

Press brief announcing Copenhagen Lab of Co-existence and the launch of The Co-existence Expedition

For release 31 August 2006

A new agenda for global co-existence

On 5-6 September 2006 the Co-existence Expedition begins its journey around the world. The international summit Copenhagen Lab of Co-existence marks the launch of the Expedition, which to 2008 will visit several countries and international institutions to set a new agenda for global co-existence and address the challenges to be met in the mission of creating and strengthening global co-existence.

“Please identify and rank the five main challenges for global co-existence”. This is the complicated, yet necessary, main task that meets eighty international key figures as they participate in the event **Copenhagen Lab of Co-existence**, which takes place 5-6 September 2006 at the IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Among the more than thirty nationalities that will be represented at the Lab are several high profiles representing academia, the business community, media, civil society, culture/arts and politics. All selected according to their expertise in processes supporting co-existence across different sectors and communities.

The Copenhagen Co-existence Lab both marks the end of the Danish co-existence process, which started in the aftermath of the Cartoon Conflict, and the beginning of an international process to be carried out by the **Co-existence Expedition**.

HRH Prince Hassan of Jordan has accepted to become Patron of the Co-existence Expedition, which also includes the participation of a selected number of international partner organisations, among others **Asia-Europe Foundation**, **Nordic Council**, **Strategic Foresight Group** and **Al Ahram Foundation** in Cairo. These partners will welcome the Expedition and contribute to its journey as it travels around the world. See www.coexistenceofcivilizations.org/english/travelUK.asp to learn more about the route and organisation of the Expedition.

The Co-existence process is initiated by the Danish **Monday Morning Weekly** and the Editor-in-Chief Erik Rasmussen with the aim of emphasizing the important role of media in contributing to the process for protecting and strengthening global co-existence. To learn more about the initiative please visit www.co-existence.org. The website is updated continuously.

Invitation to the press

The press is invited to participate at the Lab **5 September 10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.** (opening of the Lab and presentation of the initiative) and **6 September 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.** (closing of the Lab and presentation of the top-five challenges).

A press conference will be held 6 September 3 p.m. with participation of key figures.

All the events take place at the IT-University of Copenhagen, Rued Langgaards Vej 7, Copenhagen S.
Access requires display of valid press card.

Please visit www.co-existence.org for details on the press conference, press releases, background information, contact details etc.

For more information, interviews etc. please contact Press Officer Ida Strand, phone +45 33 93 93 23, mobile +45 26 28 09 53, mail: is@mm.dk.

Press brief supplement

Quotations from selected participants
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Why co-existence on the agenda

The following statements have been issued by some of the participants ahead of the Copenhagen Lab of Co-existence. The statements are answers to questions such as “*What impact do you expect the Co-existence initiative to have on the global ‘co-existence agenda?’*” and “*What do you regard as being one of the main challenges for creating, sustaining and strengthening co-existence in today’s global society?’*”

“I see an important challenge for strengthening co-existence in the global society as being our ability to have a broader concept of what it means to ‘understand’ someone who is different from us. ‘Understanding’ should go beyond knowledge, and even beyond mutual respect, and into the areas of being able to feel their concerns and bitterness.”

Mark Tamthai, Professor, Payap University, Thailand

“Participants and leaders including political leaders must look to and emphasize the similarities that exist between us – even if we are of different faiths, religions, colour and creed – and not highlight the differences. There are many important and critical similarities and these must be at the top of the agenda for all co-existence.”

Hardev Kaur, Editor-in-Chief, New Straits Times, Malaysia

“The challenges are the context in which we work! While initiatives like this are about outreach, engaging, including and understanding, our context is that we are functioning in a world political order that is in significant ways a war between Islam and ‘the West’ or the rest. The real challenge is that our initiatives are considerably hampered by the other reality that faces us.”

Patricia Martinez, Professor, University of Malaysia, Malaysia

“The Copenhagen Co-existence Lab with its international participation is for me already an evidence by itself for common values that exist between different cultures. It could contribute in the attempt to define a common ground, which allows different civilizations to live together peacefully and at the same time enable them to remain ‘different’.”

Norbert von Hofmann, Former Head of Office, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Germany

“We cannot expect any short-term impact of the Co-existence initiative on the global situation, particularly as regards the deplorable state of relations between Islam and the West. In the medium and long term however, the Copenhagen initiative, if it is sustained and conducted in good faith, may help Europe to adapt to the multicultural realities of today’s world, thus contributing to peaceful co-existence on a global scale.”

Hans Köchler, Professor of Philosophy, University of Innsbruck, Austria