

Abschlussveranstaltung: "MuslimInnen gegen
Antisemitismus

Haus der Europäischen Union, 06. Mai 2019

Grußworte von S.E. Trevor D. Traina, US-Botschafter in Österreich

Hello.

It is an honor to be here today to recognize the Muslim Youth Austria for their initiative "Muslims Against Anti-Semitism."

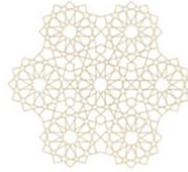
First, let me start by wishing you all "Ramadan Kareem." The holy month of Ramadan started this weekend. I wish the Muslim community of Austria and around the world a blessed Ramadan.

Ramadan is a month when Muslims around the world reflect on their faith and how they can give back to the community. This commitment to community service is something the Muslim Youth Austria display year-round. That is particularly true during Ramadan, with the "Fast, Share, Help" initiative that empowers young Austrians to serve to those less fortunate.

The U.S. Embassy has had an excellent relationship with the Muslim Youth Austria for over a decade. We have consistently admired their passion and dedication to serving not just the Muslim community, but Austria as a whole. This is why we were proud to support their initiative "Muslims Against Anti-Semitism," which we did through a grant from the Department of State's Alumni Innovation Engagement Fund.

You may not know, but Canan, Nermina, and Adis all participated in the U.S. Embassy's Generation Next exchange program, which took them to the United States for three weeks to liaise with civic leaders and community organizers in Baltimore, DC, Des Moines, and San Diego.

When they first came to us with the idea for this campaign, we supported it one-hundred percent. Anti-Semitism is not new. Anti-Semitism is not unique to one community. It is a plague that can take root in any community, in any part of the world, as we saw recently in



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the United States with the horrible attack by a right-wing extremist on innocent worshipers at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

Anti-Semitism is not always violent. It often exists in ugly words said privately in homes or in distasteful jokes made among friends. But latent anti-Semitism can turn violent without notice. This is why initiatives such as "Muslims Against Anti-Semitism" are so important. Combating anti-Semitism is not just about shaming those with anti-Semitic views. It is not about blaming whole populations for the actions of some. It is about the communities themselves standing up and saying, "this is not ok." It is about having the courage to tell our parents, our friends, our co-workers that anti-Semitic words and actions have no place in our communities.

Freedom of religion is one of the fundamental pillars of American society. We must do everything we can to ensure that nobody feels threatened because of their chosen faith, be it the Jewish, Muslim, Christian, or any other faith.

For this reason, I applaud the Muslim Youth Austria and its leadership for taking a courageous step to assert that anti-Semitism has no place in Islam, in the Muslim community, or inside Austria.

Thank-you for your attention.