

## **KAICIID Experts Consultation Meeting on Sacred Sites**

**3-6 April 2014 - Ohrid, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)**

**Hotel Metropol (5\*)**



*In close partnership with EUROCLIO – European Association of History Educators, the event takes place in the frame of the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual EUROCLIO Conference "History Education beyond Borders - How can we share our Cultural Heritage?"*

## Introduction

In 2014 KAICIID will hold an exploratory meeting of experts as a consultative step for its potential future work in the field of religious heritage sites. Protection and respect for the sacred character of these sites are highlighted in KAICIID's Establishment Agreement. This mandate thus pertains to the understanding of sacred sites, and through them, understanding of our faiths, cultures and history.

KAICIID Dialogue Centre (King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue) was founded to facilitate dialogue among followers of different religions and cultures around the world. Located in Vienna, the Centre is an independent, autonomous international organization. The Founding States of the Centre are the Republic of Austria, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Kingdom of Spain; the Holy See is Founding Observer. The Centre's Board of Directors features prominent representatives of major world religions and cultures (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism).

EUROCLIO, the European Association of History Educators, was established in 1992 at the request of the Council of Europe to build bridges between history education professionals from all parts of the then recently reunited Europe. EUROCLIO started as an umbrella organisation gathering 14 Associations from 14 predominantly Western countries and grew to become a far-reaching network of 44 member Associations and 15 associated members from 52 countries 20 years later.

EUROCLIO supports the development of responsible and innovative history, citizenship and heritage education by promoting critical thinking, multi-perspectivity, mutual respect, and the inclusion of controversial issues.

Education through and about shared cultural heritage will be the focus of the Annual Conference of EUROCLIO in Ohrid/FYROM throughout 31 March – 6 April. This convening of experts and educators will offer a multi-faceted reflection on the question *"How can we Share our Cultural Heritage?"*

Participants are an international array of history, heritage and citizenship education professionals from the Balkans, Europe, the Middle East and beyond. The programme will capitalize on the uniqueness of its location as regards religious history, and will include visits to religious sites and occasions for dialogue on issues related to sacred spaces and holy sites, their uses and misuses, their potential for inclusion and reconciliation, and the role history and heritage education play.

As a side event of EUROCLIO's Annual Conference, KAICIID hosts the

### **"The KAICIID Experts Consultation Meeting on Sacred Sites":**

A full-day meeting, under Chatham House Rule. The consultation meeting concludes with a wider Roundtable Dialogue featuring selected experts.

### **The Overall Objective:**

To map current initiatives including education content and methods relating to or using sacred sites, and identify best practices, challenges and recommendations. This will serve to identify opportunities for helpful impact in the field.

The meeting's regional focus serves as a case study, while international experts from other regions are invited as well, to initiate thinking about recommendations for new work in this field outside the existing mandates and projects covered by other organizations.

#### **Aims:**

- To convene an exploratory expert group on understanding, preservation, and use of sacred sites through the lens of intercultural dialogue and education for sustainable peace, with participation and insights from faith traditions.
- To provide KAICIID an overview of the field's challenges and active stakeholders, existing initiatives, tools and networks, by mapping current efforts and standards and identifying areas in which further work is needed.
- To promote the awareness in the regional and international cultural heritage sector on the role of religious stakeholders, history educators and the education sector at large.
- To learn from the regional process on the Western Balkans for Reconciliation and Conflict Transformation – as identified in the Council of Europe's Ljubljana Process and taken forward by the Regional Cooperation Council's Task Force on Cultural Heritage.
- To explore the unique place of Ohrid as a UNESCO World Heritage and focal point of interest for Interreligious Dialogue and Sacred Sites Education.

#### **Expected Outcomes:**

- Identification of needs, challenges and opportunities from policy making, civil society, religious community and heritage education perspectives;
- Mapping overview of initiatives, tools, best-practices;
- Wider network of educators and policy makers in the area of Sacred Sites and Intercultural Education, with a focus on the Western Balkans;
- History and Heritage Educators from over 40 countries in Europe and Mediterranean made aware of international cooperation and religious engagement in the field of cultural heritage and especially sacred sites.

#### **Preliminary Programme:**

##### 3 April – Travel & Arrival Day

Arrival of Experts to Skopje Airport

Possibility to receive guided tour of Skopje City Centre (depending on arrival time)

Departure to Ohrid (approx. 2hrs drive, private car transport organised by EUROCLIO)

##### 4 April – World Heritage, Holy Sites and Culture around Lake Ohrid

All day: Participation in EUROCLIO's On-Site Programme which involves all participants in the conference (around 130) to all main cultural sites around Lake Ohrid, including all main Holy Sites from Ancient, Medieval and Modern age. Transport on boat, expert guides in all sites and possibility to engage, reflect and participate fully in the conference, including cultural evening programme.

5 April – Experts Meeting (closed) and Roundtable Dialogue (open) See attached programme.

##### April 6 - Departure