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**The Intercultural Dialogue and the Importance of Development
Training Ambassadors of Dialogue in the Digital Age**



The idea of *mare romanorum* and *pax romana*

During the rule of the Roman Caesars, Roman writers used the phrase "*mare nostrum*" in their chronicles to indicate that the Mediterranean became a Roman lake, or "*mare romanorum*." It shows that the Romans controlled the other countries around the Mediterranean, and the last one was Cleopatra VII in 30 BC. This caused a major shift in the history of the world, and the people living around the Mediterranean had lost their independence for many centuries.

The Roman Empire experienced a time of peace and stability, known as the *Pax Romana*. During this period, the Emperor was referred to as the "*Imperator romanorum*" and "*pontifex maximus*"



Oi Barbaroi, from the Greek to the Roman Concept:

The ancient Greek concept of barbarians, which considered the foreigners uncivilized or enemies, did not change in the Roman mentality. If we look at the book *De Admenstrando Imperio*, we can see that the Eastern Roman Emperors (4-15 centuries) viewed other nations as barbarians and enemies



The change of power balance and the question of Islam:

From the seventh century onward, the balance of power in the Mediterranean changed when the Muslims arose and tried to become the only political power in the Mediterranean. Even though there were hard times between the Muslims and Christians in the medieval ages, there was still religious dialogue. Historians talk about many times when the leaders of different religions talked with each other and exchanged letters about theological issues.

By the end of the medieval ages, a new stage of intercultural dialogue between East and West was started under the auspices of the Pope of Rome.



From Confrontation to Compatibility:

The experiment of **Al-Azhar al-Sharif** and **the Vatican** must be mentioned as well. In 2019, after many talks between the two, Pope Francis and Shaikh al-Azhar, Dr. Ahmad al-Tayyb, signed an important document called the Document of the Humanitarian Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together. This document showed the importance of intercultural dialogue, or the exchange of ideas between different cultures. It also showed that Islam and Christianity can work together for peace and humanity, and invite the other religions to share their goals.

This document also supports the idea that we have a shared path to the future, based on justice, peace, love, and the right of humans to choose their religious beliefs without fear of persecution.

Along with Al-Azhar and the Vatican, some national and international organizations are working towards the same goal: intercultural dialogue. For example, **Bayt al-'Ā'ilah al-Miṣṣrīyyah** (the Egyptian Home Org.) is one of these organizations. It works under the direction of Shaikh al-Azhar, Dr. Ahmad al-Tayyb, and the Holiness Pope Twardrus II, Pope of the Egyptian Orthodox Church.



A Glance on the Non-governmental Organizations:

Another example of the non-governmental organizations is the *Arab-West Foundation*, which was founded in 2005 by Dutch sociologist Cornelis Hulsman and his wife in Cairo to support a growing intercultural dialogue. Hulsman, as a sociologist, knows well the value of intercultural dialogue and has paid attention to the religious dialogue in Egypt as well and to establish a strong database for successful intercultural dialogue in the Eastern Mediterranean. His earlier work, sparked by the 1967 Six-Day War, involved documenting diverse perspectives on Israeli-Palestinian relations and reporting on religion in Egyptian society. This evolved into the Arab-West Report, later renamed *Dialogue Across Borders*. With the foundation's establishment, database ownership shifted to the Arab-West Foundation, while content development continued through its Egyptian partners, the Center for Intercultural Dialogue and Translation (CIDT) and the Center for Arab-West Understanding (CAWU).



A Glance on the Non-governmental Organizations:

When it comes to Egypt, a good example for other Arab countries, it would be useful to teach intercultural dialogue to university students, especially at government universities, which have a lot of students. This would be based on support from the EU via its programs to help developing countries, as well as the development and digitalization of the *Dialogue Across Borders Foundation* database, which would be made available to university students...

Conclusion:

As F. Jaroslav said, “The database is more than just a repository of documents; it is a vital resource for fostering understanding and reducing conflict,” especially in the hot spots of the Mediterranean. By grounding our efforts, we can create a more inclusive and informed dialogue by confirming the idea of Humanitarian Fraternity. Universities must lead this initiative, equipping students with the required skills to become ambassadors of intercultural dialogue and ensuring that the database remains a dynamic and accessible platform for these goals, which can't be achieved without EU support.



Thanks for your Attention