
Almaty, 06-13-2006

**Participation of Three Cultures Foundation in the OSCE
Tolerance Implementation Meeting on promoting inter-
cultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic understanding.**

Session III: "National, regional and international initiatives to promote inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue and civil society partnerships.

Speakers: Mr. Dario Marimon & Mr. Germinal Gil.

Ladies & gentlemen,

We would like to thank the government of the republic of Kazakhstan for hosting and supporting this important meeting and to the OSCE for giving us the opportunity of introducing our Institution, the Three Cultures Foundation, as one of the tools to promote tolerance, civil society and the different initiatives, local and international, in the inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogue.

The Three Cultures Foundation was born in 1998 when the kingdom of Morocco and the Regional Government of Andalusia reached an agreement to set up a forum on the premises of peace, dialogue and tolerance; a forum capable of promoting an encounter between people and cultures of the Mediterranean. They were later joined in the initiative by the Peres Center for Peace, the Palestinian National Authority and other people and institutions from the State of Israel committed to dialogue and Peace.

Three Cultures Foundation of the Mediterranean, located in Sevilla, south of Spain within the region of Andalusia, was established in 1999. The Foundation's singular, and to a certain extent, exceptional characteristics have turned it as a guiding light for tolerance and progress. There are few foundations in the world with such a representative and well-balanced plurinational presence with such special ties to the Mediterranean sphere and with such a commitment to embracing all the countries of the Mediterranean area.

Moreover, the Foundation born as an regional initiative as above mentioned, has become a permanent tool for implementing these mentioned commitments developing concrete actions not only to go beyond discussions but also to establish an open space for multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi cultural inter actions in the shape of projects that will be explained later on).

The spirit of the Foundation is also a reflection of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference held in Barcelona in November 1995, an event that pointed towards a new horizon for the entire Mediterranean Basin: the establishment of an area of peace, stability and progress on either side of a sea that has been the cradle of many civilizations.

Three important working lines constitute the main principles of Three Cultures Foundation:

First of all, taking into account that our organization is an Spanish – Moroccan Foundation, is the cooperation with our neighbours of the Mediterranean, specially Morocco, a partnership that participate in the Foundation's activities at different levels.

The second Priority is clearly the Middle East. Since its creation, the Foundation has become a privileged instrument for piloting dialogues and establishing contacts, a tool capable of binding society's concern for the present and future of this troubled region through congresses and seminars, either directly with the institution and governments of Palestine and Israel or with departments and institutions of the European Union dealing with the different areas of conflict.

One of the initiatives that the Foundation is more proud of is the promotion of the Geneva Accords, signed by the authors Yasser Abde Rabbo and Yossi Beilin. Once again Three Cultures Foundation was used as an umbrella for editing, distributing and spreading out a concrete peace project.

Besides, this is the main line in the Dialogue of Civilizations, as it is a point where the international policy turns around, and cause by itself of instability in the area.

The European Union and civil society is the third path towards the Foundation is driving its actions. Our privileged relationship with the EU and Mediterranean third countries enables us to play an

instrumental role in the application of policies and the execution of projects in the Mediterranean co-operation scenario.

The advancement of dialogue, peace and tolerance between Mediterranean peoples and cultures is governing principle that guides the Foundation's endeavours. We believe that the culture is the best vehicle for dialogue in complex political scenarios. At a time at which the confrontation and aggravation of particularisms provoke continuous conflicts and situations of exclusions and ostracism, Three Cultures Foundation has assumed the commitment of promoting coexistence between cultures and religions through mutual acquaintance and the interchange of ideas and experiences that facilitate an approach between the people of the Mediterranean.

After having presented our main working lines, and following a new policy within the Foundation of not only establishing dialogues but also implementing the conclusions, very briefly, we are going to overview a few of the projects framed up in three different areas: education, youth and inter-religious dialogue.

Before that, we would like to remind all of you that were present and to inform those of you that were not present, that Three Cultures Foundation had the honour of hosting the NGO's preparatory meeting in 2005 previous to the OSCE Conference in Cordoba. Our expectations were fully fulfilled in such a difficult area as the civil society is when we saw working together different panels to implement tools to fight Antisemitism, discrimination against Muslims, Roma and and Sinty, Travellers, Christians, sexual oriented discriminations, xenophobia, etc...

- A) Education: Three Cultures Foundation has a growing yearly based program to teach Hebrew and Arab. Needless to say that language shows the identities of people, Three Cultures Foundation works on using this tool to gather theses cultures. This way, we change some of the orientations in the use of the languages to a new scenario in which the learning of the language and the culture of the others become a sticking element. Apart from that, we also develop cultural workshops, pictures, arts expositions and music performances.

We are now working on new and concrete actions towards training of the trainers from which we hope to get good results in short, such as the one implemented with the University of Middle East (UMO).

B) Youth: taking into account the considerable prominence that the new generations will have in a near future, Three Cultures Foundation is strongly working on providing a real space for this young people. The concrete actions presented for the year 2006 will cover different areas such as politics, academics, and civil society. Again, very briefly, we will point out a few of our projects:

b.1) The first meeting of Young political leaders will gather together a few of the most relevant people in the field of policy from Spain, Palestine and Israel. They will be given an open space with no interferences to express themselves and their political visions not only on their countries but also on the countries of the others. This way, we will throw some fresh air towards a mayor theme as policy is.

b.2) By the end of the year, we will have the second meeting of young Palestinian/Spanish poets. After having obtained, under our point of view, very touching experiences and excellent productions from the first meeting, we will host the second one in Spain and Palestine taking into account that we will count also with a third leg for this project (which is young Jewish poetry) which will end up next year including this mentioned poets to set up the fourth leg of this idea which undoubtedly will give to it the necessary stability.

B.3) Also and related to the fields of civil society, we will have next July a meeting of NGO's which develop similar jobs in Palestine, Israel and Spain in such way that they can know each other, share experiences, and implement new ways of working together. The project basically consists on visiting children suffering cancer in the hospital of the three countries, to play games with them, to present new cartoons to them and clown shows. These NGO's have been developing their tasks separated and from Three Cultures Foundation we consider that the inter-actions among them will end up in developing a more appropriate way of carrying out these kinds of projects. In this

way, we do not only promote inter-cultural and inter-faith relationships but also we find a new orientation for the cartoons away from controversies.

c) Inter-religious dialogue: it is not necessary to stress the importance of the inter-religious dialogue as a tolerance implementing tool. Three Cultures Foundation, both at small and larger scales, has developed different programs towards this issue.

c.1) Last year, we hosted a seminar of principles from a group of Palestinian and Israelis high schools, understanding that the mutual acknowledge of the other will not only enrich ourselves but also the other. In this sense, we considered essential to implement this idea in real studying plans on both societies and according to the feed back obtained by them, this has changed their views, stereotypes and precepts that they or their students might had.

c.2) In a different dimension, last march with the inestimable support of the Andalusian Government in one hand, and the Central Government of Spain on the other, we hosted the Second World Congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace. After having attended the first congress in Brussels, we realized of the importance of providing a common open space in Seville (historically land of happy coexistence between Arabs and Jews) to continue the job initiated in Brussels the year before.

Apart from this, there are two other mayor issues towards we would like to draw your attention:

- The gender perspective that lays down in all the projects that we develop.
- The consideration we give to the phenomena of the immigration as an old problem with a new dimension.

Last but not least, we would like to comment that today in Seville is taking place the meeting of the Spanish group for the Alliance of Civilisation headed by President Chaves and with the presences of the Secretary of State for External Affairs Bernardino Leon. Out of



this meeting, we positively know that new implementable tools will arise and will be shared by our institution.

To conclude, I would like to remind you our main policy of facts based upon previous dialogue looking forward to holding next year the Spanish Chairmanship in Office of the OSCE. As one of the greatest philosopher, Ortega y Gasset, used to say and I quote "I am myself and my circumstance" end of quotation and so the circumstances of the different ethnical, religious and cultural societies are also ours. Thank you.

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