



**13<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY ASSEMBLY**  
**of the WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS**  
**JERUSALEM, 26-27 JANUARY 2009**

**HEADQUARTERS REPORTS**

Inter-Religious Affairs

## **INTER-RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS**

Following the Governing Board in Ashkelon (Israel) in September 2008, an Inter-faith Commission was established to coordinate the work of all WJC bodies on this issue. The Commission, consisting of Mikhail Chlenov, Serge Cwajgenbaum, Betty Ehrenberg, Claudio Epelman (by telephone), Myriam Glikerman, Isabella Nespoli, John Malkinson, Peleg Reshef, Maram Stern and Laurence Weinbaum, met in Brussels on 04 of December 2008, and agreed to share information on the activities of the regions and try to coordinate them. Rabbi Marc Schneider also participated in the meeting by telephone in relation to Jewish-Muslim Relations. Michael Schneider, Secretary General participated in the meeting and at the dinner afterwards with Father Norbert Hoffman, Secretary of the Pontifical Commission for the Relations with the Jews, and Father Oliver Lahl, personal secretary of Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Relations with the Jews.

### **Catholic-Jewish Relations**

The WJC has continued its substantive high-level and institutional dialogue with the Catholic Church, with the Vatican and the National Bishops' Conferences.

Working through the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), the WJC has also supported specific outreach and cooperation especially concerning the Good Friday Latin Liturgy, the Pius XII controversy and the preparation of the ILC meeting in Budapest in held November 2008.

In Ciudad de Mexico (Mexico) from 9 to 10 September 2008, the Latin American Jewish Congress and the Bishops' Conference of the Latin American Bishops organized a joint meeting for the first time to increase their cooperation.

In the Vatican on 30 October 2008, WJC Deputy Secretary General Maram Stern and CRIF President Richard Prasquier were amongst the members of an IJCIC Delegation received by Pope Benedict XVI.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of International Catholic-Jewish Committee (ILC) was held in Budapest (Hungary) from 9 to 12 November 2008. The WJC delegation was composed of Rabbi Marc Schneier (USA), CRIF President Richard Prasquier (France), Rabbi Polakoff (Argentina), WJDC Ariel Rodal and WJDC Daniel Speckman. The meeting was hosted by the Federation of Jewish Communities of Hungary and the Hungarian Catholic Bishops' Conference.

In Essen (Germany) on 16 November 2008 WJC Deputy Secretary General Maram Stern was invited by Mgr. Martin Krebs, Papal Nuncio to Mali, to his ordination as Bishop conducted by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Pontifical Secretary of State.

In Antwerp (Belgium) on 5 January 2009, WJC Deputy Secretary General Maram Stern participated at the ordination of Mgr. Johan Jozef Bonny, former advisor to Cardinal Walter Kasper, as a Bishop.

### **Other Christian-Jewish Relations**

In relation to Protestant Churches the dialogue remains still difficult, especially with the international coordination organization, the World Council of Churches, based in Geneva, even if in America and some other countries the relations are good.

With the Christian Orthodox Churches the dialogue is slow, but the door to dialogue is open, especially with the Constantinople Patriarchate and his European representative, Metropolitan Emmanuel in Paris. During the WJC Inter-faith Commission meeting in Brussels it was decided to step up relations with the Russian Christian Orthodox Church.

### **Muslim-Jewish Relations**

In New York (USA) on 18 November 2008 WJC President Ronald Lauder meet Saudi King Abdullah. WJC Secretary General Michael Schneider and Chairman of the WJC USA Rabbi Marc Schneier also participated at the meeting. The meeting was the reaffirmation of the commitment taken at the interreligious meeting held in Madrid in July 2008.

In New York (USA) on 19 November 2008, WJC USA Chairman Rabbi Marc Schneier participated in the special UN Conference on inter-faith dialogue which took place at the UN General Assembly General.

In Kazan (Tatarstan – Russia) from 30 November to 4 December 2008, WJDC Director Peleg Reshef participated in the International Youth Forum on Intercultural Dialogue and its Religious Dimension.

In Paris (France) from 15 to 17 December 2008 at UNESCO HQ WJC USA Chairman Rabbi Marc Schneier participated at the Third Congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace organized by the World Congress of Imams and Rabbis for Peace and 'Hommes de Parole'.

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