

## 6<sup>th</sup> European Policy Dialogue Forum

# Social Cohesion in Changing Climates

### Fostering Inclusive Paths to Equity in Europe

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Chem. des Crêts 17, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland  
10-13 November 2025  
[www.kaiciid.org/epdf](http://www.kaiciid.org/epdf)

In a Europe grappling with rising tensions, increasing inequality, deepening polarisation, and conflicts, the erosion of social cohesion, exacerbated by growing environmental degradation, signals an urgent need for renewal. Today's fragile societal and ecological landscapes represent a *kairos* - a critical, defining moment that calls for both thoughtful reflection and decisive action.

According to its historical understanding, the concept of *kairos* emphasizes the urgent need to respond to the challenges of the present in ways that promote a more equitable and sustainable future for all. Addressing societal fractures, including those caused by environmental degradation, is essential to upholding equity, intergenerational justice, and preserving life on Earth. This decisive moment calls for a transformative shift toward more just, equitable, and inclusive societies - ones that foster a culture of inclusion, uphold human rights, and protect natural resources from the consequences of harmful and unsustainable practices.

The deep interconnection between social cohesion and the planet's health demands a shared sense of responsibility, particularly towards future generations, and requires collective, inclusive action. Community leaders and actors together with religious leaders and faith-based organisations, guided by shared values such as equity, fraternity, kindness, care for the Earth, and the profound sense of interdependence between humanity and nature, can serve as powerful agents of change. They have the capacity to mobilise communities, inspire moral responsibility, and influence principled policies and practices rooted in compassion, justice, and shared purpose.

The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the European Policy Dialogue Forum (EPDF), the distinct dialogue platform in Europe of the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID), aims to provide a safe and dynamic space for reflection on how these shared values – cutting across communities, cultures, religious and belief traditions – can inform a renewed social pact that bridges divides and fosters cohesive, resilient, and sustainable societies. By bringing participants from diverse secular, religious and belief backgrounds – including policymakers and public authorities, religious leaders and actors, the private sector, and international and civil society organisations - the Forum will encourage long-term action and broad-based partnerships to heal societal rifts and address environmental challenges.

### THE FORUM

Under the motto “**Inspire, Connect, Engage**”, around 100 participants from Europe – including one third aged between 18 and 30 – will gather in Geneva from 10-13 November 2025. Co-organised with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Forum aims to build bridges between communities, cultures and religions, generations, and social groups across the 46 member states of the Council of Europe.

Drawing on the convening capacity of KAICIID, since 2019, the European Policy Dialogue Forum (EPDF) has explored the transformative potential of interreligious and intercultural dialogue to foster a genuine culture of belonging and address ethnic, religious, and social inequities in Europe.

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## THE OBJECTIVES

- To deepen understanding of how interreligious and intercultural dialogue can help address the persistent social divisions and environmental challenges facing Europe today, by providing a safe and dynamic space for mutual learning;
- To foster a platform for the exchange of experiences, grounded on shared principles of care, human dignity, equity, fraternity and environmental protection, encouraging collaborative and dialogue-driven networks;
- To support broad-based, inclusive coalitions, particularly among secular actors, religious leaders, belief communities, and faith-based actors, to advance collective efforts toward more cohesive and sustainable societies

## THE ORGANISERS

Thanks to its dual governance structure – a Council of Parties made of States, and a Board of Directors made up of religious leaders – the **International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID)** is an intergovernmental organization uniquely placed to bring together followers of different religious traditions, religious leaders and policymakers and harness the transformative power of interreligious and intercultural dialogue as effective tools to promote justice, peace, social cohesion and reconciliation.

Established in 2019, the **Network for Dialogue**, is a Europe-wide KAICIID-supported community of faith-based and secular organisations committed to harness interreligious and intercultural dialogue methods to promote refugee and migrant inclusion in hosting communities.

The **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** is the world's largest humanitarian network. Its secretariat supports local Red Cross and Red Crescent action in more than 191 countries, bringing together more than 16 million volunteers for the good of humanity.

The **European Council of Religious Leaders/Religions for Peace Europe (ECRL/RfP Europe)** brings together senior religious leaders from Europe's historical religions, to think and act together on key societal challenges of common concern. Members are represented from traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam together with Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs and Zoroastrians.

*Get in touch with the organisers at [europa@kaiciid.org](mailto:europa@kaiciid.org)*

# Social Cohesion in Changing Climates

## Fostering Inclusive Paths to Equity in Europe

### BACKGROUND

In an increasingly multi-religious and multicultural Europe, the voices of those left behind by economic transitions that generate wealth for a few – without ensuring broad-based socioeconomic inclusion – echo the cry of the Earth, wounded in its fragile ecosystems. Amid the growing exclusion of minorities – including migrants and refugees – and the rapid environmental degradation that disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, the European Policy Dialogue Forum (EPDF) aims to provide a space to reimagine how interreligious and intercultural dialogue can help foster common engagement and a much-needed shift. Guided by core values shared across human rights-based commitments, religious and belief traditions – human dignity, equity, fraternity, care for one another, and care for the planet – the EPDF invites reflection and dialogue on how to foster a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future for all.

#### Why a Policy Dialogue

In ancient Greek, the term *polis* referred not just to a city, but to a living political and social community. Its true distinction wasn't only in whether it was ruled democratically or oligarchically, but in the principle of *isonomy* – the idea that all free citizens were equally subject to the same laws. These laws were seen as reflections of a universal order, aligning the city's justice with the harmony of the cosmos.

This deep correspondence between the individual and the *polis* made participation in public life not just a duty, but a path to personal fulfilment. The *agora* – the public square – was the beating heart of this vision, a space where citizens, including religious leaders, came together to discuss the concerns of the City-State and explore possible solutions, together.

The European Policy Dialogue Forum (EPDF) echoes this spirit. It is a modern *agora* – a space where a diverse group of people of different faiths, convictions, and sectors come together to engage in dialogue for the benefit of the *polis*, the common good, the collective future. Here, policy is not just technical – it is deeply human, rooted in shared values and mutual responsibility.

#### Why Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue Matters for Social Cohesion and Climate Justice

In this broader effort, interreligious and intercultural dialogue is one of the most suitable tools to overcome the barriers that separate “us” and “them”. Far from being an abstract theological exercise, interreligious and intercultural dialogue helps build a shared vision grounded in common values of solidarity, equity, and care for the Earth. It creates much-needed spaces for constructive engagement, collective responsibility, and a renewed sense of belonging, fostering human connections and shared commitment essential for joint action. Interreligious and intercultural dialogue methods also help rebalance power dynamics, foster solidarity, and support a social contract rooted in mutual dignity, human rights and respect for the natural environment.

The Forum will explore how the role of religious leaders and religious/faith-based actors can significantly contribute to addressing the intersecting social and environmental crises in partnership with secular

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organisations and entities. In today's context of widening socioeconomic disparities, which continue to limit equal access to essential resources such as employment, healthcare, education, and a healthy environment, religious and community leaders have the potential to serve as powerful voices for unity and justice. While their roles and influence vary – and can be ambivalent – those committed to dialogue and shared values can help transcend polarisation and encourage a collective effort toward a more equitable and sustainable future, grounded in ethical principles common across traditions and cultures. Religious leaders and faith-based actors continue to serve as anchors of care, proximity, and hope, pointing toward a broader, more inclusive, and more equitable horizon for all.

For policymakers, local authorities and the private sector, underestimating the profound influence and role of religious leaders, faith-based actors, and local community organisations can lead to missed opportunities for greater positive impact in multi-faith and multicultural societies.

### Core Themes at the Heart of the 6<sup>th</sup> EPDF

Like in an ideal *agora*, in dialogue with religious leaders, policymakers, international organisations, civil society and the private sector, the 6<sup>th</sup> EPDF will explore:

- Why interreligious and intercultural dialogue matters when addressing the intersecting social and environmental crises;
- Why pervasive inequalities are exacerbating discrimination, growing precarity and environmental degradation, impacting on the access to living resources, such as quality employment and education, public health, and the erosion of natural ecosystems;
- Why urban spaces – given their complexities – stand as pivotal environments of transformation, and places where participatory governance, community-based solutions, volunteering and shared values underpinning cohesive and sustainable communities can be scaled into meaningful change in policies and practices;
- Why the private sector must be actively engaged, recognizing the responsibility of businesses for shaping the living conditions through their investments, employment practices, and use of natural resources and the future of innovative financing models;
- How regional organisations in Europe can harness interreligious and intercultural dialogue to promote cohesive and sustainable communities.

These systemic challenges will guide discussions toward actionable strategies, particularly at the local level. The EPDF will showcase inspiring local initiatives as springboards for dialogue on adapting such experiences elsewhere and influencing national and regional policy frameworks.

*Social Cohesion in Changing Climates* is both a call and an opportunity – to rediscover the power of human connection, reaffirm equity as the foundation for human dignity, and transform our shared spaces into places of mutual care and renewal.

In this effort, KAICIID's mission remains more relevant than ever. With its unique dual governance – bringing together states and religious leaders – KAICIID promotes interreligious and intercultural dialogue to foster compassion, shared responsibility, and deeper relationships. The European Policy Dialogue Forum is called to convene religious leaders, policymakers, civil society, and the private sector to deliver on this mission, promoting values-driven alliances that contribute to more equitable and sustainable societies.

## DRAFT AGENDA

### MONDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2025

#### ARRIVAL OF PARTICIPANTS

18:00-19:30 - HUMAN LIBRARY – CROWNE PLAZA, GENEVA  
“STORIES OF EQUITY: SEEING OURSELVES IN EACH OTHER”

**Moderator:** Mr. Tim Mortimer, Programme Officer, Europe Region Programme, International Dialogue Center (KAICIID); **Co-facilitators:** Mr. Tim Mortimer, Ms. Teresa Albano, Ms. Jana Jakob, Dr. Aleksandra Djuric Milovanovic

Featuring: **Mr. Miguel Rohula Reis**, Policy Officer, Baha’i International Community Office, Brussels (*tbc*)  
**Ms. Linn-Maggi Jannok-Joma**, Adviser, Sami Pathfinders, Norway  
**Mr. Kannanathan Rajganna**, KAICIID Fellow, Switzerland (*tbc*)  
**Ms. Hind Hafuda and Ms. Eidel Malowicki**, Young Ambassadors of the KAICIID-supported Muslim-Jewish Leadership Council (MJLC), Vienna

#### Methodology:

Participants will be divided into small breakout groups. Each group will host a few “living books” - diverse individuals ready to share their story in 5–7 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of respectful dialogue. The session will rotate, allowing participants to listen to multiple stories. A reflective debrief will follow, asking:

- How did the stories deepen your understanding of equity?
- What connections did you see between personal experience and systemic policy challenges?
- How might these insights inspire action locally, spiritually, or institutionally?

### TUESDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2025

09:30-10:00 – WELCOMING COFFEE AND REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS –

10:00-12:30 - OPENING SESSION – 1

10:00-10:30 INTRODUCTORY SESSION – SETTING THE CONTEXT

This onboarding session will open with a 3-minute video presentation highlighting the mission and evolution of the European Policy Dialogue Forum (EPDF) over the years. It will be followed by an overview of the objectives and structure of the 6<sup>th</sup> edition, setting the stage for the discussions and activities to come

**Ms. Teresa Albano**, Senior Programme Manager, Europe Region Programme, International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID)

10:30-12:00 OPENING REMARKS - The opening session of the 6<sup>th</sup> European Policy Dialogue Forum will feature high-level representatives from KAICIID, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and other Geneva-based institutions, alongside diplomatic representatives of the KAICIID Council of Parties. Together, they will offer key insights into the Forum’s central themes—social cohesion, environmental justice, and the role of interreligious and intercultural dialogue in addressing shared societal challenges—setting the tone for an inclusive and forward-looking discussion

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### 13:00-14:00 – LUNCH BREAK –

### 14:00 – 15:30 – PLENARY SESSION - 2

#### **WHY COMMON VALUES AND PRINCIPLES MATTER. TOWARDS A SHARED ETHICAL FOUNDATION TO ADDRESS SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES**

– In an increasingly multi-faith and multicultural Europe there is a growing need to (re)discover values and principles that offer a common foundation for action across different traditions. Drawing on KAICIID's mission to advance interreligious and intercultural dialogue, as well as the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent - particularly humanity, impartiality, and universality - this panel will examine how shared values can serve as ethical anchors in confronting today's intertwined crises, strengthening societal bonds, fostering inclusive dialogue, and inspiring joint responses to social fragmentation and environmental injustice. By highlighting the moral dimensions of both social cohesion and climate justice, the discussion will illustrate how values-driven cooperation can help rebuild trust, empower communities, and promote long-term resilience across Europe and beyond.

### 16:00 – 18:00 VISIT OF THE RED CROSS MUSEUM

## WEDNESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2025

### 09:00 – 10:30 – PLENARY SESSION - 3

#### **FRACTURED SOCIETIES, FRAGILE ENVIRONMENTS: THE HIDDEN COST OF INEQUALITY**

– Europe faces deepening fractures driven by structural inequalities, social exclusion, and environmental degradation. Such growing inequalities translate into shrinking of equal opportunities that current policies seem unfit to properly re-balance. Access to quality education, fairly paid jobs, public health systems, social protection, and affordable housing is increasingly limited to a shrinking segment of the population - driven by a harmful narrative that divides people into the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' of equal human rights. Although marginalised and minority communities bear the heaviest burdens, these widening divides weaken the resilience of the entire social fabric. This session will help unpack how systemic disparities intersect across gender, race, migration, religion, ethnicity and geography, compounding fragility in both social cohesion and the natural environment. This honest diagnosis sets the stage for the Forum's journey: we must fully understand the forces pulling our societies apart before we can repair.

### 10:30-11:00 – COFFEE BREAK –

### 11:30- 13:00 - BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

Participants will be divided into pre-assigned groups to ensure a diverse mix of stakeholders in each group. The four break-out sessions are clustered around the Forum's two main thematic areas: social cohesion and climate justice. Each session will be led by a dedicated facilitator. This format ensures greater interaction among participants. Insights emerging from these sessions will inform KAICIID priority areas of action as well as concrete interventions that will be mirrored in the EPDF Call to Action and the EPDF Follow-up Initiatives in 2026.

**Outline of the session: Ms. Aleksandra Djuric Milovanovic**, KAICIID Fellow and Coordinator of the KAICIID-supported platform the Network for Dialogue (N4D)

How interreligious dialogue can impact practices and policymaking at local level. **Focus on migrant and refugee integration and inclusion**

**Facilitators:** Mr. Stefano Volpicelli (Expert on migration governance, Antonianum University), Ms. Anila Noor (New Women Connectors NGO, member of Network for Dialogue – N4D)

How interreligious dialogue can impact practices and policymaking at local level. **Focus on climate resilience and adaptation**

**Facilitators:** Ms. Azmaira Alibhai (UNEP/KAICIID Fellow) and Mr. Mark Owen (President European Council of Religious Leaders)

How interreligious dialogue can impact practices and policymaking at local level. **Focus on social cohesion**

**Facilitators:** Mr. Tim Mortimer (KAICIID Officer) and Ms. Carla Amina Baghajati (KAICIID Ad Hoc Advisory Group, KAICIID Resource Guide for religious leaders on countering hate speech)

How interreligious dialogue can impact practices and policymaking at local level. **Focus on social and solidarity economy**

**Facilitators:** Ms. Vera Ferreira (KAICIID Head of Programmes), and Mr. Amjad Saleem (IFRC/N4D)

### 13:30-14:30 – LUNCH BREAK –

### 14:30-16:00 - PLENARY SESSION - 4

**BUILDING VALUES-BASED URBAN COMMUNITIES** – Cities are on the frontlines of today’s intertwined social and environmental challenges. Their multicultural and multi-religious fabric presents not only challenges, but also powerful opportunities to foster ethical governance, inclusive leadership, and socially innovative solutions. This session will explore the untapped potential of broad-based collaboration at the local level, engaging local authorities with community leaders and actors across secular, faith, religious, and cultural traditions to build communities rooted in shared values of dignity, equity, and solidarity in increasingly multi-faith and multicultural urban fabrics. With deep ties to their communities and a profound understanding of local needs and hardships, religious leaders are uniquely positioned to complement the work of local authorities and civil society organizations, including the Red Cross, often among the first to respond to social and environmental emergencies. The discussion will focus on building partnerships that turn values and principles into practice - strengthening community resilience, trust, and a shared sense of belonging from the ground up.

### 16:00-16:30 – COFFEE BREAK –

### 16:30-18:00 - PLENARY SESSION - 5

**MARKET PLACE OF IDEAS – LOCAL INNOVATIONS AND ETHICAL FUNDING FOR SHARED FUTURES** – Step into the Marketplace of Ideas - a dynamic, fair-style space designed to spark conversations, connections, and inspiration. The room will come alive as social innovators and impact investors take their places at individual desks arranged throughout the venue, ready to welcome visitors. You're invited to wander freely, stop by any desk, and dive into informal and engaging exchanges about bold ideas, grassroots innovations, and visionary approaches that are reconfiguring business, investment and funding models to bridge the gap between values and delivery.

This is a space to engage and connect - to be inspired by grassroots solutions and forward-looking investors and consider how similar ideas could work in your own setting. Let curiosity guide you. Let ideas inspire change.

**Outline of the session:** Ms. Jana Jakob, Programme Officer, Europe Region Programme, KAICIID

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## THURSDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2025

09:00-10:30 – PLENARY SESSION – 6

**BRIDGING REGIONS THROUGH DIALOGUE IN A FRAGMENTED EUROPE** - In an increasingly fragmented Europe facing overlapping social, political, and environmental challenges, subregional cooperation mechanisms - such as those in the Western Balkans, the Baltic, in Central and Mediterranean Europe - are uniquely positioned to translate proximity into policy. Operating at the crossroads of local realities and regional frameworks, these platforms have the potential to systematically integrate interreligious and intercultural dialogue into their approaches. This session explores how subregional organisations can harness the transformative power of dialogue - rooted in shared values of dignity, equity, and mutual respect - to build trust, counter polarisation, promote human rights for all, and foster inclusive and resilient communities. By embedding dialogue as a strategic tool, subregional initiatives can contribute more effectively to cohesive, just, and sustainable societies across Europe.

10:30-11:00 – COFFEE BREAK –

11:00-12:00 - PLENARY SESSION

**HARVESTING INSIGHTS AND THE EPDF CALL TO ACTION** - Building on the collective experience and diverse expertise of policymakers, religious leaders, civil society actors and academics, the session will aim to distill a set of shared priorities and actionable follow-up actions informing the EPDF Call to Action 2025, which aspires to guide KAICIID intersectoral and interreligious efforts in 2026, toward more cohesive, just, and sustainable societies across Europe.

**Moderator: Teresa Albano**, Senior Programme Manager, Europe Region Programme, International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID)

**12:00-13:30 - CONCLUDING REMARKS** - The 6<sup>th</sup> EPDF will close with a high-level session featuring distinguished speakers, including members of the KAICIID Board of Directors and key institutional partners. Their concluding reflections will highlight the value of inclusive dialogue, celebrate the milestones achieved, and reaffirm KAICIID's commitment to fostering shared solutions through interreligious and intercultural cooperation. This session will serve as both a moment of gratitude and a renewed call to collective responsibility

13:30-14:30 – LUNCH BREAK –

## DEPARTURE OF PARTICIPANTS

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