INTERCULTURAL
DIALOGUE
PLATFORM
Mutual Understanding & Social Cohesion

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2025

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE PLATFORM

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Mutual Understanding & Social Cohesion

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PROJECTS

Projects Implemented

Protone Project

Final Conference

The Protone Project Final Conference, Beyond Protection: Imagining the Places of Worship in Europe, was held on 29 January 2025 at the Pontificia Università della Santa Croce in Rome. Organised by Istituto Tevere, the Intercultural Dialogue Platform (IDP), and Arco Forum, the conference brought together leading scholars, religious leaders, policymakers, and civil society representatives to reflect on the evolving role of places of worship in contemporary Europe. Moving beyond a narrow focus on security, the event explored how religious spaces function as social, cultural, civic, and interfaith hubs, and how they can contribute to social cohesion, democratic resilience, and peaceful coexistence.

A Pre-Conference Study Tour: Experiencing Religious Space in Context

The conference was preceded on 28 January by a study tour at the Great Mosque of Rome, led by Imam Dr. Nader Akkad and Dr. Massimo Cozzolino. Participants were introduced to the mosque's architectural features, historical development, and its longstanding commitment to interfaith dialogue. This immersive visit provided a concrete and experiential entry point into the conference's broader reflections, highlighting how places of worship operate not only as sacred sites, but also as spaces of encounter, cultural exchange, and community engagement within pluralistic societies.

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Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Places of Worship

The final conference unfolded through a series of interdisciplinary sessions examining places of worship from ethnographic, sociological, legal, political, and transnational perspectives.

The ethnographic session, led by Professor Tahir Abbas (University of Leiden) and his research team, presented key findings from the Protone Project's empirical research. Drawing on interviews, focus groups, and large-scale survey data, the session explored the relationship between security measures, perceptions of safety, and religious integration. A central insight was that increased security does not automatically translate into a stronger sense of safety among worshippers. Similarly, high levels of social integration do not necessarily reduce perceived security threats. These findings underscored the need for context-sensitive, community-specific approaches that take into account lived experiences, identity dynamics, and local realities.

The sociological session, featuring Professor David Lehmann (University of Cambridge) and Professor Paul Weller (University of Oxford), introduced the concept of the "sociological imagination" as a tool for rethinking the protection of places of worship. Speakers emphasised the importance of balancing protection with openness, and of recognising religious sites as embedded within wider social, historical, and cultural structures. Rather than treating religious spaces solely as security risks, the discussion highlighted their role in shaping collective identities, fostering belonging, and contributing to the public sphere.

Legal, Political, and Transnational Dimensions

The legal panel, with contributions from Professor Pamela Harris (John Cabot University, Rome) and Professor Arhan Kardas (University of Potsdam), addressed the legal and administrative challenges faced by minority religious communities across Europe. The discussion focused on issues of recognition, zoning, taxation, and bureaucratic barriers that often prevent minority groups from accessing dignified and stable places of worship. Speakers stressed the need for inclusive and non-discriminatory legal frameworks that protect religious freedom while ensuring equal treatment for all faith communities.

A transnational and political session broadened the discussion beyond national contexts. Contributions from Professor Pasquale Ferrara (LUISS University, Rome) and representatives of COMECE highlighted the importance of interfaith diplomacy and international cooperation in safeguarding religious freedoms. Places of worship were framed not only as local community sites, but also as symbols of cultural heritage and global religious identity, requiring coordinated responses at European and international levels.

Professor Mohammed Hashas (University of Rome Tor Vergata) added a critical historical and educational dimension by highlighting the often-overlooked contributions of Islamic scholars to European civilisation. He argued that the exclusion of these contributions from mainstream educational narratives reinforces perceptions of Muslims as perpetual outsiders. Promoting more inclusive historical narratives, he suggested, is essential for fostering belonging, mutual recognition, and long-term social cohesion.

Intercultural and Interfaith Collaboration

The final session, moderated by Dr. Luigi De Salvia (Religions for Peace), focused on trust-building and interfaith cooperation as core components of religious security. Contributions from Rev. Dr. Thomas Wipf (Religions for Peace) and Dr. Massimo Cozzolino (SPIRIT Project) showcased concrete examples of

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interreligious solidarity, including initiatives where faith communities actively support and protect one another's places of worship. Particular attention was given to the newly established Interreligious Council for Peace and Security, envisioned as a sustainable platform for continued collaboration, dialogue, and joint action beyond the lifespan of the Protone Project.

Vatican Visit and Closure

On 31 January, conference participants were received at the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican. Representatives of the Dicastery expressed strong support for the continuation of the Protone Project and emphasised the importance of interfaith solidarity, particularly in contexts where minority religious communities face heightened vulnerability. The programme concluded with a guided visit to St. Peter's Basilica, reflecting on the Jubilee Year and the symbolism of the Holy Door, followed by the Friday Prayer for Muslim participants. This closing moment powerfully embodied the conference's spirit of inclusivity, respect, and shared responsibility.

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Protone Project Final General Assembly

The Final General Assembly (GA) of the Protone Project was held in Rome on 30 January 2025, bringing together all project partners for a full day of strategic reflection, evaluation, and forward-looking coordination. As the concluding governance milestone of the project, the General Assembly provided a structured space to assess achievements, consolidate results, and ensure the long-term sustainability of the Protone Project's outcomes, particularly the establishment and functioning of the Interfaith Council for the Safety of Places of Worship in Europe.

The meeting gathered representatives from all consortium partners, including academic institutions, civil society organisations, and interfaith actors from across Europe. The agenda was designed to balance reflection on completed activities with concrete planning for post-project continuity, ensuring that the project's intellectual, institutional, and operational legacy would extend beyond its formal funding period.

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Opening and Strategic Outlook

The General Assembly opened with welcoming remarks and an ice-breaking session led by the project coordination team, setting a collaborative tone and reaffirming the shared commitment of partners. This was followed by a forward-looking presentation by Professor Tahir Abbas (University of Leiden), who reflected on future scholarly outputs emerging from the Protone Project. His intervention highlighted how the project's interdisciplinary research on the protection of places of worship could continue to inform academic debate, policy discussions, and applied research in the fields of security, social cohesion, and religious diversity.

Sustainability and Long-Term Impact

A central component of the General Assembly was the workshop on "Pathways to Sustainability," facilitated by the project coordinator. This session focused on identifying mechanisms to preserve and amplify the project's impact after its formal conclusion. Discussions addressed how research outputs, policy recommendations, and capacity-building materials could be embedded in partner organisations' ongoing activities, and how interfaith and civil society networks developed through Protone could remain active and responsive to emerging challenges.

Participants emphasised that sustainability should not be understood solely in financial terms, but also in institutional, relational, and normative dimensions. The importance of continued cooperation between academic researchers, religious communities, and policymakers was repeatedly highlighted as a key condition for long-term success.

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Advisory Board Meeting and Work Package Review

The Advisory Board reviewed the main project components and collectively assessed progress, challenges, and lessons learned across work packages. Presentations and discussions covered capacity-building activities, empirical research outputs, thematic symposia, and dissemination efforts. Particular attention was given to the functioning and future governance of the Interfaith Council for the Safety of Places of Worship in Europe, recognised as one of the most significant and durable outcomes of the Protone Project. Partners discussed the operational framework of the Council, its decision-making structures, leadership rotation, and meeting schedule, ensuring clarity and shared ownership among participating organisations This session also examined the project's recommendation report, reflecting on how its findings could be translated into actionable guidance for policymakers, religious institutions, and security stakeholders at local, national, and European levels.

Evaluation, Financial Management, and Dissemination

The afternoon sessions were dedicated to evaluation, administrative closure, and dissemination strategy. A dedicated workshop on "Evaluation and Lessons Learned" enabled partners to critically reflect on the project's overall design, implementation, and impact. This collective assessment identified both best practices and areas for improvement, contributing to institutional learning and strengthening future collaborative initiatives.

Financial management and final reporting guidelines were then presented, ensuring transparency and shared understanding of administrative requirements. The session clarified procedures for final financial closure and reinforced the importance of accountability in EU-funded projects.

The final substantive session focused on dissemination, with presentations on social media outreach and audiovisual materials. Partners discussed how project videos, online content, and digital communication tools could continue to reach wider audiences, including policymakers, religious communities, and the general public, even after the project's conclusion.

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Virtuous Project

Kick-off Meeting

The Kick-off Meeting of the VIRTUOUS project took place on 19–20 March 2025 in Limoges, France, marking the official launch of the project's activities. The project objectives are (1) identifying security vulnerabilities in places of worship; (2) Enhance preparedness through training and simulations; (3) strengthen cooperation among religious communities and authorities; (4) implement innovative security measures using BIM technology; (5) Develop an EU-wide security awareness campaign.

The meeting was hosted by Pompiers de l'Urgence Internationale (PUI), the project coordinator, and brought together representatives from all consortium partners, including research institutions, SMEs, religious organizations, civil society actors, and law enforcement agencies from across Europe.

The meeting opened with a welcome address by PUI, followed by an overview of the VIRTUOUS project objectives, expectations, and implementation challenges. Each consortium partner introduced their organization, expertise, and role within the project, establishing a shared understanding of responsibilities and fostering collaboration across disciplines. Particular emphasis was placed on the project's multidisciplinary nature, combining security research, technological innovation, and community-based approaches to enhance the protection of places of worship.

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A significant part of the meeting was dedicated to the detailed presentation of all project Work Packages (WPs). WP1, "Project Coordination and Management", outlined governance structures, reporting procedures, quality assurance mechanisms, financial management, and internal communication tools. The consortium agreement process, internal review schedule, and monthly coordination meetings were also clarified to ensure smooth project execution.

WP2, "State of the Art on Terrorist Attacks and Risk and Vulnerability Assessment", introduced the methodological framework for analyzing past terrorist attacks, identifying trends, and assessing risks and vulnerabilities affecting religious sites. Discussions highlighted the importance of architectural, symbolic, and environmental factors, as well as coordination with other WPs to ensure methodological coherence.

WP3, "BIM Technology and Security Recommendations", presented the integration of Building Information Modelling (BIM) with security simulations to assess attack scenarios and develop evidence-based security recommendations. Partners discussed scenario development, simulation implementation, and the role of law enforcement feedback, stressing data protection and ethical considerations.

WP4, "Security Awareness Activities", focused on policy labs, stakeholder engagement, awareness campaigns, and training programs tailored to diverse religious communities. The consortium agreed on the development of practical materials, including handbooks, videos, and emergency action plans, alongside hands-on training and evaluation mechanisms.

WP5, "Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation", addressed dissemination strategies, the development of an online knowledge hub, micro-learning materials, and exploitation pathways. Clear rules for sensitive content, data protection, and stakeholder communication were established.

The meeting concluded with a review of immediate action points, timelines, and responsibilities for the first six months of implementation. The consortium reaffirmed its commitment to close collaboration, methodological rigor, and impact-driven results.

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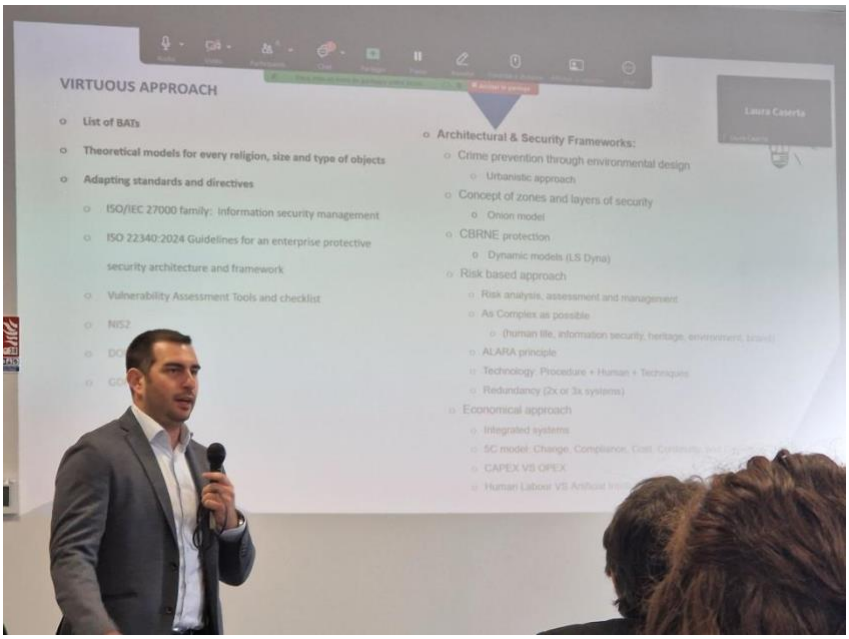

IDP Contribution to WP2 - State of the Art on Terrorist Attacks and Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

Within Work Package 2 of the VIRTUOUS project, IDP made a substantial and multifaceted contribution to the analysis of terrorist and violent attacks against religious sites, with a particular focus on Muslim places of worship. IDP's work spanned Tasks T2.1 (Historical analysis of past terrorist attacks), T2.2 (Trend analysis), and T2.3 (Risk and vulnerability assessment), combining longitudinal quantitative research with qualitative, context-specific case study analysis. IDP acted as co-author of three core WP2 deliverables, D2.1, D2.2, and D2.3, thereby contributing directly to the conceptual, empirical, and analytical foundations of the project.

Comprehensive Review of Past Terrorist Attacks (D2.1)

IDP co-authored the "Report on Comprehensive Review of Past Terrorist Attacks", which presents a broad and systematic overview of violent attacks against Christian, Jewish, and Muslim places of worship and related spaces in Europe. Within this deliverable, IDP contributed to the analytical framework addressing attacks on Muslim places of worship, including their typology, vulnerabilities, and symbolic exposure.

IDP's contribution supported the adoption of a broad and inclusive analytical approach, moving beyond narrow legal definitions of terrorism to encompass a wider spectrum of violent attacks, including hate-motivated incidents, vandalism, and symbolic aggression against religious sites. This approach was particularly relevant for Muslim places of worship, which are frequently targeted through low-threshold and non-lethal forms of violence that nonetheless generate significant psychological and community impact.

Drawing on its expertise, IDP contributed to the conceptual discussion of Muslim places of worship and related spaces, highlighting the diversity of mosque typologies in Europe, including purpose-built mosques, Islamic centres, and repurposed or informal prayer halls (muṣallà). The analysis underlined how architectural characteristics, urban location, and regulatory constraints can heighten exposure to attacks, especially in the case of converted or temporary worship spaces lacking dedicated security infrastructure. These insights fed into the identification of structural and situational vulnerabilities later used across WP2 and subsequent work packages.

Through its involvement in D2.1, IDP ensured that the historical and conceptual treatment of attacks against Muslim religious sites was grounded in both empirical evidence and sociopolitical context, contributing to a balanced, comparative assessment across religious traditions.

Historical and Trend Analysis of Attacks on Muslim Places of Worship (D2.2)

IDP further co-authored the publication "Trend Analysis of Terrorist Threats", contributing two dedicated chapters entitled "Attacks on Muslim places of worship during the 2000s" and "Attacks on Muslim places of worship during the 2010s". These chapters provided a quantitative longitudinal analysis of attacks from 2000 to 2019, forming a core component of Tasks T2.1 and T2.2.

Using incident-level data primarily derived from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and complementary open-source material, IDP conducted a systematic quantitative analysis of attacks targeting Muslim places of worship across Europe. The analysis examined frequency, geographical distribution, temporal patterns, attack modalities, perpetrator typologies, and levels of damage. Particular attention was paid to the symbolic dimension of attacks and their relationship to broader geopolitical and societal developments.

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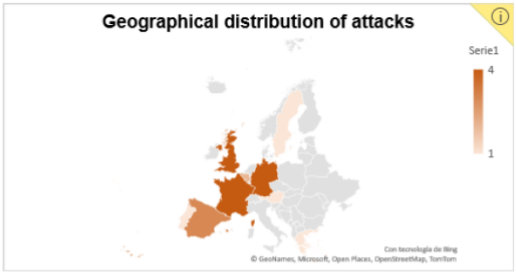

Figure 16 Geographic distribution of attacks on Muslim PoW in the 2020s

Country name	Number of cases	% of the total
Belgium	2	9.52%
UK	4	19,05%
Spain	3	14.29%
France	4	19.05%
Germany	4	19.05%
Sweden	1	4,76%
Portugal	1	4,76%
Greece	1	4,76%
Austria	1	4,76%

Table 12. Frequency and distribution of attacks on mosques in the 2020s

The analysis of the 2000s highlighted how post-9/11 dynamics shaped both jihadist-inspired violence and retaliatory or hate-driven attacks against Muslim communities. IDP's findings demonstrated that mosques increasingly became symbolic targets during periods of heightened international tension, with attacks often characterised by arson, improvised devices, and vandalism.

The chapter on the 2010s documented a shift toward a higher prevalence of far-right and hate-motivated attacks, frequently perpetrated by lone actors or small informal networks. Quantitative trends showed an increase in low-cost, opportunistic attacks, often triggered by polarising political discourse, migration debates, or terrorist incidents elsewhere in Europe. Despite relatively limited physical damage in many cases, IDP's analysis emphasised the cumulative psychological impact on Muslim communities and the normalization of hostility toward Islamic religious spaces.

Through these chapters, IDP contributed decisively to identifying medium- and long-term trends affecting Muslim places of worship, while enabling comparative analysis with attacks targeting Christian and Jewish sites.

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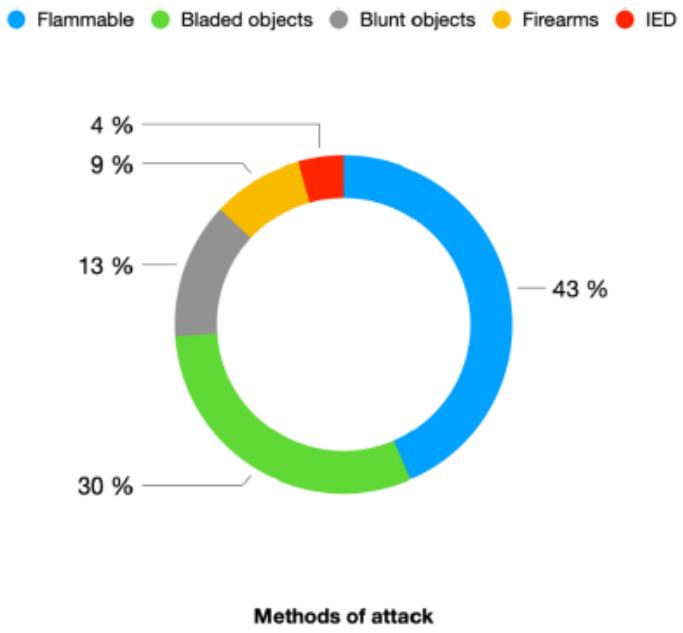

Figure 17 Methods of attacks employed on Muslim PoW in the 2020s

Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and On-site Case Study Analysis (D2.3)

In the publication, "Security Awareness for Religious Sites: Risk and Vulnerability Assessments and On-site Interviews", IDP co-authored the section addressing attacks against Muslim places of worship, with a particular focus on the vandalism incident at the Al-Ihsaan Mosque in Leuven, Belgium.

This contribution provided a qualitative, context-sensitive risk and vulnerability assessment, examining how local urban context, symbolic exposure, and limited security measures intersected to facilitate the incident. IDP analysed both structural vulnerabilities and social vulnerabilities, including limited resources for security investments and reliance on informal community protection practices.

The Leuven case study illustrated how acts of vandalism, even when non-lethal, function as instruments of intimidation and exclusion. IDP linked these findings to broader trends identified in D2.2, particularly the rise of hate-driven, low-threshold attacks against Muslim religious sites. The analysis also contributed to the identification of recurring risk factors and informed recommendations for awareness-raising, cooperation with local authorities, and tailored preventive measures.

Added Value of IDP's Contribution to WP2

Across D2.1, D2.2, and D2.3, IDP played a key role in ensuring that Muslim places of worship were robustly and systematically represented within WP2. By combining historical review, quantitative trend analysis, and qualitative vulnerability assessment, IDP strengthened the empirical and analytical foundations of the VIRTUOUS project.

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IDP's work directly informed subsequent activities in WP3 (BIM-based security recommendations) and WP4 (security awareness and training activities), ensuring that project outputs are grounded in evidence-based understanding of real-world threats and vulnerabilities. Overall, IDP's contribution enhanced the project's capacity to deliver context-sensitive, inclusive, and actionable recommendations aimed at improving the security and resilience of religious sites across Europe.

Projects Developed

CERV (FPA – SGA) – ENID Project Proposal

As part of its commitment to fostering inclusive civic engagement and promoting democratic participation among young people, the Intercultural Dialogue Platform, drawing on its experience and that of its partners in 15 EU countries, has developed and submitted a two-stage three-year project proposal entitled European Network for Inclusive Dialogue (ENID) under the CERV programme. The ENID initiative is designed to strengthen youth participation in democratic processes while promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding among diverse communities.

The ENID project aims to advance participatory and deliberative democracy by combining innovative engagement practices with a *glocalisation* methodology, bridging local and European perspectives. This approach enables participants to explore European challenges through the lens of their local communities while situating local concerns within a broader European context. Central to ENID's mission is the promotion of EU citizenship rights, and the inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented groups, including migrants, disadvantaged communities, and women, ensuring that young people from all backgrounds can actively contribute to democratic life. Through a series of participatory activities, workshops, and digital platforms, ENID facilitates meaningful dialogue and collaboration among citizens from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. The project emphasizes user-centered and community-driven approaches to create inclusive spaces for reflection, deliberation, and co-creation. By enhancing democratic literacy, civic skills, and engagement, ENID seeks to cultivate a generation of empowered and responsible citizens who are prepared to participate actively in shaping democratic communities.

ENID aligns closely with the objectives of the CERV Program, as well as broader European policy frameworks, including the European Democracy Action Plan 2020, the Defence of Democracy Package 2023, the EU Citizenship Report 2020-2023, and Articles 2, 3, and 22-24 of the TEU and TFEU. By integrating local engagement with European policy priorities, the project aims to foster a more inclusive, participatory, and interconnected Europe, where citizens, particularly youth, are equipped and motivated to uphold shared values, respect diversity, and contribute meaningfully to democratic processes.

AMIF – BE SAFE Project Proposal

Driven by its commitment to contributing to a safer society where human dignity is upheld, IDP, in collaboration with multiple NGOs, community organizations, and diaspora networks across Europe, developed and submitted the BE SAFE project proposal under the AMIF Program.

The BE SAFE project aims to address irregular migration by combining evidence-based research with targeted information and awareness-raising campaigns. It relies on audiovisual content, online and

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offline awareness-raising activities, and collaboration with trusted community actors, including religious leaders, diaspora representatives and returnees. Together, these tools facilitate the dissemination of accurate, reliable and culturally appropriate information on the risks of irregular migration and the dangers of using smugglers, while highlighting safe and viable alternatives. The project focuses on integrating these elements into a cohesive strategy specifically designed to reach at-risk populations along key migration routes.

At its core, BE SAFE seeks to influence perceptions and behaviors regarding irregular migration by providing factual, psychologically-informed, and actionable information. Through rigorous research, targeted campaigns, and community engagement, the project aspires to deliver interventions that not only raise awareness of immediate and long-term risks but also promote informed decision-making among potential migrants and their families. By doing so, BE SAFE aims to contribute to safer migration practices and reduce vulnerability to smuggling networks across origin and transit countries. Structured around three core pillars, the project planned to execute three comprehensive online campaigns complemented by offline events, aiming to reach at least nine million individuals and laying the groundwork for future initiatives in migrant integration and community support.

Despite receiving a highly positive evaluation, the project was not selected for funding due to limited resource capacity. Nonetheless, IDP remains fully dedicated to advancing initiatives in the area of migrant integration and preventing irregular migration.

AMIF – The NEW Project Proposal

As part of its relentless commitment to promoting human dignity, fostering inclusive and cohesive societies, and advancing gender equality, IDP, in partnership with several partners across Europe, including research centres, public authorities, integration services and civil society organisations, developed the NEW project under the AMIF Program. The three-year project focuses on the social and economic integration of migrant women, particularly those facing vulnerabilities such as low educational attainment, trauma, or family responsibilities, and aims to empower them while transforming the systems that affect their integration.

The NEW project seeks to enhance migrant women's integration by combining tailored support pathways, participatory approaches, and multi-stakeholder cooperation. It integrates childcare solutions, flexible training schedules, and psychosocial support to address the complex realities of trauma, family separation, and social exclusion. At its core, the project promotes inclusive, humane, and family-sensitive approaches that remove barriers to participation while fostering empowerment, resilience, and self-confidence. Central to NEW is the creation of women-only "safe spaces" that provide opportunities for mutual support, skill-building, and civic engagement in an environment free from judgment and social pressure. Through language and skills training, mentoring, peer exchange, and civic orientation, the project strengthens individual capacity while enhancing access to employment, education, and public life. All activities are co-designed with migrant women, ensuring that interventions are relevant, responsive, and reflective of lived experiences. A key innovation lies in the mentoring and empowerment network, which connects migrant women with trained mentors, professionals, and former beneficiaries, fostering guidance, emotional support, and professional inspiration. These connections boost confidence, enhance job-seeking strategies, and help women navigate complex social and institutional systems.

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The project also focuses on systemic change by strengthening cooperation among regional stakeholders, including job centres, schools, NGOs, and social services, and by providing institutional capacity-building to enhance gender sensitivity and inclusive practices in public services. By developing shared protocols, employment guides, and multi-stakeholder frameworks, NEW embeds successful practices into sustainable, long-term policies. Through knowledge transfer, digital platforms, toolkits, and open-access materials, NEW promotes scalability and replicability, while policy advocacy ensures lessons learned inform future integration strategies at both local and EU levels.

In essence, NEW will contribute to a more inclusive, gender-sensitive, and resilient integration ecosystem across Europe, acknowledging the lived realities of migrant women and placing their voices at the centre of co-created solutions. By combining individual empowerment with systemic change, the project strengthens the foundations for long-term migrant integration, inclusive societies, and equality. Results of the AMIF submission are expected in the coming months.

Horizon Europe – DISCOPE Project Proposal

The Intercultural Dialogue Platform acted as the initiator and coordinating organisation of the Horizon Europe research and innovation project "DISCOPE - Addressing Disinformation in Europe through Global Comparative Lenses". IDP was responsible for the conceptualisation, design, and drafting of the full project proposal submitted under the Horizon Europe Cluster 2 call addressing democracy, governance, and the fight against disinformation.

IDP developed DISCOPE as an interdisciplinary and comparative response to the evolving challenges posed by misinformation, disinformation, and information manipulation in Europe and beyond. IDP defined the scientific vision, overall objectives, and analytical framework of the project, positioning disinformation not only as a technological or regulatory problem but as a phenomenon deeply embedded in political culture, historical trajectories, media systems, and transnational information flows.

As lead author of the proposal, IDP drafted the core sections of Part B, including the Excellence, Impact, and Methodology chapters. In particular, IDP designed the project's innovative analytical framework, integrating political science, media studies, epistemology, and digital methods. The proposal advances a comparative approach that examines both EU and non-EU information environments, recognising the cross-border nature of contemporary disinformation and the influence of external actors on European public debate.

IDP also defined the work package architecture, ensuring coherence between foundational research (WP2), analysis of authoritarian and semi-authoritarian information systems (WP3), mapping of opposition to regulation (WP4), cross-platform disinformation dynamics (WP5), and citizen-centred innovation and education activities (WP6). The project was designed to deliver not only academic outputs, but also practical tools, including dashboards, AI-supported origin-tracing instruments, educational resources, and policy toolkits aimed at strengthening democratic resilience while safeguarding freedom of expression.

In its coordinating role, IDP assembled and structured a large, multidisciplinary consortium composed of universities, research centres, media organisations, civil society actors, and fact-checking initiatives from across Europe and neighbouring regions. IDP ensured scientific complementarity among partners

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and aligned their expertise with the project's objectives, impact pathways, and expected outcomes under Horizon Europe requirements.

Throughout the proposal, IDP placed strong emphasis on ethical governance, open science, gender sensitivity, and fundamental rights, explicitly addressing tensions between combating disinformation and protecting freedom of expression, media freedom, and academic freedom. The proposal reflects IDP's commitment to intercultural dialogue by foregrounding plural epistemological perspectives and context-sensitive regulatory approaches rather than one-size-fits-all solutions.

The DISCOPE consortium includes Western Balkans University (WBU) (Albania); University of Salzburg (PLUS) (Austria); Fundacja Levelflow (FLF) (Poland); Asociația Jurnaliștilor de Investigații Context (Romania); University of Derby (UD) (United Kingdom); KU Leuven (Belgium); University of Copenhagen (UCPH) (Denmark); Fundación Blanquerna (Spain); University of Leeds (UoL) (United Kingdom); DebunkEU (Debunk.org) (Lithuania); European Center for Populism Studies (ECPS) (Belgium); Associazione Culturale Istituto Tevere (Italy) and ARIJ – Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (Denmark).

HORIZON Europe - CIV-EE Project Proposal

Recognising the urgent need to empower young people and strengthen democratic resilience across Europe, IDP, in coordination with UCLouvain and in collaboration with several universities, research centres, educational organisations, youth networks and public authorities, developed and submitted the CIV-EE project under the Horizon Europe programme. Entitled *Civic efficacy through education: Exponentiating young people's democratic engagement through innovative civic education,* this project addresses a crucial challenge, namely that many young Europeans feel powerless to influence democratic processes, leaving them vulnerable to disengagement and reducing the effectiveness of democratic institutions.

CIV-EE aims to enhance both internal and external civic efficacy by developing, testing, and scaling innovative civic-education interventions. It combines comparative, cross-country research with in-depth case studies across seven countries (Denmark, France, Italy, Belgium, Romania, Moldova, and Colombia) to capture variation across established, reforming, fragile, and post-conflict democratic contexts. A multi-method design integrates surveys, experiments, and qualitative research, ensuring interventions are evidence-based and grounded in the lived experiences of young people. National learning labs engage youth as co-designers, ensuring that co-created tools, from deliberative and digital formats to gamified simulations, are relevant, engaging, and effective.

At its core, CIV-EE seeks to equip young people with the skills, confidence, and opportunities to participate actively in democratic life. By linking global perspectives with local engagement, the project delivers both generalisable knowledge and tailored solutions. Planned outputs include a Civic Education Toolbox and a Youth and Teacher Fellowship Scheme, providing educators, policymakers, and civil-society actors with evidence-based models to restore democratic confidence and resilience among young citizens. By fostering youth agency, participatory learning, and institutional collaboration, CIV-EE contributes to a more inclusive, vibrant, and participatory European democracy.

The results of the CIV-EE submission were recently announced. The project received an excellent score of 14/15 and is currently on the waiting list for funding. Given the importance of the subject, the

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consortium is proactively developing new initiatives to ensure that young people are equipped with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to actively shape democratic processes. These efforts aim to position youth as drivers of flourishing democracies rather than as passive or vulnerable actors, reinforcing their agency, civic efficacy, and long-term engagement in building inclusive and resilient democratic societies across Europe.

Horizon Europe - COHERE Project Proposal

Addressing hate speech, polarisation, and radicalisation is a strategic priority for the Intercultural Dialogue Platform. In line with this focus, IDP coordinated the writing of the COHERE project proposal, submitted under a Horizon Europe call. The project plans to develop innovative, proactive approaches to prevent and mitigate the societal risks linked to extremism, disinformation, and intercommunal tensions within the EU. If accepted, COHERE will represent a highly relevant and timely intervention, particularly in light of ongoing international crises whose spillover effects increasingly impact European communities.

The project proposes an interdisciplinary and forward-looking methodology, combining insights from social sciences, digital technologies, education, and interfaith dialogue. COHERE will investigate how external conflicts—such as the Russo-Ukrainian war and the Israel-Hamas escalation—contribute to societal polarisation, radicalisation, and hate speech, particularly affecting youth, minority communities, and vulnerable groups. The project aims to generate evidence-based, practical strategies for prevention that integrate technological innovation with community engagement.

Key planned innovations include an AI-powered sentiment and tension detection platform (iCOHERE) capable of monitoring online and offline narratives in real time. The tool will provide early-warning signals to policymakers, civil society actors, and community leaders, enabling proactive, context-sensitive responses. In parallel, COHERE will co-develop immersive VR educational simulations for youth and community participants, designed to foster empathy, social cohesion, and intercultural understanding. Both tools will be co-created with stakeholders to ensure relevance, accessibility, and ethical integrity.

The project also plans to implement structured and intercommunal dialogues. These will engage policymakers, educators, faith leaders, and civil society representatives in collaborative prevention strategies, while fostering interfaith and intercultural understanding among Jewish, Muslim, and Orthodox communities. These dialogues are designed to build trust, address historical grievances, and reduce tensions amplified by external crises.

By integrating research, technological tools, and community-driven dialogue, COHERE aims to strengthen EU and national capacities to anticipate, prevent, and mitigate hate speech and extremism. If funded, the project will deliver scalable, evidence-based solutions, including policy recommendations, educational frameworks, and sustainable community practices, making a long-term contribution to inclusive, cohesive, and resilient European societies.

Horizon Europe - BRIDGE Project Proposal

In 2025, the Intercultural Dialogue Platform (IDP) took on the role of coordinator of BRIDGE, a Horizon Europe Coordination and Support Action developed under the Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society

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Cluster. The proposal addresses one of the most pressing and complex challenges facing Europe today: climate-induced migration and its implications for governance, social cohesion, and policy-making.

Climate change increasingly acts as a multiplier of displacement, placing pressure on local, regional, and national governance systems. Yet existing policy responses remain fragmented, often lacking integrated data, anticipatory tools, and meaningful participation of affected communities. BRIDGE was designed to respond to this gap by proposing an interdisciplinary, participatory, and data-informed governance framework that strengthens Europe's capacity to anticipate and manage climate-related mobility.

As coordinator, IDP led the overall concept development, consortium building, and strategic positioning of the proposal. The project brings together universities, civil society organisations, and policy-oriented partners from across Europe to co-create inclusive governance frameworks with migrants, civil society actors, and public authorities. A core innovation of BRIDGE lies in its ambition to link FAIR-compliant climate, socio-economic, and mobility data with AI-enhanced decision-support tools, enabling evidence-based hotspot mapping, forecasting, and collaborative policy design.

The proposal foresees pilot validation in three complementary contexts—Greece as an entry region, Poland as a border context, and Belgium as a destination country—ensuring that outcomes are grounded in real-world governance challenges. Key deliverables include transferable governance models, practical toolkits, and a Strategic Roadmap to inform future EU policy and research agendas.

Through BRIDGE, IDP reinforces its role as a trusted civil society coordinator capable of bridging research, policy, and lived experience. The proposal reflects IDP's long-standing commitment to inclusive governance, social dialogue, and evidence-based policy innovation, while contributing directly to EU priorities such as the European Green Deal, the Climate Adaptation Strategy, and the New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

Horizon Europe - MSCA Actions Program - CIVITA Project Proposal (Industrial Doctorate)

Recognizing the urgent need to empower young people and strengthen democratic resilience in Europe, IDP, in coordination with UCLouvain, developed and submitted the CIVITA Industrial Doctoral Network under the Horizon Europe - MSCA Actions Program. The project brought together a very large, multi-stakeholder consortium, including several universities, NGOs, public authorities, research centres, dialogue institutions, civil society organizations, youth education centres, and partners from the tech and digital industries.

Among other features, what makes the CIVITA project unique is that it establishes one of the first industrial doctoral initiatives in the field of social and political sciences, an area where industrial doctorates are rarely implemented and traditionally more common in the exact sciences (such as biology, chemistry or engineering). The consortium believes that it will be highly beneficial to offer doctoral students structured exposure to non-academic and industrial sectors, thereby fostering stronger connections between research and practice, improving the social relevance of their work, and promoting innovative approaches to civic engagement and democratic resilience.

CIVITA responds to the challenges posed by rising polarization, declining trust, and rapidly evolving digital information environments. Young people, in particular, navigate fragmented civic spaces that

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weaken engagement and deepen social divisions, while traditional academic and sectoral training remains insufficient to equip them to respond effectively. Through fifteen doctoral projects organized into four thematic clusters, CIVITA advances comparative, experimental, and practice-based research on civic education, democratic participation, digital fragmentation, and societal resilience. The program combines rigorous methodological training with hands-on experimentation through 18-month secondments in civic-tech organizations, ministries, NGOs, educational institutes, community partners, and industry settings. Doctoral researchers co-design civic tools, evaluate participatory practices, analyse digital threats, develop arts-based and interactive learning methods, and generate evidence-based policy recommendations. The network-wide training programme integrates mixed-methods research, digital skills, intercultural dialogue, inclusive pedagogy, participatory evaluation, and ethical data practices.

By embedding co-supervision, open science, interdisciplinary learning, and practitioner engagement across all activities, CIVITA functions as a living laboratory for civic innovation. Its planned outputs, including datasets, toolkits, scalable pedagogical frameworks, and policy briefs, will strengthen democratic resilience, enhance civic competencies across Europe, and support public institutions in designing inclusive, future-oriented democratic processes.

The results of the MSCA Industrial Doctorate application are expected in the coming months. Meanwhile, reaffirming its commitment and recognising the importance of empowering young researchers to address pressing democratic challenges, the consortium is actively developing complementary initiatives to ensure that doctoral students acquire the skills, experience and networks necessary to effectively bridge the gap between research and practice. These efforts aim to position researchers as key contributors to strengthening civic engagement, democratic resilience and innovative solutions in Europe, promoting long-term impact by connecting academic knowledge with the needs of civil society, public institutions and the broader industrial and digital technology sector.

Horizon Europe - MSCA Actions Program – MinDs Project Proposal (DN)

Submitted under the Horizon Europe – MSCA Actions Program, the Multilingual and Inclusive Deliberations (MInDs) Doctoral Network addresses the challenges of democratic participation in linguistically diverse societies. Democracy in Europe is increasingly lived across languages, yet little is known about how multilingual deliberation functions in practice, who benefits, who is excluded, and how technology can support inclusion without deepening inequalities. MInDs brings together political scientists, linguists, sociologists, interpreters, and AI experts to explore these questions while training fourteen PhD researchers to study, improve, and rethink democratic participation in multilingual contexts.

The project is organized around three core challenges: (1) understanding how multilingual deliberation works for citizens and interpreters, identifying enablers and barriers; (2) enhancing these processes through institutional design, trustworthy AI tools, and inclusive communication practices; (3) extending deliberation to difficult contexts, such as online hate speech, indigenous participation, and polarized or post-conflict settings. The network combines qualitative fieldwork, surveys, behavioural experiments, digital ethnography, and AI-assisted analysis of multimodal debates. Through collaboration with deliberative organizations, public institutions, and technology partners, each PhD researcher gains access to real-world multilingual assemblies, mini-publics, and deliberative formats across Europe.

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IDP participates as an associated partner, hosting six-month secondments and contributing to the delivery of training in its areas of expertise relevant to the doctoral students. The project aligns closely with IDP's mission of strengthening civic engagement and democracy, providing new evidence, accessible tools, and human-centred technologies to design democratic spaces where all participants can speak, listen, and be heard, regardless of language or background.

The results of the MInDs MSCA application are expected in the coming months, with IDP remaining keenly interested in exploring opportunities and supporting initiatives that bridge research and practice, strengthen democratic participation, and enable citizens across Europe to engage meaningfully in democratic processes.

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EVENTS

Events Organised

Annual Intercultural Iftar Dinner at the European Parliament Celebrates Unity and Resilience

Intercultural Dialogue Platform, along with several civil society organizations, organized the Annual Intercultural Iftar Dinner on the evening of March 26 at the European Parliament, bringing together distinguished guests, policymakers, faith leaders, and civil society representatives to celebrate unity in diversity and the power of solidarity in addressing today's challenges. Hosted by MEP Kathleen Van Brempt, this year's theme, *Building Resilience in Solidarity in the Face of Challenges*, highlighted the importance of collective strength and cooperation in an increasingly polarized world.

The evening began with a warm welcome from the hosts. The program included a series of keynote speeches by prominent figures, starting with the event's host, MEP Kathleen Van Brempt, who highlighted the European Parliament's commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion, emphasizing the vital role of dialogue in addressing challenges and strengthening our democracies. Mehmet Bayrak, Executive Director of the Intercultural Dialogue Platform, followed with insights on the importance of fostering intercultural understanding. MEP Rudi Kennes reflected on the spiritual significance of Ramadan for Muslim and underscored our collective responsibility to build a future of peace and justice in Europe.

Further contributions came from Father Bernd Günther from Chapel for Europe, who highlighted the role of faith in fostering unity, and Temir Naziri from Arco Forum, who emphasized the significance of

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intercultural dialogue. Vincent Depaigne, Coordinator for the dialogue with religious and non-confessional organizations at the European Commission, provided insights into the European approach to fostering mutual understanding. Dr. Cenap Aydin from Istituto Tevere elaborated on the role of interfaith initiatives in strengthening social harmony. Rumi Unal, Vice-President of Cohesion, discussed the importance of civil society in promoting dialogue, while Anny Hesius, Dialogue Coordinator at New Humanity of the Focolare Movement, shared perspectives on community engagement and cooperation.

Breaking Fast Together

As the *Adhan*, or call to prayer, resonated through the hall, following a moment of common prayer, guests gathered to break their fast, symbolizing the spirit of inclusivity and shared humanity that defines Ramadan. The dinner setting encouraged an atmosphere of warmth and dialogue, allowing attendees to connect beyond their differences and engage in meaningful conversations.

Meanwhile, as participants enjoyed their meals, the *Dostaki Duo* captivated the audience with a mesmerizing live performance, blending rhythms and melodies from Greece, Turkey, and the Balkans. Their music transcended language and cultural barriers, uniting people in harmony and joy, and powerfully reinforcing the evening's message of unity.

Engaging the Community

A special highlight of the evening was the *Dialogue Seeds* initiative, where guests received plantable cards as a symbolic gesture of nurturing trust and cooperation. Participants were encouraged to plant these seeds and care for them, much like how we nurture relationships and cultivate a more resilient and united community.

The evening continued with guest interventions, where attendees shared their reflections, followed by a time for networking over coffee and delicious desserts. This provided yet another opportunity for inspired conversations, leaving participants motivated to continue building bridges between cultures.

In a Europe that faces increasing social and political challenges, events like this Intercultural Iftar Dinner play a vital role in promoting dialogue and fostering resilience through solidarity. The spirit in which the Annual Iftar was organized at the European Parliament, the very House of Democracy for Europe, sends a powerful message of unity, togetherness, and inclusivity. Now more than ever, it is crucial to see those around us as people first, regardless of their convictions, political views, religions, ethnicity, or colour. The true power of dialogue and inclusion lies in embracing the other, especially when we hold differing opinions, yet manage to express them freely with mutual respect and understanding. Living together in Europe, and in smaller communities, does not mean we must all be the same; rather, it requires that we respect our differences and learn from one another's perspectives, enriching our collective experience. With an eye on the future, we hope to see you with us again next year. In the meantime, we encourage you to continue planting *dialogue seeds*, nurturing understanding, and fostering connections in your own communities.

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Building Bridges Through Dialogue: Highlights from the Dialogue Summit in Bucharest

In a world marked by growing polarization and rising social fragmentation – even in the most established democracies – the Dialogue Summit in Bucharest offered a timely and powerful response: dialogue as a method to rebuild connection, foster understanding, and navigate complexity.

Held from *May 14 to 18*, the summit brought together more than 270 participants and dialogue practitioners from at least 38 countries across all continents for an inspiring and productive week of exchange, reflection, and collaboration. This global gathering highlighted a shared recognition and common conviction: that meaningful, inclusive dialogue is vital for fostering resilient, democratic, and peaceful societies.

The Dialogue Summit officially opened on May 14 with a Welcoming and Opening Ceremony that set the tone for the days ahead. On May 15, participants enjoyed a cultural visit to the historic city of Constanța, offering a valuable opportunity for informal networking and cross-cultural connection. The core of the summit unfolded over three intensive days (May 16–18) at the International Informatics High School, featuring a rich program of panels, workshops, and presentations of good practices.

In the main conference hall, three high-profile panels brought together renowned academics, activists, leaders and practitioners to explore the challenges and possibilities of dialogue in increasingly divided societies. Around these plenary moments, a wide variety of interactive workshops and practical sessions showcased methods for engaging communities, addressing sensitive issues, and fostering sustained civic participation.

As a co-organiser, IDP was proud to contribute by presenting two recent EU-funded projects – Protone and Citizen Z – in the good practice sessions, and by facilitating the workshop “Engaging Citizens in Meaningful Dialogue on Polarizing Issues.” The workshop created space to exchange tools and insights on how dialogue can move beyond disagreement to foster shared understanding and collective action.

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What emerged across all sessions was a common insight: dialogue is not simply about talking – it is about listening with intention, creating trust, and enabling transformation. In today's volatile climate, dialogue stands as one of the most powerful tools we have to reconnect people, bridge ideological divides, and reimagine democratic life from the ground up.
The Dialogue Summit in Bucharest was not just an event – it was a statement of purpose. It affirmed that around the world, there is a growing movement ready to lean into complexity, build bridges across difference, and place human connection back at the heart of public life.

Roundtable with Vincent Parillo

On May 26, Intercultural Dialogue Platform hosted Prof Vincent Parillo – an award-winning author, documentary producer, screenwriter, and visiting professor at several universities – for an engaging roundtable discussion. Raised in Paterson, New Jersey, a city known for its cultural diversity, Mr. Parillo has long been interested in how different communities coexist and interact. His book *Hearts and Minds: Hizmet Schools and Interethnic Relations* explores the role of Hizmet schools in fostering interethnic and interfaith harmony across various countries, based on interviews with students, parents, and educators.

Speaking to an audience of students and young professionals, Mr. Parillo began by outlining the methodology of his research. Grounded in Strauss's *negotiated order theory*, his work is based on the idea that people shape meaning through social interaction and achieve shared goals via structured organizations. In this context, Hizmet schools function not merely as institutions of academic learning but as environments where character development and ethical leadership are actively cultivated.

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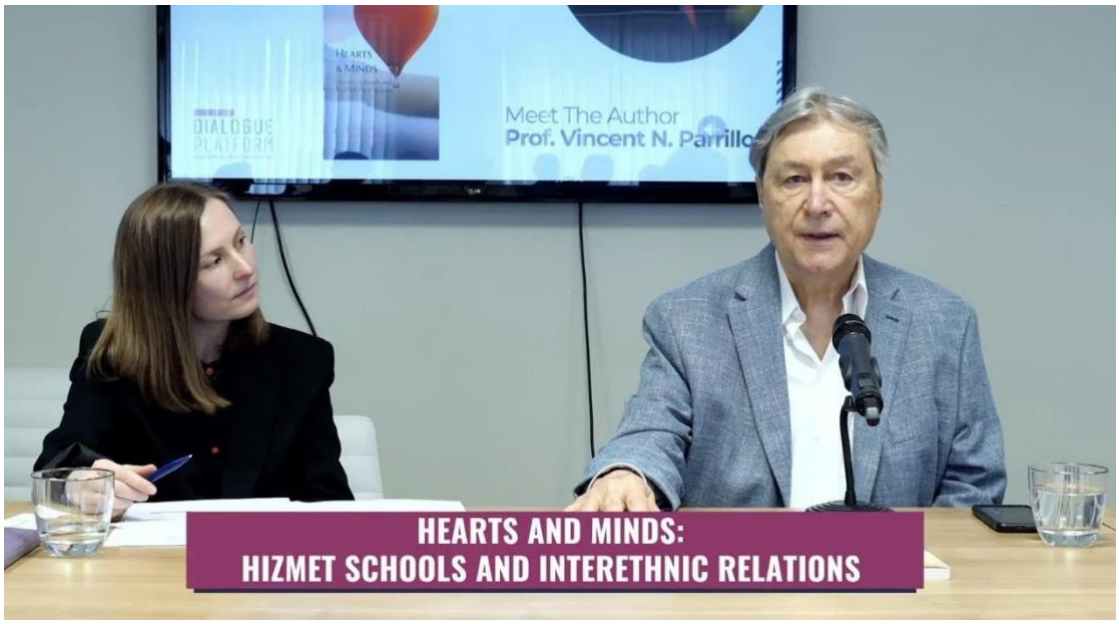

Mr. Parillo made a clear distinction between the roles of a teacher and an educator. While a teacher may focus on delivering academic content, an educator embodies the values they wish to impart, acting as a role model for students. In Hizmet schools, he observed that educators play a central role in shaping the students' moral and intellectual growth by practising what they teach. This consistency between principle and practice allows students to internalise values like empathy, responsibility, and cooperation. He shared several examples from his fieldwork, including a story about a student who had initially faced exclusion from his peers. Thanks to the timely and sensitive intervention of teachers, the situation was transformed into a positive experience, with the student eventually forming strong friendships. Mr. Parillo emphasised the importance of teachers' and administrators' proactive engagement in resolving conflicts and fostering a school climate that promotes dialogue and inclusivity.

Another feature of Hizmet schools that left a strong impression on Mr. Parillo was their emphasis on STEM education. He noted that many students from these schools excel in science and technology, often earning awards in national and international competitions. This success, he explained, stems from a curriculum that values innovation and scientific inquiry.

Finally, Mr. Parillo highlighted the inclusive and pluralistic approach to religion in Hizmet schools. Rather than being a source of division, religion is presented as a means of mutual enrichment. This perspective, he argued, helps build bridges between different communities, fostering respect and cooperation across ethnic and religious lines.

After his speech, he answered questions from the audience. The roundtable concluded with a group photo.

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Dialogue Summit 2025, Madrid

From 4 to 7 July 2025, the Intercultural Dialogue Platform (IDP) co-organised and actively contributed to the Dialogue Summit 2025 in Madrid, a four-day European gathering dedicated to intercultural and interreligious dialogue in the context of growing social polarisation, extremism, and intolerance. Hosted by Arco Forum at the Mariapolis Luminosa Centre in Las Rozas (Madrid), the Summit brought together civil society actors, academics, faith leaders, and dialogue practitioners from seven European countries, reaffirming dialogue as both a value and a practical tool for peaceful coexistence in Europe.

A European Space for Reflection and Exchange

The Dialogue Summit functioned as a laboratory for ideas and practice, combining three thematic seminars, twelve interactive workshops, and a session of good practices, complemented by socio-cultural and intercultural activities. IDP participated as a co-organiser, contributing to the overall conceptual framing of the event, as well as through presentations, facilitation, and moderation across several sessions.

The Summit opened on Friday evening with the arrival of participants and an informal welcome designed to foster trust and connection from the outset. The opening screening of the documentary *EXODUS*, portraying the forced displacement of individuals persecuted in Türkiye, set a reflective tone for the days ahead. The film prompted collective discussion on exile, resilience, and human dignity—key themes that would resonate throughout the Summit.

Dialogue as a Response to Polarisation

Saturday focused on the role of dialogue in societies experiencing increasing polarisation. The first seminar explored the ethical and social foundations of dialogue-based approaches to coexistence, peace, and education. Contributions highlighted the importance of service-oriented civic engagement, shared values, and inclusive narratives as antidotes to division.

During the first round of workshops, IDP played a direct facilitating role. One of the central sessions, *"Transforming Vision into Action"*, led by IDP representatives, guided participants in translating abstract commitments to dialogue into concrete, actionable initiatives. Through participatory methods, attendees worked collaboratively to identify practical responses to social fragmentation, emphasising grassroots engagement, cooperation across differences, and sustainability of dialogue practices.

A second seminar in the afternoon addressed dialogue in relation to polarisation, extremism, and intolerance, bringing together religious leaders, social experts, and academics from different European contexts. Moderated discussions demonstrated how dialogue can function not only as an interpersonal tool, but also as a policy-relevant approach to social cohesion.

The day concluded with a session on European good practices in dialogue, education, and culture, where IDP-related initiatives and projects were presented alongside other inspiring examples. Cultural exchange activities- including the sharing of *Aşure*, a traditional dish symbolising diversity and coexistence - reinforced dialogue as a lived experience rather than a purely theoretical concept.

Applied Dialogue and Skills Building

Sunday shifted the focus toward applied dialogue, with a new round of workshops addressing concrete challenges such as disinformation, interreligious cooperation, and value-based civic engagement. IDP contributed to discussions examining how misinformation undermines intercultural understanding and how dialogue-driven educational tools can strengthen resilience against polarising narratives.

A plenary session later in the day brought together perspectives from different European countries, allowing participants to reflect collectively on the current state of dialogue across Europe. The exchange culminated in the identification of future lines of action, reinforcing the Summit's forward-looking orientation. A special contribution by a senior European diplomat underlined that dialogue is not a sign of weakness, but a strategic necessity for safeguarding democratic values and human dignity.

The programme also integrated the cultural and historical dimensions of coexistence through a guided exploration of Madrid's Islamic and medieval heritage, connecting contemporary dialogue efforts with Europe's long history of pluralism.

Toledo: Living History of Coexistence

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On Monday, the Summit concluded with an intercultural visit to Toledo, a city historically emblematic of coexistence among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities. Visiting sites such as the Mosque of Cristo de la Luz, the Church of San Salvador, and the Synagogue of Santa María la Blanca allowed participants to experience dialogue through historical memory, architecture, and shared heritage.

IDP's Contribution and Strategic Value

IDP's role at the Dialogue Summit 2025 went beyond participation. As co-organiser, presenter, and workshop facilitator, IDP helped shape both the intellectual direction and the practical outcomes of the event. The Summit aligned closely with IDP's mission to promote intercultural dialogue, social cohesion, and participatory approaches to addressing societal challenges in Europe.

The Madrid Dialogue Summit strengthened existing European partnerships, fostered new collaborations, and generated shared reflections that will inform IDP's future projects, advocacy work, and policy engagement. Above all, it reaffirmed dialogue as a transformative practice—one that builds trust, nurtures empathy, and lays the groundwork for a more inclusive and peaceful Europe.

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Panel discussion with the Moldovan Technical University Delegation as part of a 3-day study visit in Brussels

As part of its active work with young people and its EU-level engagement with policymakers and institutions, IDP hosted on 26 November 2025 a delegation of 15 representatives from the Moldovan Technical University, including professors and students visiting Brussels for a three-day study programme aimed at gaining a practical understanding of how the EU works – how institutions and stakeholders interact, make decisions, and shape policies. The visit took place from 24 to 26 November and formed part of a wider initiative supporting Moldova's EU accession efforts and promoting the active engagement of the country's young generation in European affairs.

The aim of this activity was to equip participants with direct exposure to the EU policy ecosystem and to help them bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world institutional practice. As an EU candidate country making steady progress in aligning with European policies and standards, it is essential for Moldovan students and young professionals to build a nuanced understanding of how Brussels functions. The study visit therefore sought to familiarise participants with the daily operations of EU institutions, the role of sector-specific stakeholders, and the broader dynamics that influence policy development, particularly in areas relevant to Moldova's economic outlook, including agribusiness and sustainable development.

The panel discussion hosted by IDP opened with introductory remarks from Tudor Enache (Coordinator, Moldova EU-Club) and Nicoleta Golovaci (Mission of the Republic of Moldova to the EU), who provided an overview of Moldova's ongoing EU integration efforts and highlighted the crucial role of youth engagement in European dialogue. The session continued with a series of expert presentations, each followed by an interactive Q&A. Alessandro Piccione (FoodDrinkEurope) offered insights into EU environmental policy and circular economy trends; Ivan Ginga (European Research Executive Agency) presented an institutional perspective on EU research and innovation frameworks, with a particular focus on MSCA Actions and the opportunities they provide for young researchers across Europe; and finally, Ludmila Malai (Intercultural Dialogue Platform) shared experiences from EU-funded project implementation, research activities, and project development processes.

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The delegation demonstrated a high level of engagement throughout the discussion, expressing strong interest in learning more about EU funding mechanisms and opportunities to build expertise in proposal development, as well as ways to increase awareness of these programmes among Moldovan professors and students. The event successfully enabled a meaningful exchange between Moldovan students and EU-level practitioners, reinforcing IDP's mission to promote youth participation, support the European integration efforts of candidate countries, and expand access to hands-on learning about EU policymaking.

Events Contributed

The Joint EU-Bahrain Conference on October 28-29

In 2025, the Intercultural Dialogue Platform actively contributed to high-level international dialogue on Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) through its participation as speaker and contributor in the Joint EU–Bahrain Conference on "Ensuring Freedom of Religion and Belief: The Practice of Promoting Coexistence", held on 28–29 October 2025 in Brussels. The conference was jointly organised by the King Hamad Global Center for Coexistence and Tolerance and the European Union, building on the successful "Manama FoRB Encounters" held in 2022 and 2023.

The conference brought together policy-makers, government representatives, religious and non-religious leaders, academics, civil society actors, and technology experts from Europe, the Gulf region, and beyond. Its overarching objective was to advance concrete and actionable recommendations for a joint EU–Bahrain roadmap to strengthen the implementation of FoRB at regional and global levels, with a particular and timely focus on countering hate speech while safeguarding freedom of expression.

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IDP contributed substantively to the conference through the participation of Ms. Ludmila Malai, EU Project Manager at Intercultural Dialogue Platform, as a speaker in the breakout session "Education, Awareness and Cultural Diplomacy." This session examined practical ways in which educational institutions, public bodies, and cultural initiatives can foster respect for religious and belief diversity, prevent the curtailment of FoRB, and protect societies from hateful and divisive narratives. IDP shared its experience in designing and implementing intercultural and interreligious initiatives at the European level, highlighting the importance of inclusive institutional practices, targeted training programmes, and cross-sector cooperation.

Across keynote speeches, panel discussions, and workshops, the conference explored key themes highly relevant to IDP's mission, including safeguarding FoRB in diverse societies, preventing hate speech and hate crime, strengthening education and awareness, and assessing the opportunities and risks posed by artificial intelligence. The discussions underscored the need for coordinated action among governments, civil society, educators, and the private sector to build resilient communities grounded in dignity, equality, and mutual respect.

IDP's participation reinforced its role as a trusted contributor to European and international policy conversations on intercultural dialogue, human rights, and social cohesion. The conference also provided valuable opportunities for network-building and partnership development, contributing to ongoing collaboration with EU institutions, international organisations, and civil society partners. Through its engagement, IDP helped shape policy-relevant discussions and supported the collective

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effort to translate dialogue into concrete actions that promote coexistence and the broad enjoyment of Freedom of Religion and Belief.

Roundtable 'Invisible Influencers'

Dialogue platform hosted the roundtable organised by Inclusive Europe and De Montfort University (DMU) in Brussels as part of the SMIDGE Project, bringing together journalists, researchers, and civil society representatives to examine how disinformation narratives target middle-aged audiences and how journalism can respond more responsibly.

Dr. Sara Wilford (DMU), Scientific Coordinator of the SMIDGE Project, highlighted the importance of dialogue with people aged 45–65, a demographic that is often overlooked in media research and practice. While younger audiences have received significant attention, middle-aged groups are frequently assumed rather than properly understood, creating vulnerabilities to misleading or extremist narratives.

The discussion focused on practical challenges journalists face when reporting on radicalisation and disinformation. Participants noted the pressure of fast-paced news cycles, editorial demands, and algorithm-driven platforms, which can encourage oversimplification or unintentional amplification of harmful content. The growing influence of AI and limited transparency around platform algorithms were also raised as key concerns, alongside the need for clearer guidance on language use and editorial standards when covering extremist and counter-extremist narratives.

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The roundtable concluded with reflections on the responsibility of journalists, policymakers, and influencers - many of whom belong to the same age group under discussion - and a presentation of upcoming SMIDGE dissemination activities. Organisers emphasised the need for continued collaboration between media professionals, researchers, and civil society to ensure that project findings translate into practical tools that strengthen democratic resilience in Europe.

4th Intercultural Christmas Celebration "Together, Let Us Dare Hope"

On Saturday, 13 December 2025, the Intercultural Dialogue Platform (IDP) co-organised the 4th edition of the Intercultural Christmas Celebration, held at Centrum Eenheid. The event brought together nearly 80 participants from civil society organisations and the academic community for an evening of encounter, reflection, and dialogue.

Held under the theme "Together, Let Us Dare Hope", the celebration offered a warm and inclusive space to reaffirm shared values of peace, hope, and living together, at a time when public discourse is often marked by polarisation, misunderstanding, and social tension. Rooted in the spirit of Christmas, the evening emphasised that hope is not a passive sentiment, but a collective commitment nurtured through dialogue, mutual respect, and concrete human connection.

The event was organised by Fedactio, in close collaboration with Intercultural Dialogue Platform, La Chapelle pour l'Europe, Focolari Movement, El Kalima, Women of Faith, and Intouch. This broad partnership reflected the diversity and complementarity of actors committed to fostering interreligious and intercultural dialogue in Belgium and beyond.

Throughout the evening, participants engaged in moments of attentive listening, informal exchange, and shared reflection, creating an atmosphere of trust and openness. The diversity of convictions and

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backgrounds present did not dilute the sense of unity; rather, it reinforced the idea that pluralism, when approached with sincerity and humility, becomes a source of mutual enrichment and social cohesion.

In a societal context where fear and misunderstanding can easily take root, this interreligious Christmas celebration served as a concrete reminder of the power of proximity—of coming together not to debate differences, but to recognise shared humanity. For IDP, the event was fully aligned with its mission to promote dialogue as a lived practice, grounded in everyday encounters and collective experiences.

Beyond its symbolic dimension, the celebration strengthened relationships among partner organisations and participants, contributing to a growing network of trust-based cooperation. The strong engagement and positive feedback confirmed the relevance of creating recurring, inclusive spaces where dialogue is embodied through presence, hospitality, and shared moments.

The 4th Intercultural Christmas Celebration thus stood not only as a festive gathering, but as a meaningful act of civic and social engagement—affirming that hope, when shared, becomes a driving force for peaceful coexistence and a more inclusive society.

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Empowering Young Leaders: IDP's Contributions at GYLP 2025 Session on Global Youth Leadership

In 2025, the Intercultural Dialogue Platform (IDP) proudly contributed to the JWF Global Youth Leadership Programme (GYLP), a dynamic initiative designed to empower emerging leaders from around the world. GYLP brings together youth from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds to engage with experts, diplomats, and scholars on global challenges, with a particular focus on advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As part of Session 6, themed *Global Youth Leadership and Empowerment Programs*, Ludmila Malai, EU Project Manager at IDP, addressed participants on June 26, delivering a presentation entitled *Youth Leadership in Times of Extreme Polarization and Conflict: Practical Observations from the Citizen Z Project*. In her remarks, Ms. Malai highlighted the critical role young leaders play in fostering peaceful and inclusive communities, particularly in contexts of social division and conflict. Drawing from IDP's extensive experience in youth engagement and intercultural dialogue, she shared best practices for youth empowerment and outlined opportunities available within intergovernmental organizations across Europe.

IDP's participation provided program participants with valuable insights into building sustainable, youth-led initiatives that address social, economic, and environmental challenges. The presentation emphasized practical approaches for translating knowledge into action, fostering collaboration, and leveraging global platforms for meaningful impact. By engaging with young representatives from 16

countries, IDP contributed to the creation of an interactive learning environment that promoted cross-cultural understanding, leadership development, and experiential learning.

Through initiatives like GYLP, IDP continues to demonstrate its commitment to nurturing the next generation of global leaders. By sharing expertise and facilitating access to international networks, IDP strengthens the capacity of youth to act as agents of change, advancing inclusive, sustainable, and resilient communities worldwide.

PUBLICATIONS AND DISSEMINATION

Citizen Z Booklet, May 2025

In 2025, the Intercultural Dialogue Platform (IDP) concluded and capitalised on the Citizen Z – Strengthening the Participation of Young Citizens in Democratic and Civic Life project (2022–2024) through the creation and publication of a comprehensive results and recommendations booklet. Published in May 2025, the booklet consolidates the outcomes of a large-scale, multi-country participatory process and serves as a lasting policy and advocacy resource on youth civic engagement in Europe.

Citizen Z was designed in response to growing youth disengagement from democratic and political life across the EU. The project aimed to reimagine civic participation by placing young people at the centre of decision-making processes and equipping them with the knowledge, tools, and spaces needed to engage meaningfully with democratic institutions at local, national, and European levels.

IDP's booklet captures the vision, methodology, findings, and policy recommendations of the project in a structured and accessible format. It documents how Citizen Z engaged young people in Belgium, Italy, Croatia, and the Netherlands through a two-round deliberative model: local-level deliberations focused on everyday challenges, followed by European-level dialogues connecting these concerns to EU policies and institutions. The publication highlights the project's innovative use of participatory methods, including citizens' assemblies, juries, deliberative polls, workshops, and youth-led consultations.

A central feature of the booklet is the inclusion of country spotlights, giving visibility to young people's voices and priorities. Across the four countries, youth identified key challenges and proposed solutions in areas such as housing and urban development, education and civic literacy, youth centres and wellbeing, social justice, inclusion, and anti-discrimination. These inputs were synthesised by IDP into a coherent set of policy recommendations, calling for expanded social housing, EU-wide civic education frameworks, investment in youth-friendly and inclusive spaces, and stronger structures for youth participation in policymaking.

The booklet also documents the scale and impact of Citizen Z, with over 1,400 direct participants and more than 135,000 individuals reached indirectly, spanning 22 EU Member States and several non-EU countries. It reflects the project's strong visibility at international and EU-level events, including the *Deliberative Democracy Days* in Brussels, EU Regions Week, and United Nations conferences in New York. In addition, the publication recognises the role of the Youth Advocacy Team, established by IDP to ensure sustained youth leadership and ownership throughout the project.

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By creating this booklet, IDP ensured that the outcomes of Citizen Z extend beyond the project's lifetime. The publication functions as both a record of participatory democratic practice and a practical policy tool for institutions, civil society, educators, and decision-makers. It reinforces IDP's commitment to strengthening democratic participation, fostering inclusion, and ensuring that young people are recognised as active contributors to Europe's present and future, not merely as beneficiaries of policy.

Recommendation Paper for the 2026-2030 EU Anti-Racism Strategy, June 2025

In 2025, the Intercultural Dialogue Platform (IDP) made a significant policy contribution at European level through the drafting and publication of a Recommendation Paper for the 2026–2030 EU Anti-Racism Strategy, released in June 2025. This paper reflects IDP's long-standing commitment to combating racism, discrimination, and intolerance through dialogue, inclusion, and participatory policymaking.

The recommendation paper addresses the urgent rise of anti-Muslim hatred in Europe, drawing on the latest evidence from the 2024 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) report, Being Muslim in the EU. The data highlights alarming trends, including increased discrimination in employment, education, housing, and access to public services, as well as widespread hate-motivated harassment and underreporting due to low trust in institutions. Particular attention is given to the compounded discrimination faced by Muslim women, especially those wearing visible religious symbols, and to concerns around ethnic and religious profiling.

Building on this evidence base and IDP's extensive field experience, the paper puts forward four strategic pillars to be integrated into the next EU Anti-Racism Strategy:

- Strengthening institutional support for dialogue-based initiatives, recognising intercultural and interfaith dialogue as essential tools for reducing prejudice, fostering social cohesion, and closing the gap in meaningful social interaction between communities.
- Ensuring inclusive and participatory policy development, by involving Muslim communities and other affected groups directly in the design, implementation, and evaluation of anti-racism policies through structured consultations and citizens' panels.
- Introducing local monitoring and feedback mechanisms, including community-based reporting and accountability structures, to improve trust in institutions and ensure that anti-racism measures respond effectively to local realities.
- Promoting positive and accurate narratives in media and public discourse, through collaboration with journalists, media regulators, and civil society to counter negative stereotypes, support responsible reporting, and amplify diverse voices.

A core contribution of the paper is its emphasis on dialogue and social interaction as practical responses to anti-Muslim hatred. Drawing on IDP's own initiatives, such as citizens' dialogues, intercultural community events, and shared religious and cultural gatherings, the paper demonstrates how community-based encounters can humanise differences, reduce stereotypes, and strengthen a sense of belonging. It also highlights the importance of education, cultural competency training, and media engagement as complementary tools for long-term change.

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Through this recommendation paper, IDP positioned itself as a policy-relevant civil society actor, bridging grassroots experience with EU-level strategic thinking. The document contributes concrete, actionable guidance to EU institutions and Member States, ensuring that the voices and lived experiences of Muslim communities are reflected in future anti-racism policies. This work reinforces IDP's mission to promote social cohesion, democratic participation, and fundamental rights across Europe, and underlines its continued engagement in shaping inclusive, evidence-based, and dialogue-driven European policies.

Virtuous publications

The project has produced several key scientific and technical outputs addressing the protection of places of worship and religious communities. These include:

- D2.1 - Report on the Comprehensive Review of Past Terrorist Attacks, providing a structured overview of attacks against places of worship across Europe;
- D2.2 - Trend Analysis of Terrorist Threats, analysing long-term trends, attack modalities, and threat evolutions, including quantitative assessments;
- D2.3 - Security Awareness for Religious Sites: Risk and Vulnerability Assessments and On-site Interviews, focusing on risk profiles, vulnerabilities, and in-depth case studies across different religious contexts.

In addition, the project has produced complementary analytical and methodological outputs supporting security recommendations, awareness-raising, and training activities developed in subsequent work packages.

These publications are currently being finalised and prepared for dissemination and will be published soon on the official VIRTUOUS website and the VIRTUOUS online portal, where they will be accessible to stakeholders, practitioners, researchers, and policy makers.

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PARTICIPATION IN EXTERNAL EVENTS

Fedactio's New Year's Reception and 15th Anniversary Celebration

On Monday, 27 January, the Fedactio hosted its New Year's Reception at the Thon Hotel Brussels, marking a significant milestone: 15 years of civic engagement, dialogue, and social action. The Intercultural Dialogue Platform (IDP) was pleased to participate in this festive and reflective gathering, which brought together guests from the fields of culture, education, media, and civil society.

The evening offered a moment to look back on Fedactio's rich journey, illustrated through a video highlighting more than 400 activities carried out over the past 15 years in areas such as education, social cohesion, arts and culture, women's empowerment, and intercultural and interreligious dialogue. This diversity of action, repeatedly underlined by speakers, reflects a shared vision strongly aligned with IDP's own mission and values.

Several long-standing partners and stakeholders shared their perspectives on Fedactio's impact. Ides Nicaise (KU Leuven) stressed the crucial role of organisations like Fedactio in fostering dialogue between cultures and communities, particularly through education. His testimony illustrated how educational engagement can open pathways to broader social understanding and cooperation.

Focolari Movement representative Chriss Hoffman highlighted the transformative power of dialogue and the importance of sharing religious and cultural moments. He referred to initiatives such as

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interreligious Christmas dinners and Iftar gatherings as concrete examples of how celebrating together strengthens bonds and mutual trust—an approach consistently supported and promoted by IDP.

A particularly moving moment was the personal testimony of Abdulaziz Atannour, a former student of Collège des Étoiles, a school affiliated with Fedactio. He spoke about the decisive role his teachers and school community played in his personal development, helping him grow into a confident individual grounded in respect, openness, and responsibility toward others.

Looking ahead, the reception also served as a platform to introduce future-oriented initiatives. Alexandre Thiry, Project Coordinator at Fedactio, presented the HarmonyCity project, which aims to highlight local initiatives and volunteers working toward harmonious coexistence. By giving visibility to these positive stories, the project seeks to inspire wider civic engagement and solidarity—objectives closely resonating with IDP's work.

The evening concluded on a convivial note with the symbolic cutting of Fedactio's anniversary cake, followed by an informal reception accompanied by live Cuban music. IDP's participation in this event reaffirmed the strength of its partnership with Fedactio and its shared commitment to building a more inclusive, peaceful, and dialogue-driven society, grounded in both reflection on past achievements and confidence in future collaboration.

Fedactio Iftar Event – Antwerp

On 1 March, the first day of Ramadan, IDP participated in the intercultural iftar evening organised by Fedactio at the Hilton Antwerp Old Town. The event also marked the 15th anniversary of Fedactio and brought together a wide range of stakeholders from politics, civil society, education, business, faith communities, and the cultural sector. The gathering provided a valuable platform for strengthening networks and reinforcing shared commitments to dialogue and social cohesion.

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The evening highlighted the importance of intercultural dialogue, solidarity, and peaceful coexistence in a context of increasing societal polarization. After the call to prayer, participants broke the fast together, followed by a series of keynote speeches and reflections focusing on cooperation across communities and sectors.

Speakers underlined the broad social impact of Fedactio's work and the importance of continued engagement on human rights, inclusion, and social responsibility. Contributions from public officials, civil society leaders, and representatives of the business community emphasized the need for stronger collaboration between institutions, entrepreneurs, and community organisations to foster inclusive and resilient societies.

Interfaith dialogue was a key theme of the event, with representatives from different religious communities stressing the importance of mutual understanding and cooperation. Several participants also shared concrete examples of humanitarian and social initiatives, illustrating the practical impact of solidarity-based action.

The event offered IDP an opportunity to engage with policymakers, civil society actors, and community leaders, exchange perspectives, and strengthen partnerships. Overall, the gathering demonstrated how shared values and collective action can create common ground and contribute to trust, dialogue, and social cohesion in diverse societies.

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Panel on Hate Speech, Democracy, and Inclusion – European Parliament, Brussels

On 27 February 2025 at the European Parliament, Brussels, IDP participated in the panel discussion *"The Effects of Hate Speech on Democracy, Fundamental Rights, and Inclusion"*, organized by Solidarity with Others. The event convened policymakers, civil society organizations, researchers, and practitioners to examine the growing impact of hate speech on democratic life and social cohesion in Europe.

The discussion addressed how hate speech undermines fundamental rights, erodes trust in democratic institutions, and contributes to polarization and exclusion, particularly affecting vulnerable and minority communities. Speakers emphasized the need for comprehensive responses that go beyond legal measures and include education, awareness-raising, community engagement, and preventive approaches.

Through its participation, IDP contributed insights from its work in intercultural dialogue and community-based initiatives aimed at preventing discrimination, polarization, and radicalization. The event provided an opportunity to highlight the importance of strengthening social resilience, promoting inclusive narratives, and fostering trust between institutions and diverse communities.

Participants also underlined the critical role of civil society in creating safe spaces for dialogue, countering divisive rhetoric, and building bridges across social and cultural differences. The panel further enabled IDP to connect with key stakeholders working on democracy, human rights, and inclusion, opening avenues for future collaboration.

Overall, the event reinforced the importance of multi-stakeholder cooperation to counter hate speech and to safeguard democratic values by promoting inclusive, respectful, and cohesive societies.

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Panel on Press Freedom and Journalism in the Digital Age – Brussels

On 8 May 2025 in Brussels, at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), IDP participated in the panel discussion *"Press Freedom Talks: Journalism in the Digital Age"*, organised by Solidarity with Others in the context of World Press Freedom Day. The event brought together journalists, policymakers, civil society representatives, and media experts to discuss the evolving challenges facing independent journalism in an increasingly complex digital environment.

The panel explored key threats to media freedom, including political pressure, media ownership concentration, financial vulnerability of independent outlets, and the growing influence of digital platforms on information flows. Particular attention was given to the risks posed by disinformation, online censorship, and the economic dominance of large technology companies over advertising revenues. Speakers also highlighted the importance of effective implementation of European frameworks such as the European Media Freedom Act, as well as the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act, to better protect journalistic independence across borders.

A central theme of the discussion was the situation of journalists working in exile, who often face continued security risks, financial instability, and limited institutional support despite having fled repression. Testimonies shared during the event illustrated both the resilience of independent journalists and the urgent need for stronger political and institutional backing at the European level.

Through its participation, IDP engaged with key stakeholders working at the intersection of democracy, human rights, and media freedom. The event provided an opportunity to exchange perspectives on the role of independent journalism in safeguarding democratic accountability and social cohesion, as well as to strengthen connections with organisations active in the field.

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Overall, the panel reaffirmed that press freedom remains a cornerstone of democratic societies and that coordinated efforts by civil society, policymakers, and media professionals are essential to protect independent journalism and ensure access to reliable information in the digital age.

Invest in What Matters: What is at stake in the next EU long-term budget?

Intercultural Dialogue Platform participated on 3–4 November in the "Invest in What Matters: What is at stake in the next EU long-term budget" event at the European Parliament. As part of this two-day programme, we had the opportunity to join over 160 civil society organisations, communication professionals, stakeholders, and EU decision-makers in a rich and dynamic exchange on the future of the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework.

The event opened with a networking reception on 3 November, offering space to connect with organisations from across Europe and share perspectives on the challenges and opportunities linked to the next long-term budget.

On 4 November, the participatory world-café session provided an inspiring environment to explore innovative ways of communicating about the EU budget and activating civil society engagement, allowing us to collaborate with peers and contribute our insights to the broader debate.

The high-level afternoon session brought together key EU figures, including Members of the European Parliament, rapporteurs from various EU institutions, and distinguished speakers.

Through our active participation, we were able to engage directly with decision-makers at this crucial moment ahead of the upcoming negotiations.

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The UNTOLD Europe Project Workshop - "The Impact of Colonial Legacies on European Migration Policies"

The Intercultural Dialogue Platform (IDP) participated in the UNTOLD Europe Project Workshop on Migration Narratives, titled "The Impact of Colonial Legacies on European Migration Policies", held on 21 October 2025 at the Residence Palace. The workshop was organised by the European Center for Populism Studies (ECPS) in collaboration with Oxfam Intermón and Qalia, and brought together scholars, journalists, civil society representatives, and activists from across Europe and beyond.

The event provided a critical and interdisciplinary space to examine how colonial histories and enduring power hierarchies continue to shape European migration governance, policy frameworks, and public narratives. Through panels, country case studies, and interactive group discussions, participants explored the ways in which migration discourses are influenced by unequal knowledge production, geopolitical asymmetries, and historically embedded representations of mobility, belonging, and exclusion.

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IDP's participation aligned closely with its mission to promote intercultural dialogue, inclusive narratives, and rights-based policy approaches. Throughout the workshop, IDP engaged in discussions addressing the politics of representation in migration debates, the marginalisation of migrant voices, and the need to rethink dominant narratives that frame migration primarily through security, control, or crisis lenses. These exchanges resonated with IDP's broader work on social cohesion, pluralism, and democratic resilience in Europe.

The programme featured high-level contributions from academics and practitioners, including panels on power, perspective, and storytelling in migration, as well as sessions foregrounding lived experiences and gendered dimensions of displacement. A dedicated segment on country case studies highlighted how colonial legacies continue to influence national migration frameworks in different European and non-European contexts, offering comparative insights and reinforcing the importance of contextualised policy analysis.

In the final interactive sessions, IDP participated in small-group discussions focused on reframing migration narratives and developing alternative, decolonial approaches. These discussions produced concrete recommendations aimed at EU policymakers and stakeholders, emphasising the need to amplify migrant perspectives, recognise historical responsibilities, and promote communication strategies grounded in equality, human rights, and dignity.

Overall, the UNTOLD Europe Workshop represented an important forum for cross-sectoral dialogue and critical reflection. IDP's participation contributed to reinforcing the workshop's objectives of fostering intercultural understanding and advancing more inclusive and humane migration narratives and policies across Europe.

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Standing Together Against Hate: IDP Joins No Hate Speech Week 2025 on the International Day for Countering Hate Speech

The Intercultural Dialogue Platform (IDP) participated in the Council of Europe's No Hate Speech Week 2025, held from 17 to 20 June in Strasbourg. IDP joined international stakeholders, including civil society actors, equality bodies, public authorities, and the tech sector, in a powerful collective effort to address and combat hate speech across Europe.

The Week was organised by the Anti-discrimination Department of the Council of Europe, and this year's No Hate Speech Week brought together over 100 participants under the theme: "*Enhance legal and non-legal measures against hate speech through a multi-stakeholder approach*."

The event featured plenary sessions, workshops, and a networking fair, all designed to build stronger partnerships and promote both legal standards and community-led strategies to tackle hate speech in all its forms.

The event was officially opened by *Alain Berset*, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Ambassador *Francesca Camilleri Vettiger*, Permanent Representative of Malta to the Council of Europe, *Michael McGrath*, European Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection, and *Virginia Gamba,* United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Acting Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (via video address).

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Sessions addressed the dangers of hate speech, from the fear and humiliation it inflicts on individuals to its chilling effect on public discourse, and how algorithms and disinformation increasingly amplify such harmful content.

The discussions highlighted the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16, which guides member states on when and how to prohibit hate speech through criminal, civil, or administrative law in alignment with the European Convention on Human Rights. Participants explored examples from the Compilation of Promising Practices and accessed tools from the Knowledge Hub on Combating Hate Speech, reinforcing the role of civil society organisations in delivering both legal and non-legal solutions.

By engaging in No Hate Speech Week 2025, IDP reaffirmed its commitment to standing against hate and promoting inclusive, rights-based societies.

"United in Diversity Europe Facing Today's Main Challenges", organised by New Humanity International

Intercultural Dialogue Platform participated on 8 April 2025 in the event "United in Diversity: Europe Facing Today's Main Challenges", organised by New Humanity and hosted as part of its three-day political experience at the European Parliament in Brussels. The programme, which ran from 7 to 9 April 2025, included a central panel discussion on 8 April dedicated to examining how the founding values of the EU can be reinterpreted to respond to today's multifaceted challenges.

By taking part, we joined a diverse group of citizens, young people, experts, and policymakers for meaningful dialogue on Europe's present and future. The event offered a space for youth to engage directly with decision-makers and stakeholders, share their ideas, and reflect on how unity and diversity can strengthen European democracy.

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Our participation underlines Intercultural Dialogue Platform's commitment to fostering civic engagement, intercultural understanding, and youth involvement in shaping Europe's future.

Event on women as agent of change in conflict resolution

The Intercultural Dialogue Platform (IDP) participated in the panel discussion *"Women as Agents of Change in Conflict Resolution,"* held at the European Parliament and organised by the Civil Society Outreach Unit in recognition of International Women's Day 2025.

The event brought together MEP Lina Gálvez, Chair of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, along with representatives from ActionAid, the European Movement International, Promote Ukraine, and UN Women.

Their contributions highlighted the critical role women play in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and shaping inclusive, sustainable approaches to security and social resilience. The event underscored the ongoing need to advance women's leadership, ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making processes, and integrate gender perspectives across peace and security agendas. IDP remains committed to supporting initiatives that empower women and contribute to lasting peace and stability.

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Sakharov Prize Ceremony 2025 in Strasbourg

Dialogue Platform, together with other civil society organisations, participated in the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought Award Ceremony at the European Parliament in Strasbourg from 15–17 December. The event brought together Sakharov Prize laureates and finalists, Members of the European Parliament, and civil society representatives to reflect on shared values and collective strategies for advancing democracy, peacebuilding, and human rights worldwide.

Awarded annually by the European Parliament, the Sakharov Prize recognises individuals and groups who demonstrate exceptional courage in defending human rights and freedom of thought. In 2025, the prize was awarded to two imprisoned journalists: Andrzej Poczobut from Belarus and Mzia Amaglobeli from Georgia. The ceremony took place on 16 December in Strasbourg.

Andrzej Poczobut, a journalist and activist from the Polish minority in Belarus, is known for his criticism of the Lukashenka regime and his work on history and human rights. Detained since 2021, he is serving an eight-year sentence in a penal colony. Reports indicate a serious deterioration in his health, while access to medical care and family visits remains denied.

Mzia Amaglobeli, a Georgian journalist and founder of the independent outlets *Batumelebi* and *Netgazeti*, was arrested in January 2025 for participating in anti-government protests and sentenced to two years' imprisonment on politically motivated charges. The first female political prisoner in Georgia since independence, she has become a prominent symbol of resistance amid the country's democratic backsliding.

Announcing the laureates, European Parliament President Roberta Metsola stated:

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> "By awarding this year's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Andrzej Poczobut and Mzia Amaglobeli, we honour two journalists whose courage shines as a beacon for all who refuse to be silenced."

Beyond the award ceremony, the programme included discussions with human rights defenders, journalists, humanitarian actors, and youth activists. These exchanges highlighted the risks faced by journalists in conflict zones, the growing role of young people in democratic resistance, and the urgent situation of imprisoned journalists worldwide. Speakers repeatedly stressed the essential role of independent journalism and civil society in confronting authoritarianism.

The event concluded with closing remarks from Sophie Wilmès, Vice-President of the European Parliament responsible for the Sakharov Prize community.

For Dialogue Platform, participation in the Sakharov Prize Award Ceremony was a deeply valuable experience that reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to justice, equality, and the protection of fundamental rights. Dialogue Platform also engaged directly with Members of the European Parliament through a series of interviews on the significance of the Sakharov Prize and the European Union's role in defending human rights. These interviews are available on our Instagram account and on YouTube.

International Conference "Echoes of Hate" – Ghent

On 15 December 2025, IDP participated in the international academic conference *"Echoes of Hate: Digital Communication, Populism and the Regulation of Hate Speech"*, held in Ghent, Belgium and organised within the Programme for Studies on Human Rights in Context at Ghent University, in collaboration with international human rights institutions.

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The conference brought together scholars, researchers, and civil society representatives from different countries to examine the growing phenomenon of hate speech in the digital environment and its implications for democracy, fundamental rights, and social cohesion. Discussions explored the relationship between online hate, populist political narratives, and the increasing polarisation of public discourse, as well as the legal and regulatory frameworks developed to address these challenges.

The programme included thematic panels on platform responsibility and governance of online content, the role of social media in amplifying polarisation, gendered hate and online misogyny, and the contribution of media and journalism in countering disinformation and harmful narratives. Additional sessions examined the psychological and emotional drivers of online hostility and provided comparative perspectives from different global contexts.

Through its participation, IDP engaged with academic and policy discussions relevant to its work on intercultural dialogue, prevention of polarisation, and promotion of inclusive societies. The event provided an opportunity to exchange knowledge with experts and civil society actors, identify emerging trends in the field, and strengthen networks for future collaboration.

Overall, the conference highlighted the need for multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder approaches to address hate speech in the digital age, combining regulatory measures with education, dialogue, and community-based initiatives to protect democratic values and social cohesion.

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INTERCULTURAL
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Mutual Understanding & Social Cohesion

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