

The role of the media in framing co-existence - A mini-conference about media in a globalized society

Background

The publications of twelve cartoons of the prophet Muhammad have caused a worldwide crisis between as well as within Western societies– with Denmark in front – and Islamic societies and cultures.

It has been argued that this sort of crisis was inevitable as a result of a long-term, historical conflict between different values and norms.

This might be true. Eventually, the role of the media as ‘incubator’ of the crisis cannot be neglected. It was a Danish newspaper, which chose to publish the drawings. Therefore, the conflict illustrates the impact the choice of the media can have on world politics and global relations. The crisis underlines the role and questions the responsibility of the media in a globalized society.

This development must lead to self-reflection across the global media society.

So far, the debate related to the media’s role in the conflict has focused on questions concerning freedom of speech and the right of the media to express controversial views and opinions. Indeed a necessary discussion. But we need to bring the debate forward by asking what role the media can and should play in a globalized society. In this context it seems evident to question how the media can contribute to creating and strengthening future global co-existence.

Advances in technology and the Internet era have offered the media institutions increased opportunity to influence and setting the public agenda. The main question is whether this increased impact is followed by an increased responsibility of the media to engage pro-actively in creating and maintaining global co-existence.

The conference

How can the media in the future avoid being creator of dispute? Can the media be expected to adopt a role as consensus maker - or will this role conflict with the fundamental premises upon which the free press is founded? Are we in need of a new model of journalism, which can respond to the demand of growing multicultural societies – or of the formulation of an international code of conduct? Is it necessary to increase cross-cultural training in the training of journalists?

Questions like these are addressed at the mini-conference “***The role of the media in framing co-existence***”, which will take place the 7th of June 2006 at The International Press Center in Copenhagen, Denmark. The objective of the conference is to address the role of the media in the age of globalisation by debating and challenging the role of the media as creator of future co-existence.

The conference arises from the Muhammad-debate, but will seek to move further as this crisis only is one example of the challenges that the media must be prepared to meet in the future. Many Western media institutions today face the challenge of covering stories in multicultural societies.

This development creates new demands upon media institutions, editors and journalists to understand different cultures and identify the stories, which could be of importance taken into considerations the need for improved integration and co-existence in as outside Europe.

The following five media key figures will speak at the conference:

- **Zaki Chehab**, London Bureau Chief, ALHayat-LBC TV (UK/LB)
- **Nasreen Suleman**, BBC journalist specialised in programmes about British Muslims (UK)
- **Jörg Lau**, Journalist for Die Zeit (D)
- **José Lemos**, Journalist and Program Director at RTP (PT)
- **Jacob Mollerup**, Editor of the Listener and Viewers, Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR)
- **Troels Mylenberg**, Study Director, Journalism, University of Southern Denmark

Moderators are journalist and film producer Lasse Jensen, Editor of the Listeners and Viewers Jacob Mollerup, DR, author and journalist Rushy Rashid, and editor Noa Redington, Monday Morning Weekly.

The keynote speakers will each make a presentation with duration of app. 15 minutes, followed by a discussion with the audience. This will mainly comprise journalists, editors and other players from different Danish as well as international media institutions, representing the print, broadcast and digital media.

To mark the end of the conference, the most important observations, discussions and statements of the day are to be summarized in a document and handed over as a baton to a representative of the initiative *Co-existence of Civilizations*.

Co-existence of Civilizations

The conference is the 4th event in a series of workshop and conference of *Co-existence of Civilizations* – an initiative organized by 22 leading Danish stakeholders and opinion leaders with the purpose of develop and strengthen the international dialogue across cultures, countries and religions.

The initiative culminates with the international summit **Copenhagen Co-existence Lab**, which will take place the 6th and 7th of June 2006 in Copenhagen with participation from a range of international partners, keynote speakers and high profile guests.

The additional events take place in Copenhagen the 20th April (Academic Co-existence), 30th Mai (Cultural Co-existence), 2nd June (Business Co-existence), 7th June (Media Co-existence), 4th-8th July (Youth Co-existence) and early August (Civil Co-existence).

For more information please see www.coexistenceofcivilizations.org or contact press officer Ida Strand: is@coexistenceofcivilizations.org, phone +45 33 93 93 23 / +45 26 28 09 53.

Co-existence of Civilizations

Konferencen udgør det første arrangement i en række af konferencer og workshops, der afholdes i regi af **Co-existence of Civilizations** – et initiativ tager af 22 fremtrædende danskere med det formål at fremme og styrke den internationale dialog mellem forskellige kulturer, herunder formulere bud på, hvad der skal til for at sikre en fredelig, global sameksistens.

Initiativet kulminerer i et internationalt topmøde, **Copenhagen Co-existence Lab**, der finder sted 7. og 8. juni 2006 i København med deltagelse af en række internationale summit partners, talere og gæster.

De øvrige **Co-existence** -arrangementer finder sted i København hhv. 29. maj til 2. juni (Youth Co-existence), 30. maj (Cultural Co-existence) samt 2. juni (Human Co-existence og Business Co-existence).

For flere oplysninger om det samlede initiativ samt de forskellige begivenheder se www.coexistenceofcivilizations.org eller kontakt presseansvarlig Ida Strand på is@coexistenceofcivilizations.org, tlf. 33 93 93 23 el. 26 28 09 53.