

# Bonner Querschnitte

## Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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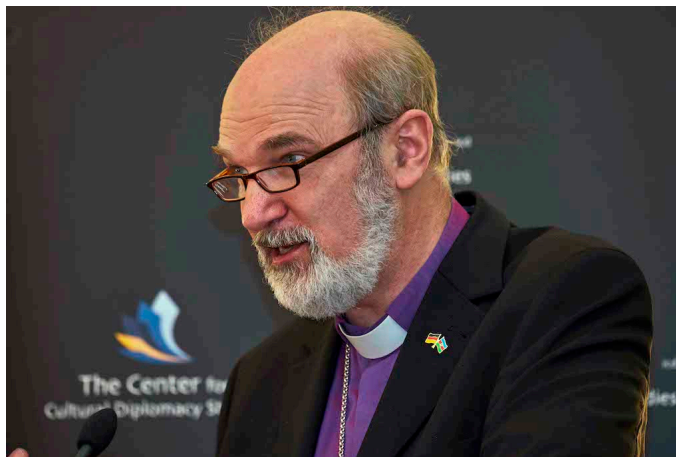
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### BQ 579 – No. 15/2019

## “Does religious freedom, religious harmony, and interreligious dialogue contradict absolute truth claims?”

(Bonn, 26.04.2019) The Associate Secretary General responsible for the interreligious dialogue of the World Evangelical Alliance has now made his speech at the dialogue conference of the governments of Azerbaijan and Germany in Berlin available in German and English. The topic “Does religious freedom, religious harmony, and interreligious dialogue contradict absolute truth claims?” had been set for him.

In his speech Schirmmacher stressed that representatives of religions and world views who see themselves in possession of the truth must nevertheless or precisely therefore be interested in dialogue with each other. The Western thought that one must first renounce the claim to truth before one can talk reasonably with each other is wrong, as the series of dialogue conferences initiated by the government of Azerbaijan shows.



Thomas Schirmmacher during his speech © BQ/Warnecke

The International Conference entitled “From the interfaith and inter-civilizational dialogue to cooperation” was held in Berlin (Germany) on 19 November 2018, by co-organization of the Baku International Centre for Interfaith and Inter-Civilizational Cooperation acting under the aegis of the Caucasus Muslims’ Board, the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Federal Republic of Germany, German-Azerbaijani Forum, and the Berlin Academy for Cultural Diplomacy.

The Conference was attended by the state officials of Azerbaijan and Germany, as well as public figures, academicians and religious representatives from various countries, the heads of different religious confessions, members of diplomatic missions accredited to Germany and international organizations.

Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade, the Chairman of the Caucasus Muslims’ Board and Secretary General of the Baku International Centre for Interfaith and Inter-Civilizational Cooperation, Mr. Markus Grübel, Commissioner for Global Freedom of

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Religion and Member of the German Parliament, and Mr. Ramin Hasanov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Federal Republic of Germany, delivered welcoming speeches at the opening ceremony. (A complete list of participants and quotes from their speeches can be found [here](#).)



View into the hall from behind at the banquet © BQ/Warnecke

The Conference focused mainly on topics as interfaith and inter-

civilizational dialogue and cooperation, threats and challenges to international dialogue and solidarity such as terrorism, separatism and xenophobia, problems of refugees, IDP's and migrants who became victims of aggression, racial, religious or ethnic intolerance, the role of interfaith and inter-civilizational cooperation in education of youth, preservation of historical, cultural and moral heritage, as well as the importance of joint efforts by public, religious and scientific leaders in the development of interfaith and inter-civilizational cooperation:

- The improvement of the interfaith and inter-civilizational dialogue to solidarity and cooperation serves promotion of peace, prosperity, and religious tolerance in the world;
- Terrorism, separatism, and xenophobia as challenges of the dialogue and solidarity;
- Contribution of the interfaith and inter-civilizational cooperation to enlightenment of the young generation and preservation of the moral and cultural heritage;
- Significance of increasing the world community's attention to the problems of those who face racial and religious intolerance, aggression, and ethnic cleansing, as well as refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants;
- Significance of strengthening the joint efforts to struggle against the vandalism regarding historical and cultural monuments, religious tombs and attributes;
- Increase of joint efforts against harmful information propaganda which aims prevention of the inter-civilizational and interfaith dialogue and cooperation;
- The role of joint efforts of the state men, scientists and religious leaders in the promotion of inter-civilizational and interfaith dialogue and cooperation.

### Downloads and Links:

- Thomas Schirmmacher's speech in English ([pdf](#))
- Thomas Schirmmacher's speech in German ([pdf](#))

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- **Photo 1:** Thomas Schirmmacher during his speech (close-up) © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 2:** Thomas Schirmmacher during his speech (view of the podium) © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 3:** Thomas Schirmmacher in conversation with Aiman Mazyek, Chairman of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 4 and photo 5:** Thomas Schirmmacher in exchange with Father Khaled Akasheh, who is responsible for the dialogue with Muslims in the Vatican © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 6:** From right to left: Thomas Schirmmacher, Grand Sheikh Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade, Ramin Hasanov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan in Berlin © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 7:** Thomas Schirmmacher welcomes Grand Sheikh Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade to Germany © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 8:** Thomas Schirmmacher welcomes his beatitude, Patriarch of Alexandria Theodore II © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 9:** Thomas Schirmmacher hands over books of the Global Christian Forum to his Beatitude, Patriarch of Alexandria Theodore II © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 10:** Thomas Schirmmacher in conversation with Rabbi Chaim Yitshak Ehrenberg, until 2010 Chairman of the Orthodox Rabbinical Conference Germany © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 11:** View of the podium © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 12:** Markus Grübel speaks on behalf of the German government © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 13:** Table of honour with Grand Sheikh Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade, to the left of Schirmmacher Aiman Mazyek and Mohamed Moncef Marzouki, former President of Tunisia © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 14:** View into the hall from behind at the banquet © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 15:** Thomas Schirmmacher greets an old friend, the Catholic bishop in Baku, Vladimir Fekete, S.D.B. © BQ/Warnecke



Some of the participants in the group picture with Grand Sheikh Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade (center) © Embassy of Azerbaijan in Berlin

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- [Photo 16](#): Thomas Schirmmacher in conversation with Mohammad Sammak, Lebanon © BQ/Warnecke
- Official Press Photos of the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Berlin:
  - [Photo 1](#): Thomas Schirmmacher during his speech (close-up) © Embassy of Azerbaijan in Berlin
  - [Photo 2](#) and [photo 3](#): Some of the participants in the group picture with Grand Sheikh Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade (center) © Embassy of Azerbaijan in Berlin
  - [Photo 4](#): Markus Grübel speaks on behalf of the Federal Government © Embassy of Azerbaijan in Berlin
  - [Photo 5](#): Ravvin Yitzak Ehrenberg, Rabbi from Berlin, until 2010 Chairman of the Orthodox Rabbinical Conference Germany © Embassy of Azerbaijan in Berlin
  - [Photo 6](#): Grand Sheikh Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade © Embassy of Azerbaijan in Berlin
  - [Photo 7](#): View into the hall © Embassy of Azerbaijan in Berlin
  - [Photo 8](#): View to the tribune © Embassy of Azerbaijan in Berlin
- Official website of the event: [http://www.iiicdc.org/index.php?en\\_iiicdc-2018\\_home](http://www.iiicdc.org/index.php?en_iiicdc-2018_home)

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