

EUROPEAN POLICY DIALOGUE FORUM ON REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

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network for
Dialogue



“The Policy Dialogue Forum is a platform that brings together people who are really concerned about this topic, and who are aware that all issues related to it should be dealt with locally, nationally, and globally. Here, we are not just talking about refugees, **we are talking about the work that we do** with refugees. I believe this is what makes this event successful”.

Prof. Míriam Diez Bosch

Director at the Blanquerna Observatory on Media, Religion
and Culture at Ramon Llull University in Barcelona

THE POLICY DIALOGUE FORUM IN A NUTSHELL:

Purpose and Development

The political and social environment for refugees and migrants has changed immensely over recent years. To address popular misperceptions that newcomers could pose a threat to fundamental European values, The International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) fosters dialogical approaches that allow us to listen to and learn from each other. This approach led to the first European Policy Dialogue Forum, that took place in Athens, Greece, 20-21 October 2019. The Forum brought together 60 participants from around Europe to initiate a discussion on the theme of "Understanding current challenges of refugees and migrants in Europe: What can we do?".

The Policy Dialogue Forum is now an annual platform bringing together key stakeholders working on the social inclusion of refugees and migrants in Europe. Acting as a convener to discuss the growing diversity and complexity of migration flows and migration dynamics, the Policy Dialogue Forum gathers participants in interactive discussions to combine different perspectives and build bridges between different actors working with refugees and migrants around Europe. The Policy Dialogue Forum supports new directions towards dialogue in migration policies and calls attention to the extent to which grassroots experiences can contribute to the work of policymakers.

#inclusion
#dialogue
#understanding
#collaboration
#refugees
#migrants



**The motto of the Policy Dialogue Forum is:
Inclusive dialogue, more hospitality in Europe.**



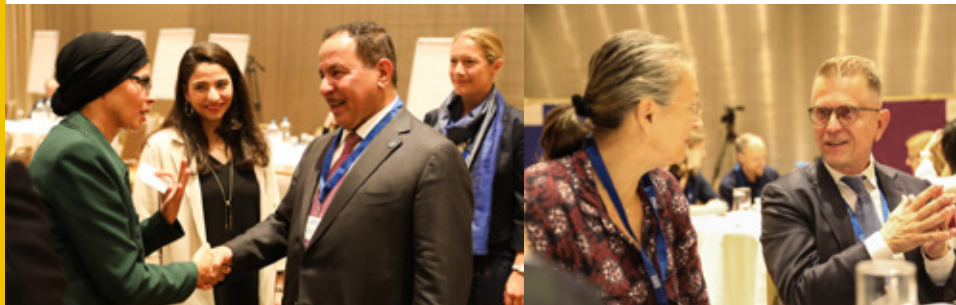
A Unique Approach

At its core, the Policy Dialogue Forum fosters the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and dialogical approaches as an essential tool to help refugees and migrants better navigate in the host community and integrate within society. **It also helps host communities to better understand newcomers, uniting and encouraging knowledge sharing from bottom-up approaches,** in addition to learning from key stakeholders and high-level policymakers. The active inclusion of religious actors and faith-based organizations in such a format also allows for deeper conversations. By applying an interactive, participatory and dialogue focused design, the Policy Dialogue Forum provides participants with the opportunity to disseminate their own work and research, share different perspectives, and further invest in new ideas and means to cooperate.



Participants

The Policy Dialogue Forum brings together participants based all over Europe **working on the social inclusion of refugees and migrants** in the European context. Participants include policymakers from the local to the European level, religious leaders, academics and secular and faith-based civil society organizations, including the members of the KAICIID-supported platform Network for Dialogue.



The 2020 Policy Dialogue Forum

Based on the six main recommendations of participants at the 2019 event, the 2020 Policy Dialogue Forum addresses the current social inclusion processes of refugees and migrants in Europe. It deals with the question of how interreligious and intercultural dialogue can contribute to the social cohesion and social inclusion of refugees and migrants in Europe. The 2020 Forum concentrates on five specific topics:



Strengthening social inclusion in education: to address the difficulty of many refugees in learning a new language and understanding a new culture; deals with the challenges of teachers addressing cultural and religious diversity and includes both formal and non-formal approaches, allowing for the inclusion of adults.



Building trust in local communities: to find ways to enable interactions between refugees and the local host community to come together to learn from each other; fosters mutual understanding and creates spaces where members of the host community can learn about other religions and cultures, hence reduces fear and prejudices against newcomers.



Reshaping the narratives on migration: to explore new ways of fostering tolerance and understanding. Promising practices coming from media, academic research and policy initiatives are shared to show how to better counter hate speech and discrimination.



Applying dialogue to policymaking: to promote intercultural and interreligious events and to learn more about other cultures; to support platforms that institutionalise dialogue among key stakeholders to enhance compassion; and to have public conversations online and in open fora on migration, diversity and equality through dialogical approaches.



Dealing with COVID-19: the biggest ongoing public health crisis also affects people seeking refuge, as they often live in vulnerable conditions; they are not easily reached by public media and are not allowed to contribute in aiding others because of working restrictions. Providing new opportunities to refugees and migrants can bring more cohesion to Europe's divided societies.

Participant Feedback

88%

expressed that they gained a **better understanding** of the current situation of refugees and migrants

83%

learned more about using dialogue

96%

felt that their voices **were heard**

LEARN MORE

about the 2019 Policy Dialogue Forum in the official report that is available online!



"Isn't it time for Europe to change the way it deals with the refugee and migrant influx? Isn't it time we re-examined our policies, focusing not on the negative preventive practices, but rather on the essential respect of human rights on which the EU has built its common and universal principles?"

Metropolitan Athenagoras

President of the Integration Centre for Migrant Workers - Ecumenical Refugee Program (KSPM-ERP) of the Church of Greece

"The question is not whether or not to engage with religious organizations and actors; but rather, how to engage in the best way."

Ambassador Pekka Metso

Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

"It is dialogue itself that – on all levels of society – can initiate new experiences of relations and build trust. An essential basis is the human capacity for empathy, that is the ability to emotionally understand another human being. Dialogue can become a place of learning to promote an awareness of a universal, shared identity."

Ambassador Teresa Indjein

Austrian Foreign Ministry

"We need to continually question the securitisation and criminalisation of migration. It is not migrants we need to fear. Migration is a normal part of human existence."

Prof. Erin Wilson

University of Groningen

Next Steps



For more information about registration please contact us at networkfordialogue@kaiciid.org.

How Can I Participate in the Policy Dialogue Forum?

If you are working on the issue of refugees and migrants in Europe and support social inclusion processes, **you might be interested in joining the Policy Dialogue Forum**. If you are a policymaker, religious actor, academic or from civil society and would like to learn more about using dialogue and strengthening the dialogical approach, you and your organization are invited to participate in this year's Policy Dialogue Forum.

The Policy Dialogue Forum will particularly have in mind the priorities of the EU Agenda and its member states as they relate to the social inclusion of refugees and migrants and support the development of constructive recommendations and policy reports in this specific field.

The Role of KAICIID and the Network for Dialogue

As part of KAICIID's commitment to foster dialogue between local host communities and refugees to enhance overall understanding and cooperation, **the Centre aims to encourage refugees' participation within European societies**. Through the Network for Dialogue, a European-wide platform launched in March 2019, and collaborative partnerships with key organizations in the field, KAICIID convenes policymakers, religious leaders, academia and civil society to promote the use of dialogue, to shape socially inclusive policies and to strengthen the social inclusion of refugees and migrants in Europe.

Contact

The Network for Dialogue

Empowering Interreligious and Intercultural Action
for the Social Inclusion of Refugees and Migrants

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