

IofC's Open Meeting Series

Theme: Living together

Guest speaker: H.E. Ambassador Ms. Lamia Radi,

Head of Mission, Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Oslo.

Date: 27th April 2017

Venue: Initiatives of Change (IofC), Sophus Lies gate 5, 0264 Oslo, Telephone: +47 22 55 73 93

Time: 7 – 9.00 PM



Abstract: The ‘global village’ is today experiencing a wave of polarization and insecurity on a scale possibly not experienced since the end of the second-world war. The recent and much discussed United Kingdom’s exit from the EU (Brexit) and the election of President Donald Trump in the United States have been associated with heightened nationalistic and anti-Muslim sentiments within these countries. While both events may also be attributed to increasing inequality, unemployment and poverty within specific sub-groups in both countries, a clear result has been the increase in societal polarization and negative tensions directed against immigrants and Muslim sub-groups/cultures.

In Europe, the experience of societal polarization has been accentuated by Brexit and the nascent Trump administration. The recently concluded presidential and parliamentary elections in Austria and the Netherlands (respectively); the ongoing politicking towards the soon-to-occur French presidential elections; and the build-up to the German federal elections in the fall of 2017 all provide clear examples of how socially polarizing ‘identity-based’ political ideologies are driving a wedge between sub-groups in our societies. Religion, race and immigrant/native pedigree appear to have a stronger say now - than at any other time in the past 70 years - in defining acceptance, belonging and inclusion in the European nation-state.

Norway is not isolated from this increasingly globalized narrative. Some people are of the opinion that the past four years with a far-right party as an active player in the sitting government may have contributed to increasing societal polarization in the Norwegian society, in line with the observable trends in Europe and the United States of America. This means that religion, ethnicity and immigrant/native status may now be playing a larger role (than many are ready to admit) in defining how individuals, groups and sub-cultures are perceived, accepted and included in the Norwegian society. One predictable result of this being increasing distrust and polarization in the society.

IofC is an organization that aims to build bridges of trust across the world’s divides. Learning to live together is central to how we can move closer to this goal, whether as individuals, in families, within the larger society and even internationally. It is our hope that the visit and open seminar with H.E. Ambassador Ms. Lamia Radi will inspire us and will provide us with an extra impetus to speak more with each other in-order to combat increasing social polarization and build trust in Norway, in Europe, and in the world in general.



Building trust across the world's divides

Initiatives of Change **Norge**

Program:

7:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.

- Opening of the meeting with a brief word about IofC and the IofC center in Norway
- Introduction of the special guests and panel members
- Presentation of the evening's program

7:15 p.m. to 7:35 p.m.

- Speech by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco: H.E. Ms. Lamia Radi

Theme: Living together - how to continue to live together peacefully and productively in today's world.

7:35 p.m. to 8:05 p.m.

- Panel discussion

Theme: Is it possible for people with different cultures and religious backgrounds to live together peacefully and productively in today's world? If yes, how can this be achieved and what lessons can be learned from the past? What are the implications for Europe and the world as a whole? What are the implications for Norway and the Norwegian society? What role can IofC play in these regards?

Panel: H.E. Dr. Ms. Lamia Radi, Dr. Sturla Stålsett, Mr. Shoaib Sultan

Moderator: Jorulf Brøvig Silde (Leader of the Board, IofC Norway)

8:05 p.m. to 8:20 p.m.

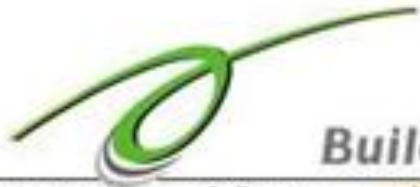
- Coffee/tea break with musical interlude

8:20 p.m. to 8:45 p.m.

- Space for questions and answers from the audience

8:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

- Vote of thanks with presentation of gifts to the speakers/panelists and the moderator.
- Closing remarks
- Closure.



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Initiatives of Change Norge

Initiatives of Change's Open Meeting Series:



The above picture was taken at Initiatives of Change's International Conference center in Caux, Switzerland.

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The IofC Open meeting series is meant to stimulate learning and to initiate action for change through, knowledge, dialogue, debate and reconciliation in a friendly, peaceful and open environment.

Short bios:

H.E. Ambassador Dr. Ms. Lamia Radi:



Ambassador Radi was born on the 6th of April 1968 in Rabat, Morocco. She obtained a Ph.D. in Political Sciences at the Paris Institute of Political Studies, and a Masters degree in International Relations at the Sorbonne University. She started her professional career in 1998 as a technical advisor to the Moroccan Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, and thereafter became an advisor to the Moroccan vice Minister of Foreign Affairs. She has previously been in charge of Cultural Affairs at the Moroccan Embassy in Paris and a Director at the Moroccan Royal Institute of Strategic Studies and the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. She was assigned to her current position as Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco in Oslo in the fall of 2016. Ambassador Radi is the president and founder of the Foundation “Memories for the Future” in Morocco that is involved in countering youth radicalization. She is a member of the Association « Jossour Forum of Moroccan Women » involved in promoting gender equality, education for women and social mediation. She speaks Arabic, French, English and Spanish and she is married with a son.

Picture source: Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Norway.

Dr. Sturla J. Stålsett:



Sturla Johan Stålsett was born on the 16th of April 1964. He obtained a Ph.D in Theology in 1998 at the Theological Faculty of the University of Oslo, and he qualified as a priest in 1989 after studies at the Norwegian School of Theology. He has also undertaken undergraduate studies in Political Science. Sturla served as Secretary General of the Inner-City outreach organization ‘Kirkens Bymisjon’ between 2006 and 2014. He also served as the parish priest for the Norwegian Lutheran Church’s diocese in Sagene and Illdalen in 2014. Sturla is currently a Professor of Diaconal work, religion and society at the Norwegian School of Theology, and is the leader of the voluntary social workers’ association ‘Frivillighet Norge’. He is very fond of rock music and has two children.

Picture source: www.mf.no.

Shoaib Sultan:



Shoaib Sultan was born on the 22nd of December 1973. He is an Adviser with the Norwegian Center against Racism, which is a non-government organization with a central objective to combat racism and discrimination and to promote a culturally diverse and socially just society in Norway. Shoaib has previously worked as Communications director with the European Council of Religious Leaders and as the General Secretary of the Islamic Council in Norway. He is an active member of the Green political party (Miljøpartiet De Grønne) and is currently a member of the Oslo City Council.

Picture source: www.oslo.kommune.no