



European Federation of the Communities of Sant'Egidio aisbl

World Interfaith Harmony Week Interfaith Harmony Breakfasts 2017

On 22 March 2016, Brussels was the centre of two terror attacks which killed 32 people from all walks of life. That day, Belgium joined the endless list of countries hit by Daesh and its followers.

More than never, Sant'Egidio believes that the only answer to the negation of dialogue is more dialogue, to hate is love and caring, to a society in decay, where distrust finds fertile soil, is reviving the values of solidarity and friendship.

That is the reason why we intensified our commitment to building coexistence in Belgium and beyond. For the 6th year in a row, we organised **two Interfaith Harmony Breakfasts** during the first week of February, proclaimed 'Interfaith Harmony Week' by the United Nations at the initiative of King Abdullah II of Jordan. The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Jordan, HE Yousef Bataineh, was present.

All in all, some **forty high-level representatives** of Christian churches (Protestant, Anglican and Catholic),



Islam, Judaism and Buddhism participated in the two Interfaith Harmony Breakfasts. This breakfast was held in Brussels on Wednesday 1st February and in Antwerp on Friday 3 February 2017.

Struggle against violent extremism was at the heart of the discussion. After an



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introduction devoted to the social challenge of radicalization by the guest speaker, Belgian Federal Prosecutor Frédéric Van Leeuw, the participants discussed the role of churches and religions in building a 'living together' in peace and respect.



Central to the discussion was the question of how religions and beliefs can help answer the **question of purpose and meaning of the new**

generations. This includes also the question of how to make better use of social media to counter hate speeches and violent extremist preachers. Representatives of religions showed that they were aware of their social responsibility and stressed the need for mutual cooperation.

The Community of Sant'Egidio has 30 years of commitment to interreligious dialogue with youth and leaders at local, national and international levels.

