

EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION

A RESEARCH AND EXCHANGE CONSORTIUM
THAT CONNECTS INDIVIDUALS,
ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS
IN A SPIRIT OF SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION

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The Project

In 2016, the **Foundation for Religious Sciences John XXIII (Fscire)** set about creating a large member-based **research network**, connecting organizations which deal with **religious studies** in Europe.

Scholarly associations working in the field of religious studies have been active throughout Europe for decades. These were created to guarantee an exchange among generations of teachers and students. Each association has its own epistemological specificity, and each is characterized by different methodological directions and research topics. In addition to these associations, there are numerous scientific societies, research centers, university departments, working groups, and a variety of organizations who engage in this field of study.

Fscire has made a substantial **database** of these organizations in Europe (over 1800 surveyed), confirming the extent of the phenomenon and the need to equip this 'archipelago' with a common foundation.

This need has become all the more pressing now that the debate on religions poses key challenges for our societies. Fscire endeavors to respond to this necessity by promoting the establishment of a European Academy of Religion: a research and exchange consortium that connects individuals, organizations and institutions in a spirit of scientific cooperation.

The making of the database started in July 2015 and **surveyed more than 1800 institutions**

Initial contacts with the institutions and scholars surveyed began in the summer of 2016. **Approximately 3000 invitations were sent out** and the response was overwhelmingly positive: the proposal was accepted by a large number of those contacted, and support arrived not only from **Europe**, but also from the **Near East and Maghreb**.

25 universities agreed to act as **mentors** of the Academy in tandem with the University of Bologna, Oxford and Paris, who have been active supporters of the initiative from the outset.

The project has also received positive reception from the Italian and European institutional sector: the initiative has received the **High Patronage of the European Parliament**, the **Patronage of the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**. It has also enjoyed the direct participation of the **European Commissioner for Innovation and Research**, Carlos Moedas, and the **Special Envoy of the European Commission for the Promotion of Religious Freedom**, Ján Figel'.

Details:

- Europe: 346 institutions, 449 participants;
- Middle East and the Caucasus: 11 institutions, 16 participants;
- Maghreb: 8 institutions, 29 participants;
- Russia: 3 institutions, 3 participants;
- America and Asia: 14 bodies, 21 participants.





Launch event

The complete list of participants is available on the website:

www.europeanacademyofreligion.org

The **launch event** of the European Academy of Religion occurred on December 5, 2016 in the **Aula Magna Santa Lucia of the University of Bologna**.

More than **three hundred institutions** (research centers and scholarly associations, departments and scientific journals, publishers and media) supported the Academy's founding, with more than **five hundred delegates** participating in the conference.

The launch event was an opportunity for everyone to meet, discuss and to raise awareness about the institutions with which they are affiliated. In order to foster mutual understanding and encourage dialogue, an alphabetical catalog of all parties, containing brief descriptions of their activities and research topics was distributed on the day of the event: the research **Yellow Pages**.

The day opened with the keynote speeches of **Commissioner Moedas** and other distinguished academics and representatives of OSCE/ODIHR, UNESCO, the World Economic Forum, and many others.

Then, researchers and scholars worked together in **three parallel working sessions** in order to:

- define a **statute** for the Academy;
- organize the first **annual meeting**;
- submit proposals and ideas for the **research platform**.

The proposals and suggestions made within the three discussion groups were collected and examined by the moderators of each committee. Together with the organizational secretariat, moderators make up the **international board** of the newly-formed Association.

The results of the activities of the board were presented on January 2, 2017 through a letter sent to all participants and posted on the website of the European Academy of Religion.







Ex Nihilo Zero Conference

The participants' interest and enthusiasm convinced the board to explore the opportunity to organize a **second meeting** this year, whose primary objective will be to **approve its Statute and test the Academy's capacity to be an inclusive platform of exchange and cooperation** (in preparation for the first annual conference to be held in March, 2018). Therefore, the conference program will be structured so as to allow the affiliated institutions to **present studies and ongoing activities**.

The European Academy of Religion aims:

- to offer an exchange platform to Academies and scientific Societies, Research Centers and Institutions, University Labs and Clusters, and qualified Journals, Scientific Publishers and Media;
- to act as an inclusive network of networks open to all disciplines in the European and Mena Countries as well as in the Balkans, Caucasus, and Russia, in order to support their exchange and cooperation;
- to provide an open space to those who work in the production and/or dissemination of knowledge in and of the religious field;
- to give voice to all the disciplines with an academic status in the universities or research centers, with their own distinctive and specific epistemological traditions;
- to be an instrument to make visible the academic institutions and centers of a very large and diverse set of disciplines to the public opinion and decision makers through a public, open-access web platform and an annual convention;
- to adopt an inclusive approach and encourage disciplinary and interdisciplinary research in the perspective of open research, cultural diplomacy, dialogue among thinkers, peaceful relationships among cultural systems, and intellectual international cooperation.

The **Ex Nihilo Zero Conference** will be held in Bologna from **Sunday, June 18th to Thursday, June 22nd**.

During the conference, there will be panels, discussions, master classes, a marketplace for the publishers, and cultural events.

In order to encourage the participation of graduate students and young researchers, the Academy will offer **one hundred grants**.

Conference costs will be partially covered by the participants (through membership fees) and private donors (namely, the organizational costs and the cultural events).

The conference will be advertised on the Twitter profile associated with the European Academy of Religion and on the social profiles of its members, as well as on the dedicated website.

Scholars and groups of scholars are invited to present individual papers or panels.

Societies or groups who want to hold their own meetings and conferences during the “Zero Conference” are also welcome.

Publishers may be given a space to display their publications, meet with scholars, and receive proposals from the participants.

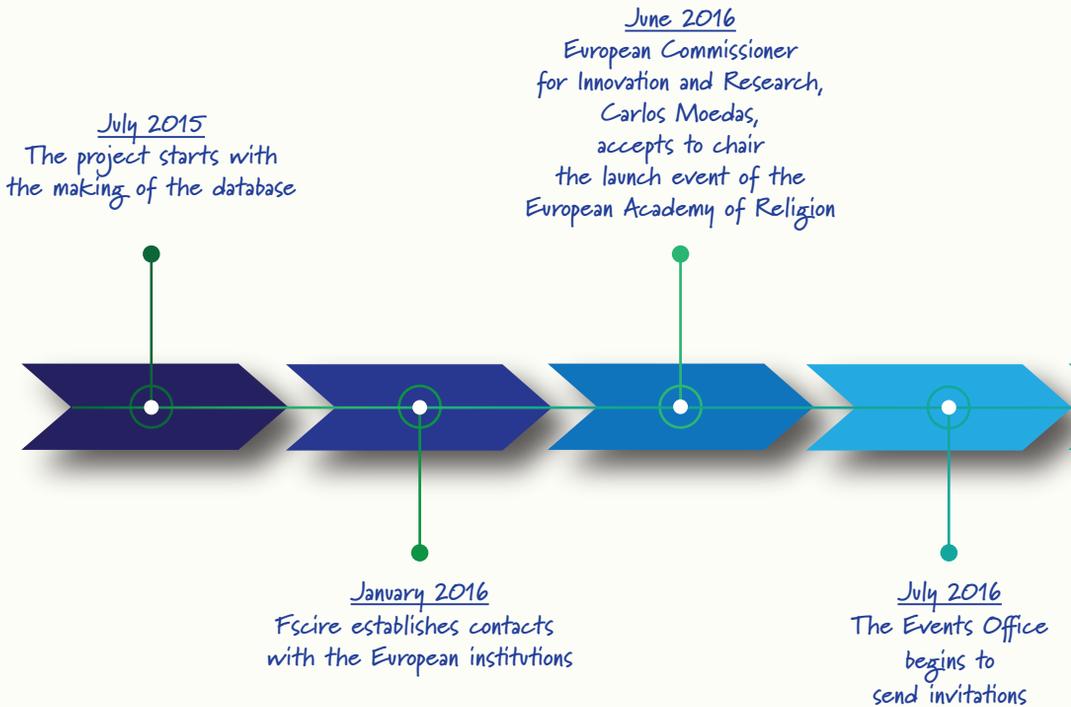
Institutional and private **donors** who want to launch calls and research projects will have the opportunity to meet with scholars and research groups.

Fscire will organize complimentary artistic events and guided tours for the registered participants, and partially fund the gala dinner.

Fscire has also sought the cooperation of the institutional agents who have acted as **patrons** of the launch event.

The Ex Nihilo Zero Conference will be held under the High Patronage of the European Parliament and under the Patronage of the European Commission representation in Italy; the Italian Commission for UNESCO; the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research; the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; the University of Bologna; the National Research Council (CNR) and the Bologna Municipality.

In 2016, patrons of the initiative were: the **European Parliament**, some of the members of the **Unesco UniTwin** network, the **Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**, the **Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research**, the **Bologna Municipality**.



EvARE Timeline

December 5, 2016
Launch event

January 16, 2017
Registrations to the
Ex Nihilo Zero Conference
are open

January 2, 2017
Letter to the participants:
announcement of the
Ex Nihilo Zero Conference

June 18-22, 2017
Ex Nihilo
Zero Conference





Fscire Profile

Established in 1953, the Foundation of Religious Sciences, John XXIII (FSCIRE), is a research institute specialized in Christianity and other religions. It continues the research in history of Christianity begun by Giuseppe Dossetti (1913-1996) and developed by Giuseppe Alberigo (1926-2007), who has been the director for almost fifty years.

The editorial activity which derives from such research is expressed in a journal (*Cristianesimo nella Storia*) and in book collections which are published in various languages with an international audience.

The Foundation participates in and promotes cooperation with research and scientific centres. Some of the core experiences of the institute – the history of Vatican II, the new edition of the decrees of the councils, the edition of the Roncalli Diaries, the Dictionary of religious historical knowledge of the Twentieth century – were made possible by consolidated collaborations which became channels for training a young generation of scholars.

The most important pillars of the research activity of FSCIRE are the books and the journals held by the Giuseppe Dossetti library: new acquisitions are selected during a weekly reunion on the basis of the latest reviews, which appear on nearly 1.000 journals in subscription. In addition to the library, the Foundation holds a large archive with significant documents concerning the Second Vatican Council and the major figures of contemporary Christianity. The archive includes also audio and visual documents.

Because of its leading position and strategic capability to offer a unique set of sources for the research, in 2014 the Italian Government inserted FSCIRE within the Italian research system as a National Research Infrastructure on historical religious studies.

FSCIRE also hosts the UNESCO Chair in Religious Pluralism and Peace of the University of Bologna. The Chairholder is Professor Alberto Melloni.

Profilo
Fscire



fscire.it
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PER LO SCIO FIDELITÀ

www.europeanacademyofreligion.org