

Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue:  
***Strengthening trust and embracing hope for our  
common future***

*Organized by the Italian Parliament and the Inter-Parliamentary Union with the  
support of Religions for Peace*

**Rome, 19-21 June 2025**

Friday, 20 June 2025

09:00 – 12:30

14:00 – 17:00

**General Debate**

*Parliamentarians in dialogue with religion and belief:  
Strengthening trust and embracing hope for our common  
future  
(Plenary Hall of the Chamber of Deputies)*

Speech by Mr. Boban KARAPEJOVSKI, Head of Delegation of the Assembly of the  
Republic of North Macedonia

Distinguished Presidents, esteemed hosts from the Italian Parliament and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, fellow parliamentarians,

It is a great honor to address here in Rome, a city that has, for centuries, stood as a crossroad of faith, dialogue and civilization. It is also a great opportunity for us, as lawmakers from diverse nations, to gather and reflect on one of the most urgent tasks of our time: strengthening trust and embracing hope in a world often divided by fear and misunderstanding.

As parliamentarians, we are not only lawmakers. We are bridge-builders. We have the

moral responsibility to ensure that our legal systems protect freedom of belief, promote respect for diversity, and create safe platforms for dialogue.

Macedonia as a country is a home to multiple religious traditions—Orthodox, Muslim, Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, and others—all woven into the social fabric of our democratic state. Dialogue among religions and beliefs is not a theoretical concept for us; it is a daily practice and a necessity for social harmony.

Allow me to underline that leaders of religious communities - Archbishop of the Macedonian Orthodox Church – Archbishopric of Ohrid, the Head of the Islamic Religious Community, the Superintendent of the Evangelical Methodist Church and the President of the Jewish Community in Macedonia have recently (last May) signed a “Declaration against violent extremism”.

Religious leaders sent a clear message that there is no place for violent extremism and religious radicalism. They committed to strengthening mutual cooperation, to act proactively against any form of hatred and any speech that incites intolerance, as well as against potential threats to coexistence and public safety. It was also pointed out that religious communities are among the key factors in preventing and curbing violent extremism because their presence and activities with believers can be of great benefit in strengthening communities.

Gathered in the spirit of mutual respect and guided by a sense of shared responsibility, the signatories are aware of their role in preserving social peace, and agree, as an expression of a common determination, to build dignified coexistence and resilience against violent extremism. They are aware that our country, as a secular state, is a common home of different peoples, cultures and beliefs, and that coexistence is a value that must constantly be nurtured and protected. It is stated that the community must face the abuse of religion as a pretext for division and violence, with increasingly common forms of hate speech and processes of radicalization that lead to violence and violent extremism.

Trust begins with listening. As leaders, we must engage faith communities as partners—not just in moments of crisis, but in shaping a vision for a shared future.

Hope, dear colleagues, is not just an emotion—it is a political act. When we invest in inclusive education, when we support interfaith youth programs, when we promote religious literacy, we are actively building hope.

Let us take inspiration from the Eternal City—where the ancient and the modern live side by side—and return to our parliaments with renewed commitment to build societies grounded in mutual respect, open dialogue, and lasting peace.

On behalf of the Macedonian Assembly, I thank you—and I look forward to the continued work we will do together.

Thank you.