

**OSCE CONFERENCE ON ANTI-SEMITISM AND ON OTHER FORMS OF INTOLERANCE**

**(CORDOBA, 8 AND 9 JUNE 2005)**

**Session 5 – Fighting intolerance and discrimination against Christians and members of other religions: respecting religious identity in a pluralistic society**

(Dr. Alfred Donath, President of the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities, Geneva)

The inter-religious dialogue has always been very important in Switzerland. Up to now it existed mainly in form of bilateral working groups.

Conscious that what binds the religions is more important than what divides them, the responsables in Switzerland have taken the initiative to discuss the creation of a Swiss council of religions. At first, it will be composed of the representatives of the ~~four~~<sup>five</sup> abrahamistic religions: the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, the Swiss Bishops' Conference, the Old Catholic Church, the Moslem associations and the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities. At a later time, it will be enlarged to other religions.

The aims of the Council will be:

- To learn to know one another better
- to favour mutual comprehension
- to create a climate of confidence between the religions
- to establish a dialogue on the actual religious politics
- to express a common point of view on actual problems, as the admission of foreign refugees
- to become the privileged partner of the authorities for all these questions.

The creation of this Swiss council of religions will take place this autumn. The Swiss government is looking favourably to the establishment of this institution.