

Report on the seminar : **Liberalism & Religiosity**

Gummersbach, Germany

7-19 March 2010

By: **Hanadi Zughayyar**

Seminar: The topic, program, participants, accommodation, moderators and facilitators were excellent. But the seminar was too long and it could have been accomplished in 8 days instead of 2 weeks.

Program : Subjects tackled were very interesting and created very intensive discussions. But a lot of the topics had been repeated during the seminar which lead to some overlapping and let some of us feel bored. The program would have been more interesting if a comparison of religions was tackled.

Methods : The participants worked in working groups then each group would give a short presentation. This working group technique is the best way to involve everybody in discussions and input.

Lectures were partly boring. The ice breaking technique was not used although this method would have been very fruitful in knowing the other and interacting.

Distributed material : very crucial and we benefited a lot from all the materials which were distributed to the participants.

External visits: were really interesting and full of information like visiting the Parliament in Munich, plus the lecture on Religion by Dr. Mariano Babato. As for the visit to the tolerance museum, I could not find any relevance or need to visit such a place especially with no connection to our topic. If tolerance is the issue, then why not visit a mosque or Buddhist center.

Our visit to this Jewish museum is a controversial issue, plus you see so many photos of Jerusalem showing only Jews as if they are the only ones living there. This contradicts the principle of tolerance and coexistence. Ever body knows that Palestine and Israel are countries for all religions and in particular “Jerusalem” is a holy city to Christians and Moslems and not only Jews. It is a country with a complicated conflict since 60 years .

Munich : was so nice and interesting. But it was a pity that we could not visit museums as it was a weekend.

The lecture of Dr. Karl Hans was very interesting and on high level.

Participants : the best group I have met until now. Variety in nationalities, religions, cultures and races, and the interaction and discussions were very intensive.

Translation : was excellent. But the translations in the external events (from German to English to Arabic) was sometimes not very clear and one feels lost sometimes.

Accommodation : was comfortable and good. But meals were a problem as most of the Moslems do not eat pork and this gave us fewer options.