventions and norms that safeguard the freedom of religion or belief and other human rights, preserve cultural heritage, and protect civilians in armed conflicts, inter alia those listed in Annex 1,

CALL UPON religious leaders, political leaders and civil and military authorities on the local, national, and international levels to join us as we

SOLEMNLY PLEDGE to respect and work towards the realisation throughout the world of the following

PROVISIONS

Article 1. Definitions

Holy sites are places of religious significance to particular religious communities. They include, but are not limited to, places of worship, cemeteries and shrines, incorporating their immediate surroundings when these form an integral part of the site.

For the purposes of this Code, holy sites are places of defined and limited area that are designated as such by each religious community according to its customs, recognising also that a single site can be sacred to more than one community.

Article 2. Preservation of Holy Sites

Holy sites shall be preserved for present and future generations, with dignity, integrity and respect for their name and identity. They shall be preserved both as sites of religious significance, and as historical and cultural legacies of their communities and of humankind. They shall not be desecrated or damaged, nor shall religious communities be forcibly deprived of their holy sites.

Where necessary to ensure the preservation of a holy site, the relevant authorities should consider establishing a protective zone around it, prohibiting or restricting construction or development, without prejudice to property rights.

If a holy site is subjected to certain restrictions due to its designation as a national heritage site, it should at the same time be guaranteed the support needed for its continued functioning under these restrictions.

Article 3. Access

The access of any person to a holy site shall be subject only to such restrictions as are mandated by religious regulations pertaining to the site, or are necessary for its protection and the safe and undisturbed conduct of worship.

The civil authorities shall not arbitrarily prohibit the entry into the country of visitors and pilgrims to holy sites, nor arbitrarily prohibit the residence of foreign personnel connected with the sites.

Article 4. Sites Sacred to More Than One Religion

Where a site is mutually recognised as sacred in the established traditions of more than one religious community, the relevant authorities shall consult with these communities to set up a legal arrangement whereby adherents of each community are permitted equal access to the site for religious purposes and preservation of the site is the equal responsibility of the religious communities concerned.

Article 5. Conflict Prevention and Solution

All conflicts or threats relating to holy sites shall be referred immediately to a forum ensuring communication and coordination among religious authorities and other relevant bodies, and, where possible, to a monitoring body set up to this end under Article 12 (Monitoring bodies) of this Code.

Article 6. Reconstruction and Memorialisation

The relevant authorities shall take measures to facilitate the reconstruction or memorialisation of a holy site destroyed or damaged in conflict, according to the wishes of the religious community concerned.

The necessary permissions to this end shall be granted, as prescribed by law and with due regard to property rights, without undue delay, and without imposing special legal or administrative obstacles.

Article 7. Expropriation or Nationalisation

In the case of proposed expropriation or nationalisation of any part of a holy site, the religious community or communities concerned shall be adequately represented and formally consulted on all aspects of the process. The relevant authority shall make an impact assessment suggesting provisions for the protection of cultural heritage, for the appropriate use of the site with respect for its religious tradition, and for the continuity of religious practice. The religious community shall have recourse to the courts if agreement cannot be reached.

Where parts of a holy site have been nationalised in the past, the restitution of such property to the religious community should be encouraged.

Article 8. Education and Public Speech

In their public pronouncements and educational activities, all parties should promote the preservation of holy sites, acknowledge the significance of holy sites for others as places of worship and sites of identity, respect the sensitivities of others with regard to these sites, and stress their spiritual value rather than any strategic, territorial or military significance. The attachment of a group to its holy site shall not be denied.

Religious communities shall be consulted regarding the public promotion of their holy sites for touristic, scientific, educational and other purposes. Such promotion shall respect the identity and religious traditions of the community concerned.

Article 9. Establishing Holy Sites

The right of all religious communities to establish and maintain holy sites, with due regard to the rights of others, shall be recognised as an integral part of the freedom of religion or belief.

An occupying power shall not establish nor allow the establishment of any permanent new holy site without due regard for the property rights of the population of an occupied territory.

Article 10. Excavations and Research

Archaeological excavations may be carried out on holy sites only after consultation and with the mutual agreement of all religious communities to which the site is sacred, as prescribed by law, and with minimal interference with the religious use of the site.

Historical findings regarding the distant past of a site shall not prejudice present arrangements of ownership and control, nor shall they be abused to question a religious community's customary identification with the site.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Article 11. Monitoring Bodies

Monitoring bodies shall be established to oversee the implementation of this Code on local, regional, and national levels as appropriate.

A monitoring body shall comprise representatives of religious communities, public authorities, and other relevant bodies. Its members shall pledge to abide by this Code and to use their influence and good offices, separately or jointly, to further its aims.

A monitoring body shall, inter alia,

- * Draw up a list of holy sites to be acknowledged as falling under the provisions of this Code.
- * Consider, at the request of any of its members, any threat to the aims of this Code or any dispute over the status of a site, and seek to resolve it in a spirit of dialogue, reconciliation, and solidarity.
- * Advise the authorities as appropriate on all issues relating to holy sites.
- * Publicise regular reports on its work and the progress made toward the implementation of this Code in its area.

Article 12. International Monitor

An international mechanism shall be set up to monitor the implementation of this code. This international monitor is charged with promoting the adoption of this Code in all relevant fora, cooperating with relevant international agencies, encouraging the establishment of monitoring bodies, assisting the monitoring bodies in their work, documenting and analysing progress toward the implementation of this Code worldwide, and reporting on violations of the Code.

A secretariat shall be set up to carry out the tasks of the international monitor on an interim basis until a permanent international monitor is established.

Adopted by the “Holy Sites” conference in Trondheim, Norway on 27–28 July 2009 organized by One World in Dialogue and the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights

ACTION PLAN FOR THE HOLY SITES INITIATIVE

The conference mandates a working group, to be set up by the organisers of the conference, to help realise the following:

- * Seek support for the Code from religious leaders and authorities from Christian churches and Jewish and Muslim communities and hold a signing ceremony with religious leaders from Europe and the Middle East at an appropriate time and venue.
- * Seek support and initiate dialogue with other religious traditions, with a view to developing a universally shared code on holy sites
- * Invite a UN body to take note of the code and to consider adopting its contents as an international convention.

■ The Initiating Group and Event Organizers

The initiative to Holy Sites, Places for Conflict or Dialogue was made by One World in Dialogue (En verden i dialog / EVID) in Trondheim, in cooperation with the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights (Oslosenteret for fred og menneskerettigheter). These organizations also hosted the entire event.



One World in Dialogue is an idealistic organization, founded in Trondheim in 2004. EVID aims at increasing respect and understanding across religious borders and works towards establishing common meeting arenas for Christians, Jews and Muslims. As a part of this work, EVID has arranged joint celebrations on religious festive days as well as organizing international dialogue themed trips. Through its members, EVID has a wide international network in contact with religious and political leaders in a number of countries. The organization has no regular staff or employees, and bases its work entirely on volunteers.



The Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights (Oslosenteret for fred og menneskerettigheter) was founded in 2006 by the former Prime Minister of Norway, Kjell Magne Bondevik, now the President of the organization. The Center's work is related to three main areas: human rights, democracy and interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The Oslo Center works through contact and dialogue with policy makers, organizations and key actors in Norway and internationally.

Sponsors

The conferences was supported by The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs, The Municipality of Trondheim and the County of Sør-Trøndelag.



■ Initiativtakere og arrangører

Initiativet til Holy Sites, Places for Conflict or Dialogue ble tatt av En verden i dialog (EVID) i Trondheim i samarbeid med Oslosenteret for fred og menneskerettigheter. Disse organisasjonene stod også for gjennomføringen.

En verden i dialog er en ideell organisasjon grunnlagt i Trondheim i 2004. EVID arbeider for å øke respekt og forståelse på tvers av religiøse og kulturelle grenser og etablere felles møtesteder for jøder, kristne og muslimer. Som en del av dette arbeidet har EVID hatt felles markeringer på religiøse høytidsdager og arrangert internasjonale dialogreiser. Gjennom sine medlemmer har organisasjonen et stort internasjonalt nettverk av religiøse og politiske ledere i en rekke land. Organisasjonen har ingen fast ansatte og baserer arbeidet utelukkende på frivillig innsats.

Oslosenteret for fred og menneskerettigheter ble grunnlagt i 2006 av tidligere statsminister Kjell Magne Bondevik som nå er organisasjonens leder. Senterets arbeid er knyttet til tre hovedområder: Menneskerettigheter, demokrati og interreligiøs og interkulturell dialog. Oslosenteret arbeider gjennom kontakt og dialog med politikere, organisasjoner og sentrale aktører i Norge og internasjonalt.

Sponsorer

Konferansene ble støttet av Utenriksdepartementet, Kultur- og Kirke departementet, Trondheim kommune og Sør-Trøndelag fylkeskommune.



SØR- TRØNDELAG COUNTY AUTHORITY

■ The Conference Location

Stiklestad is well known in Norwegian history due to the battle that took place on this site on July 29th 1030. In this battle the Viking king, Olav Haraldsson, was martyred. He was buried in Trondheim and the following year declared a saint. From then on he is known as St. Olav and became an object of veneration through vast parts of Europe. Hardly any other person has had a greater impact on the development of Norway as a sovereign nation.

Trondheim is the most prominent city of pilgrimage in Norway and the site of Nidaros Cathedral, the national shrine of Norway. In medieval times Trondheim was a Roman Catholic archdiocese comprising Norway, the Isle of Man, the Orkney Islands, the Faeroes, Greenland and Iceland. The building of Nidaros Cathedral was commenced in 1070 as sepulchral church for St. Olav. Today, it is the largest medieval construction in the Nordic Countries, and functions as both a parish church and as a venue for national church occasions. Among other things the cathedral has been a traditional site for crowning, and later for solemn blessing of both kings and queens, and the royal insignia are permanently located at The Archbishop's Residence.

By locating the conferences in Stiklestad and in Trondheim we could offer a historically relevant and accesible framework around challenging discussions. Simultaneously, the conferences supported the wish of the Norwegian authorities to promote dialogue between religions as well as cultures.

■ Sted for konferansene

Stiklestad er kjent på grunn av slaget som fant sted her 29. juli 1030. I dette led vikingkongen Olav Haraldsson martyrdøden. Han ble gravlagt i Trondheim og helgenkåret året etter. Fra da av ble han kalt Hellig Olav og ble gjenstand for tilbedelse i store deler av Europa. Knappt noen person har hatt større betydning for utviklingen av Norge som egen nasjon enn ham.

Trondheim er Norges viktigste pilegrimsby og stedet for Nidarosdomen, Norges nasjonalhelligdom. I middelalderen var Trondheim et romersk-katolsk erkebispesete som omfattet Norge, Isle of Man, Orknøyene, Færøyene, Grønland og Island. Nidarosdomen ble påbegynt i 1070 som gravkirke for Hellig Olav. Den er i dag Nordens største middelalderbyggverk og fungerer både som menighetskirke og som åsted for nasjonale kirkelige begivenheter. Katedralen har blant annet tradisjon som kroningssted og senere signingssted for både konge og dronning, og kronregaliene har fast tilholdssted i Erkebispesgården.

Ved å legge konferansene til Stiklestad og Trondheim kunne vi tilby en historisk relevant og imøtekommende ramme rundt utfordrende samtaler. Samtidig bygget konferansene opp under de norske myndighetenes ønske om å fremme dialog mellom religioner og kulturer.



■ The Conferences

The first international conference was held in Norway from July 26th – 28th 2008. The event commenced at the nationally and religiously important site of Stiklestad. The conference concluded in Trondheim. At the conference religious leaders, prominent academics and politicians from Christian, Jewish and Muslim denominations were present (see the appendix 2). Geographically, the majority of attendants originated from the Balkans, Turkey, the Middle East, Armenia and Norway. In addition, participants from Belgium (the representative of The Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul) and The United Kingdom were present.

The conference was covered by Norwegian and international media:

References to press articles:

The Economist, 28.08.08

http://www.economist.com/world/international/displaystory.cfm?story_id=12010063

Today's Zaman, 18.08.08

<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=150395>

The second conference was held July 26th – 28th 2009 in Trondheim. The participants at this conference were mainly the same as at the first, and the newcomers made no significant change to its religious and geographical identity.

The conference was covered by Norwegian and international media:

References to coverage in the press and other media:

NRK 27.07.2008

Adresseavisen 28.07.09

Vårt Land 27.07.09

Hürriyet, Turkey, 18.10.09

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=a-holy-wish-for-the-future-2009-08-21>

Aftenposten 06.08.09

■ Konferansene

Den første internasjonale konferansen fant sted 26.–28. juli 2008. Arrangementet startet på det nasjonalt og religiøst betydningsfulle stedet Stiklestad og ble avsluttet i Trondheim. På konferansen deltok religiøse leder, fremtredende akademikere og politikere fra jødiske, kristne og muslimske miljøer (se vedlagte deltagerliste). Geografisk kom hovedtyngden av deltakerne fra Balkan, Tyrkia, Midt-Østen, Armenia og Norge. I tillegg var deltakere fra Belgia (representanter for Den økumeniske patriarken i Istanbul) og Storbritannia til stede.

Konferansen ble dekket av norske og internasjonale medier. Eksempler på artikler i pressen:

The Economist, 28.08.08

http://www.economist.com/world/international/displaystory.cfm?story_id=12010063

Today's Zaman, 18.08.08

<http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=150395>

Den andre konferansen fant sted 26.–28. juli 2009 i Trondheim. På denne deltok i hovedsak de samme som på den første konferansen og nye deltakere endret i liten grad den religiøse og geografiske sammensetningen.

Eksempler på omtale av denne konferansen i pressen og andre nyhetsmedier:

NRK 27.07.2008

Adresseavisen, 28.07.09

Vårt Land 27.07.09

Hürriyet, Tyrkia, 18.10.09

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=a-holy-wish-for-the-future-2009-08-21>

Aftenposten 06.08.09



The former Prime Minister and now President of the Oslo Center, Kjell Magne Bondevik giving the opening lecture in Stiklestad

■ The Contents and Methods of the Conferences

The conferences alternated in form between open lectures and closed round – table talks. The aim of the open lectures, was to reach out widely and inform the public about the challenges connected to holy sites, and the necessity of dialogue to protect their value and respect them as a common responsibility. The round – table talks, however, were deliberately kept closed. The reason for this was to create a framework of mutual trust so that it would be possible to speak openly and courageously, also on potentially challenging and controversial topics. These were discussed on the basis of concrete experiences and actual examples from the participants' own countries. The external framework and the generous contributions from the participants created a fruitful dialogue with a considerable ability and will to understand each others experiences and concerns.

■ Konferansenes innhold og arbeidsformer

Konferansene vekslet mellom åpne foredrag og lukkede rundebordssamtaler. Formålet med de åpne foredragene var å nå bredt ut og informere allmennheten om utfordringene knyttet til hellige steder og nødvendigheten av dialog for å ivareta verdien av og respekten for disse som et felles anliggende. Rundebordssamtalene ble derimot holdt lukket. Formålet med dette var å skape en ramme av fortrolighet og gjensidig tillit slik at det kunne være mulig å ytre seg åpent og modig også om utfordrende og konfliktfylte temaer. Disse ble diskutert med utgangspunkt i konkrete erfaringer og dagsaktuelle eksempler fra deltagernes hjemland. Gjennom de ytre rammene og deltagernes generøse bidrag oppstod det en fruktbar dialog hvor det ble vist betydelig evne og vilje til å forstå hverandres erfaringer og anliggender.



Introductions to the first main session in 2008. From left: Nebojsa Cvejanov, H.G. Bishop Teodosije, Professor Sinasi Gündüz, H. H. Patriarch Zakka, H. B. Patriarch Michel Sabbah, Rev. Dr. Trond Bakkevig

The Conference in 2008

The conference in 2008 was opened in Stiklestad. The opening lecture on the topic: “Holy Sites – Political and Religious Significance, was presented to an open audience by the President of the Oslo Center Kjell Magne Bondevik. It was followed by an open session with a sharing of experiences of what holy sites mean to our different religions.

The second and third days of the conference took place in Trondheim. Here, the talks embraced three main sessions. Each session opened with prepared presentations.

The theme of the first main session was: “What Challenges do we see in our respective Countries and Regions, regarding equal Access to Holy Sites? - Practical Examples on Conflicts and Ways to Solve Them”.

The topic of the second main session was: “The Process in the Holy Land”.

The third main session’s topic was “Code of Conduct for Holy Sites, both where Religions Need Access to The Same Holy Site and Where a Minority Religion Needs Access to a Holy Site of a Majority Religion”.

The conference concluded with all the participants joining in a common Statement of Intention on a Code for Holy Sites. They also expressed a shared wish to continue the process towards commitment on a Code on Holy Sites. This will be based on common values like respect for the sacred, mutual acknowledgement of and respect for each others’ holy sites and respect for individuals and communities who manifest their faith at these Holy Sites.



Konferansen i 2008

Konferansen i 2008 ble åpnet på Stiklestad. Det første åpne foredraget med temaet "Hellige steder – deres religiøse og politiske betydning" ble holdt av Oslosenterets leder Kjell Magne Bondevik. Dette ble etterfulgt av en åpen runde med deling av erfaringer om hva hellige steder betyr for våre ulike religioner.

Konferansens andre og tredje dag fant sted i Trondheim. Samtalene her omfattet tre hovedsesjoner. Hver av dem åpnet med forberedte innlegg.

Temaet for den første hovedsesjonen var: "Hvilke utfordringer møter vi i våre respektive land og regioner med hensyn til lik tilgang til hellige steder? – Praktiske eksempler på konflikter og måter å løse dem på".

Temaet for den andre hovedsesjonen var "Prosessen i Det hellige land".

Temaet for den tredje hovedsesjonen var "Et regelverk for hellige steder, både der flere religioner ønsker tilgang til samme hellige sted og der en minoritetsreligion ønsker tilgang til et hellig sted hos en majoritetsreligion".

Konferansen ble avsluttet ved at alle deltagerne sluttet seg til en felles intensjonserklæring om hellige steder. De uttrykte også et felles ønske om å fortsette prosessen fram mot en forpliktende erklæring om hellige steder basert på felles verdier som respekt for det hellige, gjensidig anerkjennelse av og respekt for hverandres hellige steder, og respekt for enkeltmennesker og religiøse fellesskap som utøver sin tro på disse hellige stedene.



Talks in Trondheim. From left: Professor Sinasi Gündüz, Grand Mufti Mustafa Hadji, Mr. Hayri Emin, Professor Qemaijl Morina, Professor Faris Gavrankapetanovic, MP Özlem Türköne, Rev. Dr. Trond Bakkevig, General Director Oded Wiener

Whirling Dervishes





Samtalene var rammet inn av en rekke kulturbegivenheter og andre tilstelninger. Deltagerne var gjester på Stiklestad-spelet og ved åpningen av Olavsfestdagene i Trondheim. Det ble arrangert en oppvisning med dansende dervisjer og musikere fra Konya i Tyrkia. Trondheims ordfører, Rita Ottervik, hilste deltagerne ved åpningen i Trondheim og var senere vert ved en mottagelse på Leangen gård. Under konferansen ble det framført hilsener fra Fethullah Gülen og fra Den økumeniske patriarken i Istanbul.

The grand opening of the St. Olav's Festival





Dinner at Leangen gård Manor



Left: The Mayor of Trondheim, Rita Ottervik as host at Leangen gård Manor

From the conference in 2008





Mr. Kemalettin Süslü, Mr. Suleyman Cifci,
Professor Qemajl Morina



At Leangen gård Manor:
Mr. Nebojsa Cvejanov, H.G. Bishop Teodosije



From left:
Dr. Eivind Kasa, President of
EVID, Rev. Dag Aakre, H.G.
Bishop Athenagoras Peckstadt,
Dir. Fr. Vahram Melikyan, Bishop
Sahak Mashalian



The conference talks were accompanied by a series of cultural and other events. The participants were invited guests at the Play at Stiklestad and at the grand opening of the St. Olav's Festival in Trondheim. A viewing of an act of devotion by the Whirling Dervishes and musicians from Konya in Turkey was organized. The Mayor of Trondheim, Rita Ottervik, welcomed the participants at the conference's opening in Trondheim. Later on, the participants were guests of the Mayor at a reception held at Leangen gård, an ancient hall on the outskirts of Trondheim. During the conference, greetings were presented from Fethullah Gülen as well as The Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul.

The Work between the Conferences

The Oslo Centre and EVID took on the responsibility for establishing an international working group to ensure continued progress in this process and to prepare the conference in Trondheim in 2009. In the establishing of the working group it was emphasized that it should be representative both with respect to religion and geography. The members of the working group were Cemal Usak - Vice President of the Journalists and Writers Foundation in Istanbul, Sharon Rosen, Co-Director in Search for Common Ground in Jerusalem, Bishop Teodosije at the Visoki Decani Monastery belonging to the Serbian-Orthodox Church, and Emir Kovacevic from The Interreligious Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition to these, representatives from The Oslo Centre and EVID contributed by arranging the work of what was called "The Trondheim Working Group". The working group met for a working session in Istanbul in the spring 2009. His All Holiness Patriarch Bartolomeo most willingly offered facilities for the group's work. Additionally, the members of the group were continuously in contact by e-mail. The participants from the conference in 2008 were also invited to contribute to the process.



Cemal Usak
Vice President of the
Journalists and Writers
Foundation

Arbeidet mellom konferansene

Oslosenteret og EVID tok ansvaret for å nedsette en internasjonal arbeidsgruppe for å sikre framdriften i prosessen og forberede konferansen i Trondheim i 2009. Ved sammensetningen av arbeidsgruppen ble det lagt vekt på at den skulle være representativ både religiøst og geografisk. Medlemmer av arbeidsgruppen var Cemal Usak - visepresident for Journalists and Writers Foundation i Istanbul, Sharon Rosen, direktør i Search for Common Ground i Jerusalem, biskop Teodosije ved Visoki Decani - klosteret tilhørende den serbisk-ortodokse kirken og Emir Kovacevic fra det interreligiøse rådet i Bosnia-Herzegovina. I tillegg til disse bidro representanter fra Oslosenteret og EVID med å legge arbeidet til rette for det som ble kalt The Trondheim Working Group. Arbeidsgruppen møttes til en arbeidssesjon i Istanbul våren 2009. Den økumeniske patriarken Bartolomeo stilte velvillig arbeidslokaler til disposisjon. Forøvrig hadde gruppens medlemmer løpende kontakt på e-post. Deltakerne ved konferansen i 2008 ble også invitert til å komme med innspill i prosessen.

“The Trondheim Working Group” in front of The Patriarchate in Istanbul:
Front from left: Mr. Emir Kovacevic, Rev. Berit Lånke, Co-Director Sharon Rosen,
Special Advisor Ingrid Vik. Back from left: Fr. Sava, H. E. Bishop Teodosije, Rev.
Dag Aakre, Mr. Christian Moe



The Conference in 2009

The first session of the conference was open to the public and press. The opening lecture was given by Bernt Eidsvig, RomanCatholic Bishop of Oslo. Then followed a panel discussion with members from the working group that had reworked the Statement of Intention from 2008 into a draft for a final code on holy sites.



The Mayor of Trondheim, Rita Ottervik welcoming the participants

The remaining, closed sessions were entirely used to work on the proposal from the working group to reach a final Code. The sessions were moderated by the Reverend Dr. Trond Bakkevig and were characterized by a trustful and constructive atmosphere. On the last day of the conference unanimous agreement on The Code on Holy Sites was attained. Concrete plans were made to ensure that the document will receive international approval from religious and political leaders and that holy sites will not be places for conflict but for dialogue and reconciliation.

The Bishop of Nidaros greeted the participants at the opening of the conference. Mayor of Trondheim welcomed the participants and was host at a reception held at the Leangen gård Manor. The conference received the best wishes and hopes for success from His Excellency Professor Dr. Ali Bardakoglu, President of Religious Affaires, and Professor Dr. Ali Dere, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations, both Turkey.

After the conference its result was presented during an open session at the St.Olav's Festival with public and press present.

The conference would not have been possible without substantial voluntary work. The cooperation between the organizers, One World in Dialogue and The Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights, was mutually inspiring and the two organizations have taken on the responsibility for the future process.

Konferansen i 2009

Konferansens første sesjon var åpen for publikum og presse. Åpningsforedraget ble holdt av Bernt Eidsvig, romersk-katolsk biskop av Oslo. Deretter fulgte en panelsamtale med deltakere av arbeidsgruppen som hadde bearbeidet intensjonserklæringen fra 2008 til et ukast til en endelig erklæring om hellige steder.



From left: Mr. Rohullah Sidigullah, Prof. Adnan Bulent Baloglu, Prof. Sinasi Gunduz, Mr. Mahmut Özdemir, Gen. Secr. Hyusein Hasan Hafazov, Mr. Ramazan Ay

De øvrige, lukkede sesjonene gikk i sin helhet med til å bearbeide arbeidsgruppens forslag til en erklæring. Samtalene ble ledet av prost Trond Bakkevig og var preget av en fortrolig og konstruktiv atmosfære. På konferansens siste dag ble det oppnådd enstemmig tilslutning til Erklæringen om hellige steder. Det ble også lagt konkrete planer for å sikre at dokumentet skal få internasjonal tilslutning fra religiøse og politiske ledere og at hellige steder ikke blir steder for konflikt, men for dialog og forsoning.

Biskopen i Nidaros hilste deltagerne ved åpningen av konferansen. Ordføreren i Trondheim ønsket deltagerne velkommen til byen og var deres vert ved en mottagelse på Leangen gård. Konferansen mottok de beste ønsker og håp om et godt resultat fra professor Ali Bardakoglu, president for religiøse anliggender og professor Ali Dere, departementsråd ved utenriksministeriet, begge fra Tyrkia.

Etter konferansen ble resultatet av den lagt fram ved en åpen sesjon under Olavsfestdagene med publikum og presse til stede.

Det hadde ikke vært mulig å gjennomføre disse konferansene uten stor innsats av frivillige. Samarbeidet mellom arrangørene, EVID og Oslosenteret, har vært til gjensidig inspirasjon og de to organisasjonene har også forpliktet seg til å ta ansvar for den videre prosessen.



Above from left; Sr.GilChrist Lavigne, Undersecretary Salah Zuhayka, Vice Gen. Secr. Stein Villumstad, Spec. Advisor Ingrid Vik, Co-Director Sharon Rosen, Rabbi Prof. Daniel Sperber

Right from left:
Mr. Christian Moe, Fr. Sava, H. E. Bishop Teodosije,
Mr. Mahmut Özdemir, H. E. Archbishop Pargev
Martirosyan, Dir. Fr. Vahram Melykian, H. G. Bishop
Vazgen Mirzakhanyan

From the conference 2009





Future Work

As mentioned, the conference in 2009 concluded with all the participants joining in on The Code on Holy Sites and an action plan for future work. The conference mandates a working group, to be set up by the organizers of the conference, to help realise the following:

- Seek support for the Code from religious leaders and authorities from Christian churches and Jewish and Muslim communities and hold a signing ceremony with religious leaders from Europe and the Middle East at an appropriate time and venue.
- Seek support and initiate dialogue with other religious traditions, with a view to developing a universally shared code on holy sites
- Invite a UN body to take note of the code and to consider adopting its contents as an international convention.

In addition, the Code aims at the establishing of local, regional, national and international bodies to monitor its application at the world's holy sites. This is important to secure that the Code can have concrete consequences and become a tool for peace that can prevent and solve conflicts related to holy sites and strengthen them as places for dialogue and reconciliation.

The work to draw up The Code on Holy Sites has confirmed to the initiators the outmost significance of this issue to the current situation of individuals as well as for international society. It is of the greatest importance to reach a praxis that ensures that people can have access to their holy sites, that they use each others' holy sites with deep respect and that these are taken care of for future generations.

Arbeidet fremover

Som nevnt ble konferansen i 2009 avsluttet med at alle deltakerne sluttet seg til Erklæringen om hellige steder og en handlingsplan for det videre arbeidet. Konferansen gav initiativtakerne mandat til å nedsette en ny arbeidsgruppe for å:

- søke støtte til dokumentet fra religiøse ledere og myndigheter fra kristne kirker og jødiske og muslimske samfunn og holde en signeringsseremoni med religiøse ledere fra Europa og Midtøsten på passende tid og sted.
 - søke støtte til og initiere dialog med andre religiøse tradisjoner, med sikte på å utvikle en erklæring om hellige steder med universell tilslutning.
 - invitere et FN-organ til å gjøre seg kjent med erklæringen og overveie å gjøre dens innhold til en internasjonal konvensjon.
- I tillegg til dette tar Erklæringen sikte på at det skal etableres lokale, regionale, nasjonale og internasjonale organer som overvåker at den etterlevs på de ulike hellige steder i verden. Dette er viktig for at Erklæringen skal få konkrete konsekvenser og bli et redskap for fred som kan forhindre og løse konflikter knyttet til hellige steder og styrke dem som steder for dialog og forsoning.

Arbeidet med å nå fram til Erklæringen om hellige steder har bekreftet for initiativtakerne at temaet er særdeles viktig og aktuelt både for enkeltpersoner og det internasjonale samfunn. Det er av største betydning å finne fram til en praksis som sikrer at mennesker har tilgang til sine hellige steder, at man omgås hverandres hellige steder med dyp respekt og at disse blir tatt vare på for fremtidige generasjoner.

The conferences were covered by Norwegian and international media



Appendix 1: Statement of Intention on a Code for Holy Sites (2008)

On the 26th -28th of July 2008, at the invitation of the “Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights”, and the organisation “One World in Dialogue” we gathered in Stiklestad and Trondheim, the places where the patron saint of Norway, St. Olav was martyred and buried and which are regarded as the spiritual cradle for the Norwegian nation. We religious leaders, academics, politicians, and members of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities from different parts of Europe and the Middle East met together to discuss the issue “Holy Sites – Places for Conflict or Dialogue”. We would hope that this meeting will be a first step in a process which can lead to a universally shared Code on Holy Sites.

First and foremost, we unanimously and categorically condemn all forms of violence and bloodshed. Holy Sites are gathering places where humankind meets with the Creator, and therefore they may not be desecrated or damaged and must be preserved with dignity for subsequent generations. We have discussed conflicts and problems relating to Holy Sites, and have also attempted to identify their characteristics and how we can ensure that they are places of peace and reconciliation rather than focal points of conflict. We have found agreement on certain points: Holy Sites are part of the public sphere. They are places where individuals and communities join together in spiritual fellowship, reaffirm a historical heritage and receive spiritual replenishment for their personal and communal everyday life. Holy Sites reflect the profound religious identities of individuals and faith groups and are places where religion, history and politics converge.

We have agreed that there is a need to continue our discussions in order to clarify the common values we share with regard to Holy Sites. We hope to develop this into a jointly shared Code on Holy Sites which reflect common values of:

- shared respect for the sacred
- mutual acknowledgement and respect for each other’s Holy Sites
- respect for individuals and communities who manifest their faith at these Holy Sites.

In sharing these values, we wish to deal with issues relating to:

- Cooperation between religious leaders with the aim of developing a code on Holy Sites that encompasses the requirements of religious communities and is supported by political leaders
- Preservation and development of Holy Sites according to their specific needs

- A broad educational policy towards reinforcing mutual respect for Holy Sites
- Awareness of the positive role that religious leaders can play when dealing with administration of Holy Sites and the prevention of conflagrations around them
- Access to Holy Sites – which is fundamental to freedom of religion
- The abuse of Holy Sites for the purpose of manifesting one party's power over another or for political purposes
- The destruction of Holy Sites in order to deny people's attachment to their sacred places and to fundamental aspects of their history
- The right of people to worship and to feel safe in places which are part of their religious heritage
- Interpretation of history in a manner that allows us to move forward rather than be caught in our past
- The use of Holy Sites for other purposes against the will of the community with which they are associated
- Visits of tourists to Holy Sites

We intend to use the coming year to continue exchanges on these issues in an attempt to develop these aims. We wish to broaden the spectrum of participants in the recognition that Holy Sites constitute an issue to be discussed on a global level.

Appendix 2: List of Participants

Title	Name	Origin
Dir. Fr.	Vahram Melikyan	Armenia
Bishop	Sahak Mashalian	Armenia*
H.G. Bishop	Vazgen Mirzakhanyan	Georgia**
H.E. Archbishop	Pargev Martirosyan	Nagorno-Karabakh**
H.E. Bishop	Athenagoras Peckstadt	Belgium
Prof. Dr.	Faris Gavrankapetanovic	Bosnia-Herzegovina*
Mr.	Emir Kovacevic	Bosnia Herzegovina**
Vice President	Nada Tesanovic	Bosnia Herzegovina /Republika Srpska **
Mr.	Zeljko Bellina	Bosnia Herzegovina /Republika Srpska **
Grand Mufti	Mustafa Hadzhi	Bulgaria*
Mr.	Hayri Ahmed Emin	Bulgaria*
Gen. Secr.	Hyusein Hasan Hafazov	Bulgaria**
Director	Beazedin Ashim Mustafa	Bulgaria**
Prof. Dr.	Ivan Zhelev Dimitrov	Bulgaria
H.B. Patriarch	Michel Sabbah	Jerusalem*
Director-General	Oded Wiener	Jerusalem*
Exec. Dir.	Yusef Daher	Jerusalem*
Rabbi Prof.	Daniel Sperber	Jerusalem
Co-Director	Sharon Rosen	Jerusalem
Undersecretary	Salah Zuhayka	Jerusalem
Professor	Qemajl Morina	Kosovo*
Spec. Advisor	Kristin Aase	Norway*
Bishop	Bernt Eidsvig	Norway **
Sr.	GilChrist Lavigne	Norway
Rev/Pres. of OC	Kjell Magne Bondevik	Norway
Bishop	Tor Singsaas	Norway**
Ms.	Inger Myhren	Norway**
Spec. Advisor	Ingrid Vik	Norway **
Mr.	Christian Moe	Slovenia/Norway**
Rev. Dr.	Trond Bakkevig	Norway
Rev.	Berit Länke	Norway
Rev./Pres. of EVID	Dag Aakre	Norway
Mr	Ramazan Ay	Norway
Mr.	Odd Anders With	Norway **
Mr	Kemalettin Süslü	Norway
Ms.	Tone Minsaas	Norway
Ms.	Sidra Shahid Shami	Norway*
Dr.	Eivind Kasa	Norway
Mr.	Lyder Marstrander	Norway **
Rev.	Rolf Synnes	Norway*

Mr.	Suleyman Cifci	Norway*
H.E. Bishop Dr.	Macarie Dragoi	Romania/Sweden**
H.E. Bishop	Teodosije	Serbia
Mr.	Nebosja Cvejanov	Serbia*
Fr.	Sava	Serbia
H.H. Patriarch	Zakka Iwas	Syria*
Rev. Fr.	Matta El-Khuri	Syria*
Vice President	Cemal Usak	Turkey*
M.P.	Özlem Türköne	Turkey
Prof. Dr.	Sinasi Gunduz	Turkey
Prof. Dr.	Adnan Bulent Baloglu	Turkey**
Mr.	Mahmut Özdemir	Turkey**
Prof. Dr.	Tufan Buzpinar	Turkey**
Mr.	Cenap Aydin	Turkey**
Mr.	Richard Prime	UK*
Vice Gen. Secr.	Stein Villumstad	USA**

Explanation of signs:

* Participant in 2008 only

**Participant in 2009 only

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