

October 24th, Rome

I was invited by the Conference of European Rabbis to deliver the laudatio to Professor Andrea Riccardi, founder and head of the Roman Catholic Community of Sant Egidio, on receiving the Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen award of the CER given to international non-Jewish figures who have contributed to the protection and invigoration of Jewish life in Europe.



October 28th, Rome

The Vatican hosted the signing of an historic Abrahamic declaration on the imperative of Palliative Care and opposition to medically assisted suicide, that was formulated under the auspices of the Pontifical Academy of Life and the Interreligious Commission of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. In addition to three leading Cardinals and the Archbishop presiding over the Pontifical council of Life, the document was signed by the members of the delegation of the Chief Rabbinate (of which I am a member), and by Sheikh Abdullah Bin Bayyah of the UAE and his delegation which included scholars form the Gulf and the US, as well as by the heads of the two largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia. The document was also approved by the Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarch, the Russian Orthodox Patriarch, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the SG of the Muslim World League.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1soF4qZLQ7M&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR0XXKV2HBaQeuK54meLMscT0I32IC07VuuOis3nfJr5hTLEAN_N9FGnLYA

<https://youtu.be/1soF4qZLQ7M>

I was requested to moderate the program which took place at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Casina Pio IV inside the ground of the Vatican. Following this, the group was received by Pope Francis who expressed his commitment to and thanks for the declaration.



The Position Paper and photos of the event may be seen

at: <http://www.academyforlife.va/content/pav/en/news/2019/religioni-abramitiche-e-cure-palliative-28-ottobre2019.html>

Extensive media coverage included the following :-

<https://agensir.it/chiesa/2019/10/28/jews-catholics-and-muslims-no-to-euthanasia-and-assisted-suicide-with-no-exceptions/>

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2019-10/abrahamic-religions-life-euthanasia-suicide-palliative.html>

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/monotheistic-faiths-sign-joint-paper-against-euthanasia-119102900047_1.html

<https://www.ipost.com/Israel-News/Chief-Rabbinate-signs-declaration-against-euthanasia-in-Vatican-606120>

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/chief-rabbis-join-interfaith-call-at-vatican-against-mercy-killings/>

<https://www.jewishpress.com/news/global/historic-first-all-monotheistic-faiths-sign-document-dedicated-to-value-of-life/2019/10/28/>

<https://www.agensir.it/quotidiano/2019/10/28/fine-vita-mons-paglia-pav-un-accordo-storico-ora-lo-proporremo-alle-altre-religioni/>

<https://www.vaticannews.va/it/vaticano/news/2019-10/paglia-dichiarazione-congiunta-religione-monoteiste-fine-vita.html>

<https://www.acistampa.com/story/fine-vita-cattolici-ebrei-e-musulmani-uniti-contro-leutanasia-12570>

<http://asianews.it/notizie-it/Le-religioni-abramitiche-contro-eutanasia-e-suicidio-assistito-48395.html>

October 29-31, Vienna

In addition to the KAICIID Board of Directors meeting (on October 29th) KAICIID held a conference on Combatting hate Speech/Crimes, in particular in the Middle east, that was attended by religious leaders of Sunni, Shia, Christian, Druze, Yazidi, Kurdish, and Jewish communities from across the ME.

I addressed the conclusion of the conference.

See: https://youtu.be/MvOM6f_sz7I



November 14/15, Rome

A conference on promoting Child Dignity in the Digital age was hosted by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences in the Vatican, co-sponsored by the UAE Interfaith Alliance, the Joseph Ratzinger foundation, and the Arigatou Foundation, convening organizations working for child welfare/combating child abuse and trafficking, as well as the leading media and digital organizations (including Google, Facebook, Twitter and others) academic experts, public figures, and religious leaders/representatives. On the first day the conference participants were received by Pope Francis, and on the second day I was honoured to address the gathering in the session on religious perspectives and recommendations.

November 19th, Geneva

On the tenth anniversary of the promulgation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Arigatou Foundation released a publication on Faith and the Rights of the Child presenting the teachings and shared values of the world's major religions on the subject of child welfare and development. The Foundation convened a panel of religious leaders and UN officials at the UN HQ in Geneva on the subject in which I participated.

November 27th, Prague

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Czech Republic, together with the Czech Ecumenical Council, and the Jewish Community's Federation, held a program on "Red Wednesday" to pay homage to the victims of persecution around the world on religious grounds, and to highlight the struggles for religious freedom and conscience. I was invited to address the subject of Antisemitism together with the AJC representative in Prague, Mr. Tomas Kraus. We also participated in an ecumenical prayer service that followed the conference, and in the march of solidarity that followed thereafter.

December 6-8, Dubai

In advance of the interreligious conference in Abu Dhabi, my wife and I spent Shabbat with the Jewish community in Dubai which we addressed in synagogue and at Shabbat meals.

December 9-11, Abu Dhabi

I was again invited by Sheikh Abdullah Bin Bayyah to participate in the conference convened by the Muslim Forum for the Promotion of Peace sponsored and supported by the government of the UAE. For the third time Christian and Jewish leaders were convened together with major Muslim figures to promote an Alliance of Virtue, promoting tolerance and acceptance of the other and rejecting exclusion conflict and violence. I was honoured to address the signing ceremony and also had the opportunity to meet with His Royal Highness, Prince Muhammed bin Zayed. Both Rabbi Noam Marans in his capacity as chair of IJCIC, and Rabbi Andrew Baker as the OSCE advisor on Antisemitism, also attended this conference.

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWwAB1OPWGg>



(also see <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1599316>)

December 12/15, Vienna

The most impressive programme of the King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue is the Fellows Programme, which every year trains young leaders from the world's religions from around the globe in the skills of interreligious dialogue, and guarantees an international cadre of leadership in this field that also have close connections and friendships with one another. Already some three hundred young leaders have been through this programme which is held both internationally and for specific religions. The latest Fellows graduation event took place in Vienna on December 12th, at which I was honoured to give the final call to action.

On December 15th I attended a gala event at the Vienna City hall to celebrate the MJC's tenth anniversary. I am patron of the MJC together with Dr. Mustafa Cerić, the emeritus Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzegovina.