

## PRESS RELEASE

### M100 Sanssouci Colloquium 2009

## Muslim Media and Muslims in the Media

*Potsdam, Germany, 1st September 2009*

Designed to promote a dynamic and ongoing exchange between media professionals on the challenges facing the sector, this year the M100 Sanssouci Colloquium is tackling the issue of **Muslim Media and Muslims in the Media**.

European mainstream media have at times been criticised for its narratives and language when reporting on minority (especially Muslim) affairs and has been accused of seeking limited viewpoints and rarely representing a diversity of voices from within these communities. What effect the emergence of separate minority media has in creating a segregated 'information society' has yet to be fully assessed. Understanding and addressing this information divide is crucial in order to ensure that public opinion influenced by these various sources does not result in further elevating tensions, suspicions and fears.

Against this backdrop, the Colloquium aims to strengthen bridges between foreign, minority and mainstream media, to increase dialogue, provide insights and dispose of stereotypes. The Colloquium will ultimately explore the role of media coverage and the portrayal of Muslims by European and minority media in impacting public opinion as well as long term integration processes and social cohesion within Europe.

In order to establish a more informed picture of the state of Muslim foreign and minority media, as well as the representations of Muslims in the mainstream media, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, has commissioned a **Research Report** which will be presented at the 2009 Colloquium. With the generous support of the Vodafone Foundation Germany, Researchers Farzana Hakim and Colleen Harris have conducted research investigating the scope of media in Europe with a Muslim target audience and its relationship to mainstream media discourses and practices. Interviews and focus groups with policy makers, media professionals and Muslims from a diversity of ethnic, socio-economic and occupational backgrounds were undertaken in Germany, France and the United Kingdom.

Each year a Prize Laureate is recognized with the **M100 Sanssouci Media Award**, honouring a European personality who, through his or her work has left their mark on Europe. The award reflects their service to the safeguarding of freedom of expression and the deepening of democracy in Europe as well as their outstanding achievements in promoting European understanding and communication.



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This year, the Board has chosen **Hans-Dietrich Genscher**, former German Foreign Minister and senior government member, in recognition of his services to Germany and Europe in fostering international peace and understanding and in overcoming the German and European divide. His work for German reunification is particularly appropriate in 2009, the 20 year anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The organisers are delighted to announce that **André Azoulay**, who is adviser to the King of Morocco and who has championed inter-religious dialogue all his life, has agreed to address the conference in a keynote address during the closing session. Other speakers and participants include: **Octavia Nasr** (CNN), **Jasim Al-Azawi** (Al Jazeera English), **Abed Al-Bari Atwan** (Al-Quds Al-Arabi), **John Burns** (New York Times London), **Kai Diekmann** (BILD), **Roger Köppel** (Weltwoche), **Mathias Müller von Blumencron** (Der Spiegel), **Prof. Tariq Ramadan** (European Muslim Network/Oxford University), **Flemming Rose** (Jyllands Posten), **Dr. Frank Schirmmacher** (FAZ), **Oktay Ekşi** (Hürriyet), **Denis MacShane MP** (former Europe Minister) and **Gwyneth Williams** (BBC World Service).

## Notes for editors

- Launched in 2005, the **M100 Sanssouci Colloquium**, a media 'Davos', was conceived by a group of leading media and public figures as a unique forum bringing together Europe's top editors, commentators and media owners (print, broadcasting and internet) alongside key public figures to assess the role and impact of the media in European and international affairs.
- M100 is organised by the **city of Potsdam**, state capital of Brandenburg, **Potsdam Media International e.V.** and the **Institute for Strategic Dialogue**, London, and is part of the series of events of the international Media Week Berlin-Brandenburg.
- This year's M100 Colloquium will be facilitated with the generous support of **Robert Bosch Foundation**, the **Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg**, and the **Vodafone Foundation Germany**.

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