

Declaration

The conference “Re:Action - believers for peace in time of nationalism and xenophobia” was held in Lužnica, a centre for spiritual renewal, near Zagreb, from 30th March to 2nd April 2017. There were more than 70 participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, Macedonia; Muslims and Christians of various denominations, as well as agnostic humanists.

We, believers for peace, notice that in our faith communities and societies there is a growing tendency of intolerance, exclusion and hatred towards each other, other ethnic and religious groups, and also foreigners - refugees. Nationalism and xenophobia are two forms of violence that are often justified by one's affiliation to a faith community and religious tradition: then it becomes the business of all believers to respond to them.

We, participants of the conference “Re:Action - believers for peace in time of nationalism and xenophobia” firstly want to declare to each other and to the public that we are convinced that any justification of xenophobia and nationalism by faith arguments or religious traditions is profoundly wrong and unacceptable.

Peacebuilding, on the basis of equal rights and the worth of each individual, requires a constant search for freedom and justice, which are the main messages of the Holy Scriptures in all our religions. Our faith communities and churches deny the validity of any national supremacy and hatred towards people of other identity groups and repudiates provoking fear from other and different people.

The basic message of our faiths is expressed in God's exhortation: “Do not be afraid”. Staying true to that calling we appeal to the hierarchies and the faith leaders of religious communities and churches to stay away from any attempt to connect faith and religion to nationalist intolerance, hatred or fear of others. At the same time we emphasise our individual personal responsibility to build a culture of positive peace, in our more local and wider communities, which is much more than a mere absence of war.

We share our faith in God and our belief in the importance and the necessity of the personal contribution of every person to achieve peace in society versus the prevalent practices of direct, institutional and cultural violence. This path is not easy. Moreover, in the version of history that is presented to us as a continuum of violence, for instance violence and aggression dominate our daily news, so the effort of peacebuilding may seem futile and utopian. Hence we want to encourage one another and everyone not to cease from a constant advocacy for peace and nonviolent resistance to violence, nationalism and xenophobia.

In democracy every citizen is responsible for the state and events of his or her society and country. Instead of having only our faith leaders articulating the messages and actions of their own faith community and church, we invite each individual to recognize their own power and to take on their own responsibility for peacebuilding.

Our motto is: “By building peace we glorify God!”

Agreed by the participants of the conference:

“Re:Action - believers for peace in time of nationalism and xenophobia”.