

UN-Affiliated ECPD Expands to U.S., Appoints Special Representative to Foster International Academic Ties

The European Center for Peace and Development appoints U.S.-based liaison to strengthen bilateral education and research programs.

LOUISVILLE, KY, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [European Center for Peace and Development \(ECPD\)](#), a regional institution under the auspices of the United Nations University for Peace, has named a U.S.-based Special Representative to strengthen its academic and institutional outreach in North America.

Dr. Brian C.T. Beckham (Count of Nysa), who formerly served as a commissioner with other U.N. intergovernmental organizations, will now represent ECPD in the United States. His appointment marks a step forward in the center's efforts to deepen transatlantic cooperation in research and graduate education.



The appointment of Dr. Brian C.T. Beckham supports ECPD's mission to broaden its academic partnerships and develop cross-border cooperation in education, policy research, and training. Based in Louisville, Kentucky, the new representative will coordinate strategic engagement with U.S. universities, research organizations, and international education forums.

This marks the ECPD's first formal appointment of a Special Representative in the United States, reflecting the organization's broader goal of expanding its presence and collaborative footprint beyond Europe.

"Our mandate includes strengthening global educational alliances that promote peace, cooperation, and development," said an ECPD spokesperson. "Establishing representation in the United States enhances our capacity to act on that mission."



This opportunity allows me to support meaningful collaboration across institutions committed to peace education and international development.”

Dr. Brian C.T. Beckham

Supporting International Collaboration Through Education

Founded in Belgrade, Serbia, the ECPD has operated for over four decades as a center for postgraduate education, policy dialogue, and capacity-building across Southeast Europe and beyond. Functioning within the framework of the United Nations University for Peace, established by the UN General Assembly in 1980, the institution offers interdisciplinary academic programs in areas such as international law, diplomacy, public health, economics, and

sustainable development.

With the appointment of a U.S. representative, ECPD aims to create new pathways for educational diplomacy, linking American and European institutions through faculty exchange programs, joint research initiatives, and peacebuilding education.

Dr. Beckham’s responsibilities will include identifying partner institutions, coordinating programmatic collaboration, and supporting U.S.-based outreach aligned with ECPD’s existing initiatives across Europe and Asia.

The organization has previously collaborated with ministries, universities, and multilateral organizations to deliver policy-relevant education and training programs. The U.S. expansion is a natural next step in the institution’s evolution as a global hub for knowledge exchange.

An Institutional Approach to Global Peacebuilding

ECPD’s operational philosophy integrates academic rigor with real-world challenges, particularly in post-conflict societies, regions experiencing political transition, or nations confronting environmental and humanitarian risks.

By focusing on education as a mechanism for peace and mutual understanding, ECPD provides platforms for scholars, policymakers, and professionals to engage in interdisciplinary problem-solving.

The new U.S. appointment is intended to replicate the center’s model of regional collaboration, drawing on American institutions’ deep expertise in global affairs, conflict resolution, and public service.

Through its Special Representative, ECPD will engage with:

- Academic consortia focused on peace studies and international development.
- Public health and sustainability research centers.
- Law schools and policy institutes engaged in international humanitarian law and transitional justice.

-Local organizations advancing cross-cultural dialogue and educational equity.

“Our work seeks to create bridges, academic, cultural, and institutional, that enable more resilient societies,” the spokesperson added. “This appointment will help operationalize those goals within the U.S. context.”

Expanding U.S.–Europe Educational Partnerships

The ECPD’s educational activities span over 30 countries, with a network of affiliated institutions and faculty from various academic disciplines. The center’s programs emphasize applied learning and research that contribute directly to institutional strengthening and public sector capacity-building.

The addition of a U.S. representative will enable ECPD to:

- Initiate dual-degree agreements and academic memoranda of understanding (MOUs).
- Facilitate co-hosted international conferences and expert panels.
- Develop digital learning exchanges and cross-border curriculum design.
- Support applied research projects on peacebuilding, governance, and innovation in public administration.

Initial efforts will be concentrated in the Midwest and Eastern United States, with Louisville serving as the base of operations. The city’s academic infrastructure, combined with its logistical accessibility, provides a favorable environment for launching this cross-continental collaboration.

[ECPD leadership](#) has indicated that this is only the beginning of a more sustained and structured effort to build academic presence in the Western Hemisphere.

Non-Political, Education-Focused Representation

The role of Special Representative is not a diplomatic or political office in the traditional sense. Rather, it functions as an academic liaison and institutional advocate for ECPD’s core mission. While aligned with the values and priorities of the United Nations system, the position is primarily focused on education, dialogue, and research.

Dr. Beckham will work independently of any government or political entity. His remit includes public engagements, academic briefings, and outreach to potential research collaborators, with a focus on furthering educational ties that serve international cooperation.

No commercial activity or service promotion is associated with the role, in line with ECPD’s status as a nonprofit, non-political institution dedicated to knowledge-driven peacebuilding.

Long-Term Goals and Areas of Impact

This expansion into the United States will allow ECPD to diversify its partnerships and deepen its academic influence in critical policy domains. Areas of collaboration may include:

- Post-conflict governance and institution building
- Climate change adaptation and public health systems
- Human rights and international humanitarian law
- Civic education and democratic participation
- Social cohesion and reconciliation in divided societies

ECPD's programs are intended for graduate students, working professionals, and researchers engaged in interdisciplinary and applied learning environments. The U.S. presence will also enable ECPD to invite more American scholars to teach, conduct field research, or participate in symposia across its European campuses.

With education increasingly recognized as a tool for soft diplomacy and conflict prevention, ECPD's expansion aligns with broader global priorities set forth in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly goals related to quality education, peace, and strong institutions.

Call for Institutional Engagement

ECPD welcomes contact from academic institutions, international NGOs, and educational networks interested in exploring collaboration. Inquiries about research partnerships, exchange opportunities, and conference participation can be directed to the Office of the U.S. Special Representative using the contact details below.

Formal partnership agreements will be subject to institutional review processes and aligned with ECPD's core programmatic themes and teaching standards.

[About the European Center for Peace and Development \(ECPD\)](#)

The European Center for Peace and Development is a regional institute of the United Nations University for Peace. Established in 1980 and headquartered in Belgrade, ECPD delivers academic programs, professional training, and policy research designed to strengthen peacebuilding and human development. Its interdisciplinary curriculum and research initiatives span law, economics, public administration, health sciences, and sustainable development. ECPD operates in accordance with the UN Charter and supports global efforts to foster education-based cooperation and stability.

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