

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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BQ 268 – No. 33/2013

Panel on Indonesia in the EU-Parliament with expert from the International Institute for Religious Freedom:

„Diversity and multiculturalism: the exemplary Indonesian model“

(Bonn, 02.09.2013) Press release by the European Peoples Party Group in the European Parliament. Source: http://eppgroup.eu/de/news/Diversity-and-multiculturalism%3A-the-exemplary-Indonesian-model?qt-social_box=0



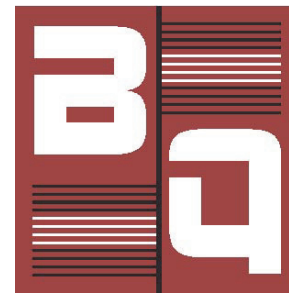
(right to left): HE Arif Havas Oegroseno, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU, Jan Olbrycht MEP (Poland), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, HE Bahrul Havat PhD, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr Atho Mudzar, Muslim scholar, Islamic State University, Jakarta, Rev Eko Armada Riyanto, Rector of the Catholic School of Philosophy and Theology 'Widya Sasana', East Java, and Prof Dr Thomas Schirmmacher, Professor of Sociology of Religions, Director of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (Bonn, Cape Town, Colombo) (© IIRF)

well-balanced harmony between numerous religious and ethnic groups on the other. He added that the conference was in a way unique in the history of the EPP Group's

By Miklos Panyi

On 5 June, the EPP Group, in cooperation with the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Indonesian Embassy in Brussels, hosted a high-level conference dedicated to presenting Indonesia's model for providing religious freedom and societal harmony. Indonesia is the biggest Muslim democracy, and its diversity and multiculturalism track record is exemplary among Muslim states.

In his opening speech, Jan Olbrycht MEP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group responsible for 'Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue', highlighted the importance of sharing the experience of Indonesia, which is the biggest Muslim democracy in the world on the one hand but also has a



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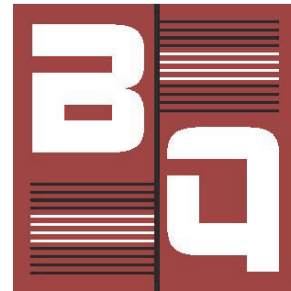
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interreligious activities, as by conducting dialogue with the representatives of the Indonesian government and religious groups, the programme stretched far beyond the neighbourhood of the European Union.

In his welcoming remarks, Werner Langen, Chair of the Southeast Asia Delegation of the European Parliament (ASEAN), noted that, though Indonesia is certainly facing many challenges in the changing world, the country has a long tradition of pluralism and religious freedom and could serve as a model for many Muslim states. Langen also highlighted that, in its Charter, ASEAN also addresses the issue of religious freedom.

In his remarks, H.E. Bahrul Hayat, Secretary General of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, highlighted that his country can be described as neither religious nor secular. Freedom of religion is ensured and the state attaches special importance to keeping dialogue between religious communities open. He added that the experience of one hundred years of coexistence between several religions has developed a special tolerance in Indonesia, a key factor for democracy.

H.E. Arif Havas Oegroseno, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Belgium, Luxembourg and the European Union, presented the multicultural background of his country. He emphasized the fact that Indonesia is enriched with more than 240 ethnic groups, more than 300 languages and hosts several religious communities including Muslims, Protestants, Catholics, Buddhists, Hindus and others. Havas Oegroseno also underlined that the long, rich and diverse history of the country has created bonds between religions and people.

Professor Mohammad Atho Mudzhar talked about the role of religious communities in promoting interreligious harmony. He explained that 88% of the Indonesian population are Muslims, 9% Protestants, followed by the Catholics, Buddhists, Hindus and others. But the religious groups are spread throughout the country leading to great varieties in co-existence. Religious groups have several national boards, while a 'joint deliberation of religious communities' forum was created in 1980 and hosts meetings every 2 years with the participation of the leaders of religious communities. The Professor added that there are 400 forums at district level in which each religion is represented. Interreligious dialogue is also undertaken by universities, youth organisations and NGOs.

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Thomas Schirmmacher in the Indonesian Embassy with Ambassador Arif Havas Oegroseno (© IIRF)

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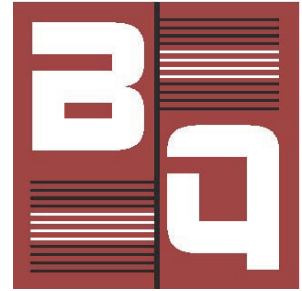
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religious communities is to promote peace and highlighted the importance of the human factor in promoting cooperation.

Professor Thomas Schirmmacher emphasised that there is no country in the world whose institutions have such good statistics on persecution grounded in religion as in Indonesia. He said that what is exemplary is that the statistics on the violation of religious rights of Christians is reported by Muslim organisations. He emphasized that Indonesia is the only Muslim country that actively uses theology against sectarian violence. He also praised the Indonesian government for working actively against extremism.

In his closing remarks, Elmar Brok MEP, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, stated that developments in Indonesia are very positive. He drew attention to the fact that the EU will soon approve a cooperation partnership with Indonesia. Brok added that the Indonesian approach is tolerant, cooperative and proves to be efficient against terrorism. He expressed his concern, however, that although the Indonesian constitution recognises freedom of religion, not all religions are treated equally. He also underlined the importance of the economic situation of people in keeping social harmony and expressed his belief that Indonesia could serve as a good example how minorities could live together.

Links:

- Photo Gallery EPP: http://www.eppgroup.eu/mt/photo-gallery/Diversity-and-Multiculturalism%3A-the-Indonesian-Story?qt-filter_most_read_content=0
- Group Photo, Indonesian Embassy: <http://www.embassyofindonesia.eu/ambassador/?q=content/diversity-and-multiculturalism-indonesian-story>
- Program: http://136.173.161.107/event/Diversity-and-Multiculturalism%3A-the-Indonesian-Story?qt-rss_feed_group_level=0
- Flyer: <http://www.embassyofindonesia.eu/content/diversity-and-multiculturalism-indonesian-story>

Downloads:

- **Photo1:** (right to left): HE Arif Havas Oegroseno, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU, Jan Olbrycht MEP (Poland), Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, HE Bahrul Havat PhD, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr Atho Mudzar, Muslim scholar, Islamic State University, Jakarta, Rev Eko Armada Riyanto, Rector of the Catholic School of Philosophy and Theology 'Widya Sasana', East Java, and Prof Dr Thomas Schirmmacher, Professor of Sociology of Religions, Director of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (Bonn, Cape Town, Colombo) (Photo © IIRF)

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- [Photo2](#): Thomas Schirmacher in the Indonesian Embassy with Ambassador Arif Havas Oegroseno (Photo © IIRF)

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