

Monthly Highlights

March 2012

International Interreligious Affairs

Vienna

A further meeting of the Board of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) took place in Vienna at the Sacher hotel on March 11th in preparation for the launching scheduled for late November. There will be two further preparatory Board meetings, to both conclude the formulation of the modus operandi of the Center and to prepare for the program of the launch itself.

United Kingdom (London and Oxford)

I was in the UK for meetings at Lambeth Palace with the key figures in the Archbishop of Canterbury's team for interfaith relations and in particular for Anglican-Jewish relations.



They included Bishop Nick Baines, the Rev.Dr.

Toby Howarth, and the Rev. Rana Khan.

Among the topics discussed was our common involvement in the abovementioned KAICIID, and preparations for the next Jewish-Anglican dialogue under the auspices of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.

Prior to these meetings, I participated in the conference of the Elijah Interfaith Institute's Board of World Religious leaders on which I serve (see : <http://www.elijah-interfaith.org/participants/board-of-world-religious-leaders.html>), which concluded with dinner at the residence of the Chief Rabbi of the UK, Lord Jonathan Sacks.

While in London I also met with Sir Sigmund Sternberg KSCG, patron of the International Council of Christians and Jews (of which I am an Honorary President) and founder of the Three Faiths Forum (on whose Advisory Board I serve), who is also the honorary interreligious affairs advisor of the World Economic Forum in which I am part of its religious leaders council. In addition to the work of these organizations, our discussion focused in particular on Vatican relations with Israel and Jewry.

Rome

The eleventh meeting of the bilateral commission of the Vatican and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel took place at the Casa Valdese in Rome, from March 27-29. Cardinal



From right to left: Cardinals Koch, Turkson and Cottier; Archbishops Forte and Franco

The theme of this consultation was “Religious perspectives on the financial crisis- vision for a just



Rabbis Sperber, Rosen, Cohen and Steinberg

economic order”.

The Catholic delegation was chaired by Cardinal Peter Turkson (president of the Holy See’s Commission for Justice and Peace) who has replaced Cardinal Jorje Mejia in this role. (see: <http://embassies.gov.il/holysee-en/NewsAndEvents/Pages/bilatrelease300312.aspx> ; and <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/homepage/news/detail/articolo/cattolici-ebrei-14040/#>)



At the reception for the delegations and Rome religious leaders hosted by Israel’s Ambassador to the Holy See, Mordechai Lewey, Chief Rabbi Cohen addresses the gathering. On his right is Sheikh AbdelWahid Palavacinni and on his far left is the Ambassador

While in Rome I had meeting with Cardinal Rylko and Bishop Clemens of the Pontifical Council for the Laity; and Archbishop Carlo Maria Celli of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. As always, at these meetings I was accompanied by ASJC’s representative to the Vatican and Italy, Lisa Palmieri Billig.