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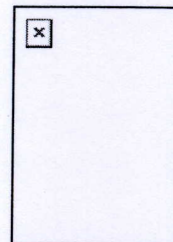
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"Raising the New Generation with a Foundation of Values and Tradition: Religious Perspectives",

It is a great honour for me to represent the Council of Europe here today at this 8th Annual Conference of the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue.

The conference theme, "Raising the New Generation with a Foundation of Values and Tradition: Religious Perspectives", struck a particular chord with the Council of Europe, which has placed intercultural dialogue, including its religious aspects, at the heart of its concerns and its work on democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which are the Council of Europe's fundamental values.

2008 was an especially rich and productive year for the Council of Europe in the area of intercultural dialogue. It took four main steps in this field:

The first was the adoption by the Committee of Ministers, the Organisation's highest authority, of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. The sub-title of this document – "Living Together as Equals in Dignity" – sums up in a few words the idea of a peaceable democratic society in pursuance of which the Council of Europe offers its sixty years of experience, expertise and exchange.

The White Paper sets out standards for the management of cultural and religious diversity and describes how our governance bodies, our education and youth policies and our policies on social and cultural affairs, civil society, religious communities and the media might provide new answers to the questions that are being raised by an increasingly multicultural Europe.

The White Paper has become a kind of bestseller as it already exists in 15 language