

Europe-Asia Center Champions Faith-Based Climate Action at COP29

Europe-Asia Center bridges faith and climate action at COP29

BELGIUM, November 25, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- From November 12 to 16, 2024, the [Europe-Asia Center delegation](#), led by distinguished figures including H.E. Erik Solheim, former UN Under-Secretary General and Co-Chair of the Europe-Asia Center; the Venerable Shi Yongxin, Abbot of the Shaolin Temple and Cultural Advisor to the Center; Ms. Yan Rui, Secretary-General of the Center; and Mr. Jonathan Schwestka, Deputy Director for Europe, made an impactful appearance at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan.



Their mission: to bridge faith and climate action while accelerating progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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Abbot Shi

On November 14, 2024, Abbot Shi Yongxin joined H.E. Judge Mohamed Abdelsalam, Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Elders, for a pivotal lunch meeting that underscored the transformative role of religious leaders in tackling global challenges.

Highlighting the "Document on Human Fraternity," the two leaders emphasized the Faith Pavilion as a vital hub for interfaith dialogue and cooperation, fostering unity in addressing the planet's pressing issues.

That same day, Abbot Shi met with Jeffrey Sachs, globally renowned economist and sustainability advocate, to explore the indispensable role of spiritual and moral guidance in combating ecological and societal crises. Their discussion resonated with the idea that faith leaders are

critical in shaping a sustainable and equitable future.

Later, H.E. Erik Solheim and Abbot Shi Yongxin engaged in a thought-provoking exchange with Sadhguru, founder of the Isha Foundation. The Abbot presented Sadhguru with a symbolic artwork of Bodhidharma, inviting him to visit the historic cave near the Shaolin Temple where Bodhidharma meditated. Sadhguru expressed admiration for the gesture, envisioning cultural collaborations like promoting Kung Fu as a bridge between India and China and fostering deeper ties between the two nations.

On November 15, 2024, Abbot Shi delivered a captivating speech at the Faith Pavilion, sharing the Zen wisdom of the Shaolin Temple as a pathway to harmony between humanity and nature. He offered unique insights into how ancient philosophies can help address modern ecological challenges.

During his address, Abbot Shi unveiled a groundbreaking mindfulness training program co-developed by the Shaolin Temple, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and the Europe-Asia Center. This program integrates Zen philosophy into contemporary practices, promoting mental well-being, resilience, and collaboration to advance the SDGs.

That afternoon, H.E. Erik Solheim and Abbot Shi joined a panel discussion moderated by Jonathan Schwestka on faith's pivotal role in driving climate action. They stressed the necessity of collaboration between governments, civil society, and faith communities, emphasizing that only through collective effort can meaningful change be achieved.

"In today's world, facing an escalating ecological crisis, humanity must harness the profound energy of Zen Buddhism to illuminate the mind, purify the soul, and foster societal harmony," remarked Abbot Shi.

The Europe-Asia Center delegation left an indelible mark at COP29, demonstrating how faith and culture can play a transformative role in addressing the climate crisis and inspiring global unity.

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