

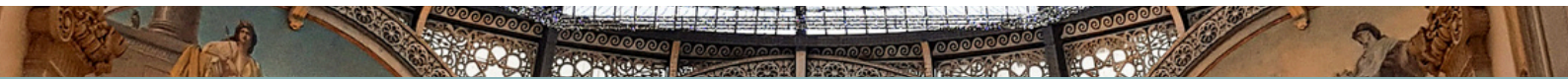


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**alda**  
European Association  
for Local Democracy



# Bridging Beliefs Strengthening Interfaith and Interconvictional Dialogue for Democratic Europe



22nd April 2026  
Sala Vitman, Acquario Civico di Milano, Milan, Italy  
9.00 am - 5.00 pm



[Click here to register](#)





## Concept note



# International Conference Bridging Beliefs Strengthening Interfaith and Interconvictional Dialogue for Democratic Europe



## Background

### Bridging Beliefs: Strengthening Interfaith and Interconvictional Dialogue for Democratic Europe

22 April 2026 | Milan, Italy

This international public conference brings together policymakers, faith leaders, civil society actors, academics, and local authorities to explore the role of interfaith and interconvictional dialogue in strengthening democratic societies across Europe. In an increasingly diverse and polarized context, the event aims to foster exchange on how dialogue can contribute to peace education, social cohesion, inclusive governance, and democratic resilience.

Structured around three interactive roundtables, the conference will address the contribution of dialogue to peacebuilding and democracy, the governance challenges and opportunities from global to local perspectives, and good practices that promote inclusive civil spaces and participatory decision-making. Through thematic discussions and parallel working groups, participants will identify concrete policy recommendations and sustainable mechanisms for dialogue at European and local levels.

The conference serves as both a reflection space and a policy-oriented platform, contributing to the objectives of the Bridging Beliefs project by promoting cooperation, mutual understanding, and inclusive democratic processes across Europe.

## Agenda



# International Conference Bridging Beliefs Strengthening Interfaith and Interconvictional Dialogue for Democratic Europe



9.00 9.30

**Welcome and informal networking**

9.30 9.50

**Institutional opening**

- **Marco Boaria** - Executive Director and Deputy Secretary General of ALDA
- **Elena Buscemi** - Chair of the Milan City Council
- **Antonella Sberna** - Vice President of EP, Regional policy and cohesion, Territorial development Institutional relations between the EU and local/regional authorities (video message)
- **Mustafa Roma** - Secretary General COREIS

9.50 10.00

**Overview of the project Bridging Beliefs -ALDA**

10.00 10.30

**Keynote speech "Interfaith and interconventional dialogue in Europe: where do we stand?"**

- **Vincent Depaigne** - Coordinator for the Article 17 dialogue with churches, religious, philosophical and non-confessional organisations, European Commission (online)
- **Teresa Albano** - KAICIID Representative
- **Iris Abraham** - EC Senior Policy Advisor TBC



10.30 11.30

### Interactive Roundtable 1: The role of Interfaith and Interconvictional Dialogue and cooperation in fostering peace education and democracy

- **Carlo Luyckx** - EBU Vice President and manager of a Tibetan Buddhist temple in Brussels
- **Imam Yahya Pallavicini** - Vice President of COREIS
- **Rabbi Alfonso Arbib** - Jewish education, interreligious dialogue, and public engagement on religious and ethical issues in Italy TBC
- **Venerable Bhikkhuni Dhammadinā** - PhD, visiting professor for Buddhist studies at the University of California at Berkeley
- **Maggioni dr. don Pietro Lorenzo** - PhD, Professor of Theology of Religions and Ecumenism at the Seminary of Milan

11.30 12.00

Coffee break



12.00 13.00

### Interactive Roundtable 2: Interfaith and Interconvictional Governance challenges and opportunities: From a global to a local perspective

- **Jean Spinette** - Mayor of Saint Gilles, TBC
- **Amina Croce** - Youth Ambassador at Muslim Jewish Leadership Council
- **Benedetto Zacchioli** - President of European Coalition of Cities Against Racism
- **Eirini Mastora** - Project Manager at Equal Society
- **Mirela Despotović** - Founder ZAMAH Foundation

14.15 15.15

### Interactive Roundtable 3: Interfaith and Interconvictional Governance for democratic decision-making and inclusive civil spaces: good practices and policies

- **Anna Scavuzzo** - Vice Mayor city of Milan
- **Livia Ottolenghi** - President of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities (UCEI) TBC
- **Representative of Diputació of Barcelona (DiBa)** - TBC
- **Fatima Zahra Dahir** - Member of Council of Siziano, PROMUS
- **Nejra Kadic Meskic** - Program manager at the Center for Cultural Dialogue

13.00 14.15

Lunch break

15.15 16.45

### Parallel thematic groups: Building Sustainable Dialogue in Europe

15.15 16.45

### Closing remarks