



2025

# ACTIVITY OF WORK

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# EDITORIAL NOTE

It is a great pleasure and gratitude to welcome you to the Enhancing Faith Institutions (EFI) 2025 activity report. This is an opportunity for us to share the success we have achieved as an organisation to serve the diverse communities online and offline across 2025. We dedicate our work to benefit and equip the communities with the skills required to tackle the issues we face together, such as the rise in hate crimes, attacks on faith institutions, and the growing narrative of the far right in Europe. A key focus for us over this year has been to continue on the work delivered by the EU Funded SOAR project that finished in 2023. EFI are proud to be involved in three newly funded projects as part of the Internal Security Fund focusing on the protection of public spaces across Europe. As part of these projects, we are in partnership with over 50 organisations in Europe and engaged in over 15 member states.

EFI successfully delivered the fourth Muslim European Empowerment Programme (MEET) in the city of Kristiansand, Norway. The MEET programme is a unique programme and important initiative to promote intra-faith and interfaith dialogue, building capacity of key stakeholders to address the challenges facing Muslims in Europe and to celebrate the achievements and contributions being made to European life by Muslim leaders.

As well as delivering on our key agendas, the EFI management team participated and engaged in various external engagements and conferences sharing our expertise and learnings in the arena of community development capacity building. EFI attended the EU Operators Forum to talk about the rising threats and incidents against Mosques and Muslims across Europe. We have had the pleasure of presenting our experiences and work at various EU-Funded Sister Projects across Europe as well as the international stage with our engagement with the OSCE, UNAOC and UNOCT.



# Engaged in the launch of the VIRTUOUS project in Limoges, France

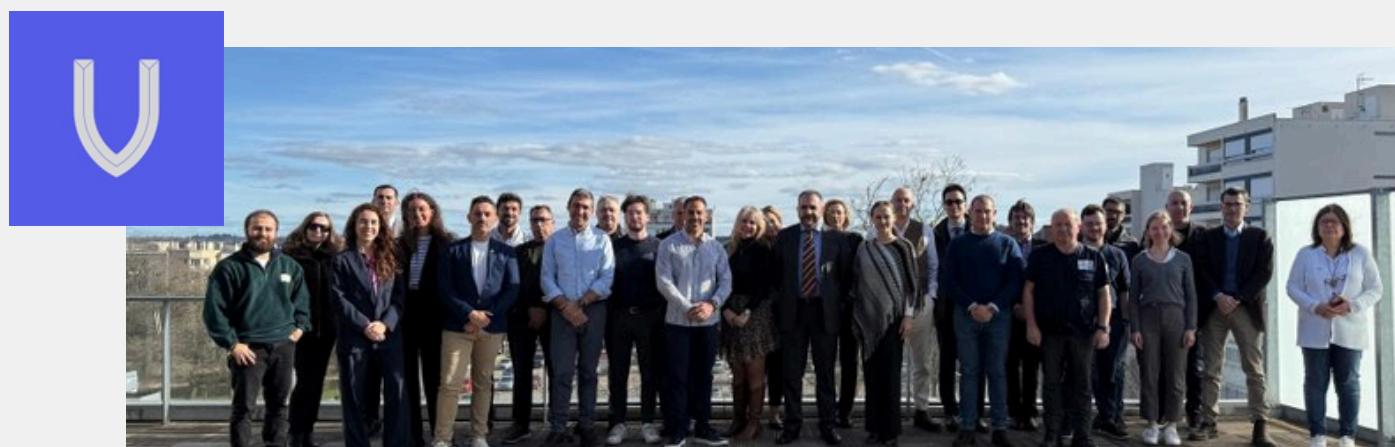
Enhancing Faith Institutions took part in the newly funded VIRTUOUS project's first kick off meeting held in Limoges, France on 18-20th March 2025.

The newly funded EU ISF project, titled "Virtuous," Vulnerability, Risk Assessment Tools and Training Exercises for the Active Protection of Religious Buildings, led by PUI based in Limoges, France, aims to enhance the protection of Places of Worship across Europe. EFI are a key part of the consortium of this project, with organisations and representation from over ten other EU member states.

Through innovative strategies, Virtuous will facilitate collaborative dialogue and interaction between different faith institutions and communities. The consortium will develop tailored security training programs, risk assessments, technology development and create digital platforms to amplify the security preparedness of religious institutions across Europe.

By leveraging the strengths of various stakeholders, including local governments, community groups, and academic institutions, the project seeks to create a supportive environment for faith institutions. This will empower them to be more secure and safe against potential threats and deliver sustainable and long lasting change.

EFI are excited to have the responsibility as Work Package leaders, leading the delivery of training and engagement with various faith communities on the ground across various EU states. EFI aim to build upon the success of the SOAR project and our direct engagements with communities related to development of best practice resources and innovative tools and technologies.



# Engaged in VIRTUOUS Transnational Meeting & Project Launch at Jewish Museum in Thessaloniki

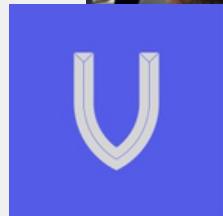
The Virtuous Project convened a Transnational Project Meeting in October in Thessaloniki, Greece, bringing together partners from across Europe to review progress and strategize for upcoming project activities.

The meeting featured presentations across multiple Work Packages, discussions on project outputs, and a press conference highlighting the project's role in enhancing community security and cross-sector collaborations.

As part of the transnational meeting, The VIRTUOUS team delivered a press conference which gathered representatives from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities supported by the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki to reaffirm a shared commitment: protecting places of worship is safeguarding the human spirit.

Their discussion underscored how interfaith cooperation fosters not only peace but also practical approaches to collective security.

A message from the Office of the Prime Minister of Greece reinforced that such initiatives are essential to building trust and resilience across societies. The conference highlighted that true security emerges when faith, scientific understanding, and public trust work together.



# The 4th MEET Conference Held in Kristiansand With European Leaders

From May 2-5, 2025, the Muslim European Empowerment Programme (MEET) hosted its Fourth Annual Conference and Leadership Retreat in Kristiansand, Norway, as part of European Democracy Week. This landmark event brought together Muslim leaders from 13 European countries to engage in critical discussions on democracy, interfaith collaboration, and the challenges facing Muslim communities across the continent.

The conference featured 30 distinguished leaders from across the EU, fostering dialogue on pressing issues such as Islamophobia, democratic values, and the Israel-Palestine conflict. Through a series of panels, workshops, and strategic discussions, participants explored solutions to strengthen democratic engagement and promote positive change within European societies.



MEET 2025 is a vital platform for empowering Muslim leaders and reinforcing democratic principles through dialogue and action. By gathering diverse voices, we aim to build resilience, foster understanding, and contribute to a more inclusive Europe.

The conference is part of a broader initiative to combat polarization and enhance interfaith cooperation, ensuring that Muslim communities play an active role in shaping Europe's democratic future.



# EFI Joins SHIELDed Consortium at Kick-Off Meeting in Lisbon

The Enhancing Faith Institutions (EFI) proudly participated in the SHIELDed Kick-Off Meeting held in Lisbon on May 21st and 22nd, marking the official launch of a groundbreaking ISF funded project by the European Union. The meeting, led by Innovative Prison Systems (IPS) hosted at the Centro de Informação Urbana de Lisboa, gathered leading organizations committed to strengthening multi-sectoral cooperation and capacity-building in security and inclusion.

Throughout the two-day event, consortium partners engaged in structured discussions on project objectives, key deliverables, and strategic action plans across multiple work packages. EFI led the WP5 session, focusing on local-level awareness and remembrance mechanisms, emphasizing the role of community engagement in fostering resilience.

Key agenda highlights included:

- SHIELDed project overview, presented by IPS, outlining expected outcomes and target groups.
- Multi-sectoral cooperation strategies addressing knowledge exchange to mitigate security threats.
- Vulnerability mapping frameworks led by FUNDEA, exploring multi-level assessment approaches.
- Capacity-building programs structured by IPS, ensuring comprehensive training initiatives.
- Dissemination, sustainability & communication efforts detailed by Blue Line.

EFI remains committed to advancing inclusive awareness mechanisms and strengthening local resilience through the SHIELDed framework.



# EFI at the PARTES Final Conference in Vienna



On June 15–16, 2025, Vienna became a hub of interfaith collaboration and security innovation as the final conference of the PARTES Project convened experts, faith leaders, and civil society actors from across Europe. Among the key contributors was Enhancing Faith Institutions (EFI), our presence underscored the organisation's pivotal role in safeguarding places of worship and fostering resilient faith communities.

The event, titled “Protecting Places of Worship in Context and Beyond – Mapping Hate, Developing Responses,” showcased the culmination of the PARTES Project’s work in addressing the growing threats to religious sites. Central to the discussions was the unveiling of the Guardian Approach—a holistic framework integrating physical security, cyber resilience, community engagement, and psychosocial support.

EFI’s contribution focused on the SOAR Project, a flagship initiative funded by the EU and led by EFI in partnership with Finn Church Aid and the Architects’ Council of Europe. SOAR—Strengthening the Security and Resilience of At-Risk Religious Sites and Communities—has been instrumental in developing practical tools and training to help faith institutions across Europe respond to evolving security challenges. At the conference, EFI presented its work on building a legacy of resilience, highlighting how the SOAR project empowers places of worship to adopt a “security by design” approach while preserving their openness and spiritual mission.

The Vienna gathering was more than a showcase—it was a call to action. EFI’s participation reinforced the importance of inclusive, community-led strategies in countering hate and extremism. By sharing insights from SOAR’s pilot projects and digital tools, EFI demonstrated how faith institutions can become not only safer but also more connected and confident in their role as pillars of European civil society.

# Launching The Dublin Local Shielding Council



## Enhancing Faith Institutions Launched The First Dublin Local Shielding Council With Key Leaders As Part of The SHIELDED Project

The launch of the Dublin Local Shielding Council, delivered by Enhancing Faith Institutions (EFI), is a pioneering initiative under the EU-funded SHIELDED programme to enhance safety and resilience for places of worship across Europe.

Held at the offices of Enhancing Faith Institutions (EFI), the launch brought together faith leaders, community representatives, and safeguarding advocates to shape the vision and priorities of the Dublin Local Shielding Council. The gathering served as a collaborative forum to exchange insights, align on objectives, and initiate coordinated actions to advance community-led safety strategies that reflect the needs of Dublin's diverse religious communities.

### Key Highlights:

- Strategic Frameworks Unveiled: The Council The SHIELDED WP2 safety framework was presented as a reference point to guide future discussions.
- Consortium Collaboration: Representatives from EFI engaged in open dialogue to share initial perspectives, align on shared goals, and begin shaping a collaborative roadmap for the Council's work over the next two years.
- Training and Capacity Building: The Council initiated a needs-based discussion to identify priority areas for future capacity building. Participants highlighted gaps in safeguarding awareness, incident response coordination, and community engagement – laying the groundwork for future workshops and resources.
- Policy Advocacy: Participants discussed how the Council could serve as a bridge between grassroots needs and municipal policy development, ensuring inclusive and responsive safeguarding strategies.

# Strengthening the Protection of Faith Communities - Dublin

Leaders and representatives from diverse faith communities across Dublin came together this week for a one-day training programme dedicated to enhancing the protection of Places of Worship and associated community spaces. The event, supported by the European Commission and delivered under the EU-funded PARTESS-COM project, marked an important step in strengthening resilience against threats facing religious and ethnic minority communities.

Hosted by Enhancing Faith Institutions (EFI), the training brought together participants from multiple religious backgrounds to collaborate with security specialists, share practical experiences, and build cross-community networks focused on safety and preparedness.



Throughout the day, attendees engaged in hands-on exercises and scenario-based discussions exploring:

- How to identify physical, procedural, and relational vulnerabilities within Places of Worship, connected schools, and community centres
- Practical strategies for strengthening security without compromising openness and accessibility
- Approaches to communicating counter-narratives—both in person and across social media—to challenge misinformation and reduce community tensions

# Invitation To Speak At EU Forum on the Protection of Public Spaces

Brussels, December 2025

In December, the European Commission DG HOME convened another meeting of the EU Forum on the Protection of Public Spaces, as part of the implementation of the EU Action Plan for the Protection of Public Spaces, and of the 2020 Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU. The meeting brings together private operators, law enforcement, faith organizations and other relevant stakeholders to exchange information, best practices and lessons learned on the protection of public spaces from terrorist attacks within the EU.

EFI are part of the Operators Forum and were invited to engage and share insight into the current picture of hate crime incidents and the work being delivered across Europe in faith communities, with a special focus on the Muslim community, to prevent incidents against Places of Worship.

## EU Forum on the Protection of Public Spaces



EFI provided a detailed presentation on the 'Threats towards the Muslim community and Muslim institutions in Europe'. We provided insight and statistics that show the increased level of incidents against the Muslim community since the October 7th attacks.



# EFI at the Forefront of Muslim Chaplaincy: Reflections from the University of Fribourg Conference



The growth of Muslim involvement in chaplaincy in numerous Western countries over recent decades has been the catalyst for the emergence of a new international field of research, namely, Muslim Chaplaincy Studies. Although the demography of Muslim communities is variable, as is the economic, political, historic, and social contexts in which they live, there are nevertheless some common issues facing Muslim chaplains as they develop their profession.

From 24–26 June 2025, the University of Fribourg in Switzerland hosted the international conference “Muslim Chaplaincy: Practice, Research and Recognition”, convening scholars, practitioners, and institutional leaders to explore the evolving landscape of Muslim chaplaincy across Europe. Among the key contributors was Enhancing Faith Institutions (EFI), whose presence underscored its growing role in shaping the future of spiritual care and institutional resilience.

The conference, organized by the Swiss Centre for Islam and Society in collaboration with Cardiff University, featured keynote addresses and parallel panels on themes such as professionalization, theological challenges, and the integration of chaplaincy into public institutions. EFI’s engagement reflected its commitment to bridging research and practice, particularly through its pioneering initiative: the European Muslim Chaplaincy Association (EMCA).

# EMCA: A New Chapter in European Muslim Chaplaincy

## EUROPEAN MUSLIM CHAPLAINCY ASSOCIATION



The European Muslim Chaplaincy Association (EMCA) by Enhancing Faith Institutions (EFI) is set to launch as a pioneering initiative dedicated to supporting and professionalizing Muslim chaplaincy across Europe. With a mission to enhance spiritual care, institutional representation, and interfaith collaboration, EMCA aims to provide structured guidance and advocacy for Muslim chaplains serving in diverse sectors, including healthcare, education, prisons, and the military.

The establishment of EMCA marks a transformative step forward for Muslim chaplaincy across Europe. By **professionalising, advocating, and expanding** chaplaincy services, EMCA ensures that Muslim chaplains are recognised, supported, and empowered to serve their communities with impact and integrity. Beyond benefiting individual chaplains, EMCA's mission promotes institutional inclusivity, strengthens interfaith understanding, and advances holistic spiritual care across diverse sectors in Europe.

## EFI honoured to speak at Eradicate Hate Global Summit 2025



The Enhancing Faith Institutions (EFI) was honoured to be invited as a speaker at the Eradicate Hate Global Summit 2025, held in Pittsburgh, USA. This internationally renowned summit convened global leaders, policymakers, tech innovators, and civil society actors to confront hate-fueled violence and build inclusive, resilient societies.

EFI contributed to a powerful session titled “Faith in Action”, alongside faith leaders and organisations working with communities actively working to tackle hate. EFI were the only non-North American representative in this session, sharing the pan-European work being delivered by EFI in mobilizing faith communities to counter hate, extremism, and discrimination. The session highlighted how faith-based leadership, grassroots networks, and trauma-informed safeguarding practices had been leveraged to foster civic resilience and social cohesion.

During the “Faith in Action” session, EFI presented case studies from the above EU projects that had successfully implemented safeguarding protocols, counter-narrative strategies, and inclusive civic programming.

The Eradicate Hate Global Summit remains one of the world’s leading convenings on hate prevention, bringing together survivors, researchers, law enforcement, and community leaders. EFI’s presence underscored the importance of transatlantic collaboration and the vital role of faith communities in shaping sustainable, rights-based responses to hate.

EFI’s delegation also engaged in strategic dialogues on digital safety, policy reform, and capacity building—sharing lessons from Europe and learning from global counterparts.

EFI’s invitation to the summit marked a milestone in its journey to build scalable, inclusive models for faith-based security and civic empowerment. The organization reaffirmed its commitment to elevating marginalized voices, designing transformative learning experiences, and shaping policy through lived expertise.



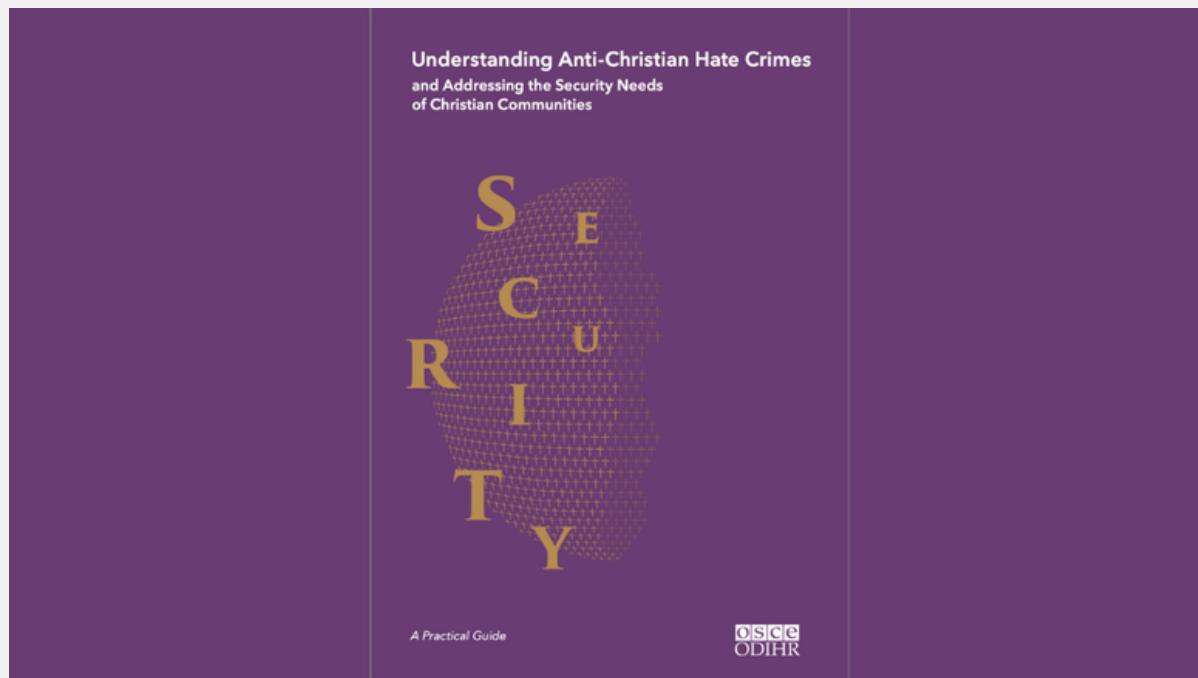
## The 11th UNAOC Global Forum for Global Peace

The 11th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) was hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the city of Riyadh on 14-15 December 2025 under the overarching theme, "UNAOC: Two Decades of Dialogue for Humanity – Advancing a New Era of Mutual Respect and Understanding in a Multipolar World".

The Forum brought together political leaders, international and regional organizations, religious leaders and faith actors, as well as representatives of the private sector, civil society, academia, youth, arts, sports and media, who renewed their shared commitment to the enduring power of dialogue, mutual respect and understanding. As UNAOC enters its third decade, the Forum successfully served as an opportune occasion to commemorate the 20th anniversary of UNAOC and to chart its future course in the pursuit of lasting peace.

The 11th UNAOC Global Forum is held at a critical point of history, marked by deepening divides, widespread conflicts across the globe and fading trust in the effectiveness of global governance structures and the multilateral system.

# Launch of OSCE Understanding Anti-Christian Hate Crimes Guide which EFI Helped Support



The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in July 2025 published a Guide on anti-Christian hate crimes, which highlights security needs of Christians in the OSCE region. The guideline complements existing OSCE guides on anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hate crime prevention and issues a strong call for government action.

The 125-page document, entitled *Understanding Anti-Christian Hate Crimes and Addressing the Security Needs of Christian Communities – A Practical Guide* covers a broad area of challenges faced by Christians in the OSCE region

According to the OSCE Guide, anti-Christian hate incidents—ranging “from graffiti and vandalism to harassment, threats, physical assaults and murder”—constitute a security concern in the region. It highlights that many Christian communities had to introduce additional security measures, in response to recent attacks on Christian places of worship and events.

The final section of the Guide outlines a series of concrete recommendations and steps for preventing and responding to anti-Christian hate crimes. Governments are urged to unequivocally condemn such acts and to promote “a clear and accurate understanding of the specific characteristics of contemporary anti-Christian bias, as well as of common discriminatory narratives that drive intolerance against Christians.”

EFI in November 2024 attended a two day private engagement in Warsaw to help provide recommendations and input into the final edition of the guide with other key leaders and organisations working in the area of protective security and tackling hate against communities.

# EFI Applauds European Commission's Strategic Investment to Combat Anti-Muslim Hatred Across the EU



Enhancing Faith Institutions (EFI) welcomes the European Commission's latest funding call under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme, aimed at addressing anti-Muslim hatred and promoting inclusive societies across the European Union.

This targeted funding initiative reflects a timely and strategic commitment to countering Islamophobia, strengthening community resilience, and safeguarding the rights and dignity of Muslim communities throughout Europe. EFI commends the Commission's leadership in prioritising this issue within the broader framework of equality, justice, and democratic values.

This funding opportunity represents a vital commitment to countering Islamophobia, promoting social cohesion, and protecting the dignity of Muslim communities in Europe. The funding call enables civil society organisations, public authorities, and grassroots initiatives to implement impactful projects that:

- Raise public awareness of anti-Muslim discrimination
- Provide support mechanisms for victims of hate crimes and harassment
- Enhance cooperation with law enforcement and judicial bodies
- Challenge misinformation and harmful narratives
- Promote inclusive education and intercultural dialogue
- Recent EU research underscores the urgency of this initiative:

EFI views this funding call as a pivotal moment in the EU's ongoing efforts to uphold fundamental rights and foster inclusive societies. As anti-Muslim hatred continues to rise across Europe—driven by misinformation, political scapegoating, and global tensions—EFI urges stakeholders across sectors to engage proactively with this opportunity.

EFI views this funding as a landmark moment in the EU's broader efforts to uphold fundamental rights. It comes at a time when anti-Muslim hatred is rising across Europe, fueled by misinformation, political scapegoating, and global conflicts. The CERV programme's focus on equality and inclusion is more critical than ever.



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