

Schweizerischer Rat der Religionen
Conseil suisse des religions
Consiglio svizzero delle religioni
Swiss council of Religions

Mandate

Membership

Members of the Swiss council of religions (SCR) are leading figures from the Swiss Bishops' Conference, the Council of the Protestant Church in Switzerland, the Old Catholic Church of Switzerland, the Metropolis of Switzerland (Ecumenical Patriarchate), the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities and Islamic organisations in Switzerland, who have been mandated by their own institutions or organisations.

In addition, other leading figures from churches and religious communities that are of social significance in Switzerland may be invited to Swiss council of religions meetings.

At the meetings of the Swiss council of religions, a person unanimously designated by the aforementioned members will manage the secretary's office.

Objectives

The objectives of the churches and religious communities that created the Swiss council of religions are:

- to contribute to and promote the preservation of religious peace in Switzerland;
- to reach agreement amongst the members on matters of common interest;
- to build confidence amongst the religious communities;
- to conduct a discussion on current religious and/or political issues; and
- to provide a consultative framework for the Swiss Government in such matters.

Purpose

The Swiss council of religions:

- aims to build on the interreligious celebration held in Bern, Switzerland, on 5 March 2003 and, in pursuit of the stated aim to «Strengthen the bonds of peace – in Switzerland and throughout the world», to safeguard religious peace in Switzerland and to make a positive contribution to mutual respect between the religions, in particular those of the monotheist-abrahamic tradition;
- sees itself as a platform for dialogue and understanding between the highest representatives of the three national churches and the Jewish and the Muslim religious communities;
- discusses issues of mutual interest, in particular those relating to interdenominational and inter-cultural coexistence in Switzerland;
- will consult regularly as to which mutual issues should be addressed and how they should be pursued;
- can investigate the important issues facing its members and can so agree jointly to address and provide support for any concern of a particular church or religious community;
- can serve as a consultative partner for concerns of the Swiss Government; and
- maintains relationships with the Interreligious Association of Switzerland (IRAS) and other Swiss organisations with similar aims and objectives.

The Swiss council of religions may not pass a resolution that is binding on an individual church or religious community.

Procedure

The Swiss council of religions will convene when necessary and on agreement but, as a rule, twice a year.

The address of the Swiss council of religions shall coincide with that of the church or religious community to which the person acting as secretary belongs.

The members of the Swiss council of religions shall jointly decide how the meetings are to be chaired.

The members of the Swiss council of religions shall, in good time, inform the person acting as secretary of any items they want to have included on the agenda.

Four weeks' notice shall be given of a meeting together with any necessary documents and a copy of the agenda.

The secretary shall prepare summary minutes of each meeting which shall, in particular, contain any views or decisions adopted by a consensus and which have to be ratified by the governing bodies of the churches or religious communities. The minutes are intended for internal use only.

No expenses will be paid. Until further notice, the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches will assume all infrastructural costs (such as the hire of the meeting room, the secretary's office, etc.).

Public relations

Discussions in the Swiss council of religions shall be confidential.

The members of the Swiss council of religions shall, on the basis of the written minutes of the meetings, inform the governing bodies of their churches and religious communities of the business of Swiss council of religions meetings and the essential crux of the discussions.

As a rule, no public statement will be made regarding the meetings of the Swiss council of religions.

In special cases, the Swiss council of religions may decide to issue a press release or a public statement.

Any such decision must be taken unanimously by all the members represented on the Swiss council of religions (i.e. including any absent and excused) in cognisance of the text to be published.

This mandate came into effect in Bern, Switzerland, on 15 May 2006.

Swiss Bishops Conference

+ Dr. Kurt Koch

Old Catholic Church of Switzerland

+ Fritz-René Müller

Coordination of Islamic Organisations Switzerland

Dr. Farhad Afshar

Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches

Rev. Thomas Wipf

Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities

Dr. Alfred Donath

Federation of Islamic Organisations - Switzerland

Dr. Hisham Maizar