

Imad Karam:

Good morning. I hope you all feel rested. I believe this morning session is important, as it will set the tone for the rest of the Forum and, in particular, inform the workshops we will all attend. The idea behind this panel is to shed light on the challenges our societies face. I am thinking especially of divisions, mistrust and conflicts, and how we can live together in peace, which is the theme of this Forum. How can we live together in peace despite our differences and difficulties?

We hope that this morning we will highlight the various challenges we all face in our work on convivence, challenges experienced in many parts of the world and in different societies represented here. We will also try to outline possible approaches and recommendations to address these issues. Some questions for reflection:

- Is diversity a good thing?
- Which actors should be involved in building social solidarity?
- What is the role of governments, the media, civil society and even businesses in this work?
- Do religious identities and doctrines help or hinder convivence?
- What can we learn from one another and from those who have long been working in this field?
- What lessons have been learned so far?
- What should we do differently?

As you know, we will begin with a keynote contribution by Mrs Ghislaine Alajouanine, followed by short responses and comments from the panellists. But before that, I would like to ask the panellists to introduce themselves briefly. Perhaps we can start with you, Amor.

AMOR MARTÍN FERNÁNDEZ:

Good morning. My name is M^a Amor Martín. I am a lecturer at a centre affiliated with the University of Córdoba in the field of Education, at the Sagrado Corazón Teacher Training Centre. I teach Spanish language, and above all literature and creativity. I have mainly developed my professional activity at university level, but I have also taught at many educational levels. I will be speaking today from my experience working in diverse environments.

SHEIKH KHALED BENTOUNÈS:

I am Sheikh Bentounès, Honorary President of the NGO AISA and Founder and President of the Muslim Scouts of France. I have long been committed to education for peace, seeking to transmit this vision through a network of schools that we are developing in different places, as well as through cooperation with universities to create an alternative method that enables us to move from a culture of “I” to a culture of “we”.

AMAL ALMOALLIMI:

Good morning. My name is Amal Almoallimi and I come from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I have extensive experience in the field of education, having worked for nearly 15 years as a teacher and trainer in teaching strategies. I then joined the National Dialogue Centre for a further ten years, and I currently work in the field of human rights. I also represent Saudi women in various organisations, such as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Family Affairs Council.

GHISLAINE ALAJOUANINE:

I am Ghislaine Alajouanine, from the Institut de France, corresponding member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, and President of the Chair of Convivence.

STÉPHANIE LECESNE:

Good morning. My name is Stéphanie Lecesne. I am French and have been living in Brussels for the past eight years. I am a trained historian and have also studied Oriental languages, including Arabic and Hebrew. I have worked in the non-profit sector for nearly 20 years, and for the past eight years I have been working at CEJI – A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe.

RAPHAËL DADÉ:

As for myself, I am Dadé Raphaël Mahaman Bassirou. I come from Niger and from an interreligious family. I have been practising dialogue since 2012. I represent the Scouts and I am a facilitator in the KAICIID Peace Dialogue programme. I am also a specialist in security and conflict issues within the field of peace studies.