

CONCEPT PAPER

‘The Co-existence Expedition’

The Co-existence of Civilizations initiative was taken by the Danish think tank Monday Morning in March 2006. Please see background information at www.co-existence.org

Since then many international organisations have joined the initiative, i.e. The Nordic Council, the Asia-Europe Foundation, European Policy Centre, Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Strategic Foresight Group, The International Peace Academy, and others.

HRH Prince Hassan of Jordan is patron of the initiative, and he actively takes part in the expedition.

THE EXPEDITION HAS A MISSION

The mission is to explore the identity and underlying values of global citizenship. The world is increasingly becoming global, which affects and challenges our cultural identity. During recent clashes between and within countries and cultures/religions, it has become clear that we need to move one step closer to a common ground. We need to aim higher than to avoid clashes. We need to identify and develop what we have in common.

We wish to explore and develop our common knowledge and language. We wish to influence politicians all over the world to stop looking for differences, clashes and what divides us – and to begin looking for common hopes, values and perceptions, which unite us as citizens in a global world.

Therefore, it is not enough to co-exist. We need to get to know each other; to create our new global societies together; to take part in defining what it takes to be a successful citizen in a global world. In this manner, the co-existence expedition has already initiated a global process, which has its own local and regional logic. The expedition wishes to enter into dialogue with all parts of society that being business, the arts, civil society, the media, politicians etc. in an open and inclusive dialogue. We hope to encourage local partners, the media and politicians to adopt local action plans.

THE CO-EXISTENCE EXPEDITION CONSISTS OF:

1. A baton process with local partners, seminars and action plans
2. Publications and positioning papers
3. Films and other media initiatives and co-operations

The first expedition stop was at the Nordic Council session on November 1st 2006. An action plan was developed and adopted. This process will be copied at the following stops on the expedition route.

Partners in Turkey, Belgium, Holland, Singapore, Malaysia, Egypt, Jordan, and the US have so far been invited to receive the Baton as well. To follow the travel of the Baton see the world map below.

The receivers of the Baton are required to:

1. Bring the subject on the agenda in their respective country or organizational body
2. Prioritize their five main challenges and solutions in their local context (i.e. Nordic context, European context, Turkish view, etc.) and define which contributions the local/regional institutions can offer future co-existence in this specific geographical area
3. Bring the results back to the Co-existence initiative for further exploration and dissemination. By the end of 2007 the findings and results of the expedition will be published at the second Copenhagen meeting between all partner organizations and the group of international advisors connected to the process.

PARTNERS AND ADVISORY BOARD

To support the Co-existence Expedition and be responsible for monitoring the process and the development of the content of the Baton, the Copenhagen Lab of Co-existence also marks the founding of cooperation between partner organizations and a group of highly esteemed international advisors.

We are proud that HRH Prince Hassan has accepted to become patron of the expedition and the whole co-existence process related to the expedition.

Chairman of the expedition will be Mr. Erik Rasmussen, Editor-in-Chief of the Danish-based think tank Monday Morning and initiator of the Co-existence of Civilizations initiative. Co-chairs will be held by partner organizations. They will be represented by 2-3 key persons, either representing the organization or invited to participate due to their specific knowledge on this subject. The expedition will invite a number of international experts from different sectors to form an advisory board to assist the partners in initiating the expedition in Copenhagen, and to sum up and conclude on the results late 2007.

The secretariat of the expedition will be based in Copenhagen Denmark.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EXPEDITION

The expedition has several objectives.

To fulfil our mission, we need to explore our common ground. In the search for a deeper understanding of global citizenship today, we will involve academia and researchers but also ordinary people from different sectors of society.

Our methodology therefore includes seminars in cooperation with local organisations with a broad participation from all sectors in society. In each country we will try to reach local politicians and decision-makers in general to open up for possible adaptations of action plans to secure a high impact of the expedition.

Another objective is to develop an analytical tool, which can assist politicians and other decision-makers in navigating in a multicultural environment. This is not a simple task, but one, which has to be met with the aim of providing decision-makers with a stronger and clearer basis for decisionmaking despite the fact that the themes to be addressed are often very complex and dependent on the local/regional context.



As a consequence, our ambition is:

- To qualify cross-cultural encounters
- To qualify the level of debate and communication, in general among citizens in general and decision-makers in particular
- To develop a tool – an analytical framework (specified underneath) to be published by the end of 2007.

At least eight different perspectives have been identified, which all contribute with different explanations of the clashes between so-called Western values and Islam based on the Danish Cartoon case. Many others cases need to be explored, but our focus will primarily lie in the analysis of the cases to develop the analytical tool, to search for common ground and future oriented approaches and solutions.

The true challenge to reach co-existence is to understand the underlying perceptions and values upon which each perspective builds, this with the purpose of being able to really benefit from cultural encounters.

Given the identification of these different explanatory views, the mission of the expedition is to comprise these in a relatively simple tool – easily understood and useable – as a starting point for constructive dialogue and the development of mutual action plans. This work is to be seen as an ongoing process, which moves and evolves between different forums, organizations, sectors etc. Hopefully, the results will be ready to be published by the end of 2007 and further explored and developed during 2008.

The following international partners, who all have agreed to bring the Baton into debate at some point, support the expedition: Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF Singapore), the Nordic Council (Copenhagen), The European Policy Centre (Brussels), the Strategic Foresight Group (Mumbai), International Peace Academy (Washington – to be confirmed) and the Al Ahram Center of Political and Strategic Studies (Cairo). The group of partners will be extended during the next months.

THE CO-EXISTENCE EXPEDITION TEAM

Patron of the expedition:

HRH Prince Hassan, Jordan

Chaired by:

Mr. Erik Rasmussen, editor-in-chief, Monday Morning, Denmark

Partners:

Ambassador Cho Wo-nil, Asia-Europe Foundation

Mr. Inge Lønning, Nordic Council

Mr. Hans Martens, European Policy Centre, Belgium

Mr. Sundeep Waslekar, President, Strategic Foresight Group, India

Dr. Mohammed Said, Al Ahram Center of Political and Strategic Studies, Egypt

Advisory Board:

Terje Rod-Larsen, International Peace Academy, US

Vigdis Finnbogadóttir, Former President and UN representative, Iceland

Hardev Kaur, New Straits Times, Malaysia

Louis Becker, partner and director, HLT, Denmark

Nuri Albala, Paris Appeal Court, France

Asma Abdullah, 'Culture matters', Malaysia

Mads Øvlisen, Committee CoC, Denmark

Tom Hoyem, EuropeSchool of Karlsruhe, Germany

Hans Köchler, President, International Progress Organization (I.P.O.), Austria

Viggo Mortensen, Professor, Denmark Professor Noreena Hertz, Cambridge University, UK (to be confirmed)

Grahame F. Thompson, Open University, UK

Asgar Ali Engineer, Professor, India

Mark Tamthai, professor, Thailand

Patricia Martinez, Professor, Malaysia

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

Ilze Brands Kehris, Latvian Centre of Human Rights

Stephen Cole, presenter, Al-Jazeera International

Director Fuad Nahdi, Radical Middle Way

John Keane, Professor, UK

Ingolf Thuesen, Head of department, University of Copenhagen

Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, Danish- Egyptian Dialogue Institute, Egypt

Lisbeth Knudsen, MD, News & Sport, Danish Broadcasting

Peter Schier, Rep. to Malaysia, Konrad Adenauer Foundation

Norine MacDonald QC, President, the Senlis Council

Thomas Voss, Executive Vice President, MASCO Europe

Mona Eltahawy, journalist & writer, US & Egypt