



**Deutsche Initiative
für den Nahen Osten (DINO)**



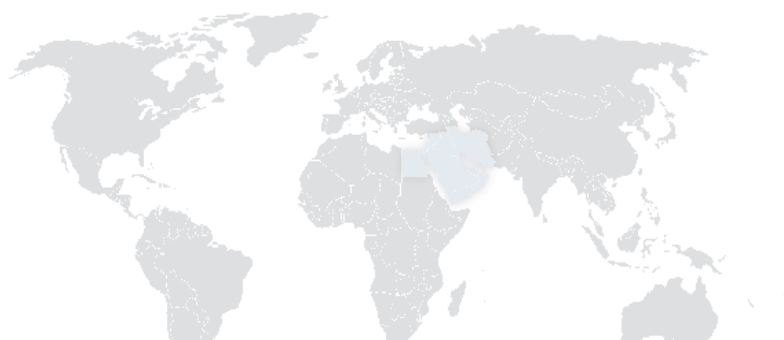
Spokesman for
the initiative:
Manfred Erdenberger



Managing director:
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German Initiative for the Middle East

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DINO

Deutsche Initiative für den Nahen Osten

Members of the initiative



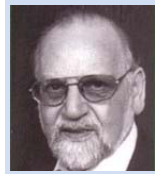
Manfred Erdenberger
(Spokesman for the initiative)
Journalist, former editor-in-chief and long-standing chief political correspondent at the German radio and television network WDR in Cologne



Jürgen Bremer
(Managing director)
Deputy Program Director of the news- and documentary network PHOENIX



Wolfgang Clement
Former Prime Minister of North-Rhine Westphalia and former Minister of Economics



Muhammad Salim Abdullah
Senior director of the Central Institute Islam Archive in Germany



Rudolf Dreßler
Long-standing ambassador of Germany in Israel



Prof. Sari Nusseibeh
President of the Al-Quds-University in Jerusalem



His Beatitude Gregorios III.
Patriarch of the Greek Catholic Church of Antioch and all the East, and Alexandria and Jerusalem



Avi Primor
Israeli political scientist and long-standing ambassador of Israel in Germany



Monsignore Martin Hülskamp
Head of the Catholic Office in North Rhine-Westphalia



Dr. Mitri Raheb
Priest of the Bethlehem Lutheran- Protestant Christmas Church and Director of the International Community Center



Dr. Klaus Kinkel
Long-standing Foreign Secretary and Vice Chancellor of Germany



Prof. Dr. Rita Süßmuth
Former President of the German Bundestag



Manfred Kock
Former Chairman of the Council of the Protestant Church in Germany



Prof. Moshe Zimmermann
Israeli historian



The basics of the German Initiative for the Middle East

The basis for the foundation of the project DINO, which stands for the German Initiative for the Middle East, were a lot of discussions, held by Manfred Erdenberger (former chief editor of the German Radio and Television Network WDR, Chevalier of the Order of Saint Lazarus) and political representatives as well as members of the church. The dialogues dealt with the question, if there is a chance for supporting initiatives for the Middle East from Germany.

Influenced through his several trips to the Middle East and his reports from that region during the past ten years, Erdenberger suggested setting up a circle of like-minded people, which would constructively support the peace process and balance in the Middle East. DINO is planning to present the situation in the Middle East to the public once a year and discuss possible chances for any improvements.

The circle of DINO-members is supposed to be present at various occasions and to give insights on the developments in the Middle East and on the difficult process of approach of the parties involved. DINO always acts non-partisan and inter religious.

The Middle East is the birthplace of three big world religions and deserves special attention. Especially the people, who are living in this region, which is continuously shaken by war and terror, need our support, exceeding the political aspects. Europe - and Germany in particular has to take the responsibility.

Basically it is about the never ending conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, but also about the situation in the adjoining countries such as Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria as well as Iran and Iraq. With other words: A stronger focus has to be put on the surrounding countries in that region. It is about rising the public awareness about the problems in the Middle East.

"Taking these aspects into account, DINO, together with a network of committed people, wants to make the attempt to support and facilitate the understanding of the complicated contexts by raising awareness, to prevent and fight prejudices and support approaches of the conflicting parties, all that without political statements or influences. So, it is about collecting information and passing them on, motivating possible partners and to raise tolerance."

In that context, the private networks of all members of DINO are very essential for the initiative. Interviews, lectures and discussions which go beyond the usual known statements of politicians and military members, are important contributions – in public as well as in the background.



The headquarters located in Münster, where also the annual meeting takes place, DINO follows the tradition of The Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, which brought peace to Europe after a war of 30 years, restructuring the political and religious situations. In the Friedenssaal of the town hall there are still some of the basics for this historic treaty, which can be taken as a model for many shaken regions in the world – especially for the Middle East.

„Pax optima rerum“ – „Peace is the greatest good“ – is written on the stove of the Friedenssaal, within sight of the cathedral. Written on the chandelier: „Befleißigt Euch der Gerechtigkeit, die ihr auf Erden richtet...!“, „Practice justice, you, who judge somebody....!“ and on the gate to the court, „Man höre beide Parteien“, meaning „Listen to both parties“. Three simple sentences which were the key to the peacetreaty in 1648, putting an end to suffering, death and destruction, still serving as the instructions for today’s world.

Members of DINO – German Initiative for the Middle East – were from the very beginning on Manfred Kock, the former Chairman of the Council of the Protestant Church of Germany (EKD), as well as the priest of the Bethlehem Lutheran-Protestant Christmas Church and director of the International Community Center, Dr. Mitri Raheb. Dr. Raheb was given the famous “Tschelebi-Friedenspreis 2006” by the Central Institute Islam Archive of Germany in Soest and in September 2008 he received the “Aachener Friedenpreis”. In both cases the priest was honoured for his persistent commitment to push the peace process in the Middle East and to improve the living-conditions for the people in the region.

Monsignore Martin Hülskamp, capitular of the Dom in Münster and prior of the Ritterorden vom Heiligen Grab zu Jerusalem (knightly order of the Holy Grave of Jerusalem) and Avi Primor, former ambassador of Israel in Germany as well as the manager of the initiative, Jürgen Bremer, Deputy Program Director of the news- and documentary network PHOENIX, also joined DINO at the very beginning.

In the meantime, Primor has become the director of the Center for European Studies (at the private university of Herzliyya (IDC)) and is also a publicist. He is cooperating with representatives of the Palestinian University of East-Jerusalem and Amman/Jordan. By doing this, he is connecting the Middle East with Europe.

The circle was enlarged by the joining of Dr. h.c. Johannes Rau, who passed away in January 2006. As prime minister, head of the Federal Council of Germany and Federal President and member of the Protestant Church, Rau always stood up for peace in the Middle East and was appointed honorary doctor of the University of Haifa in 1986, as the first German ever. He is also honorary member of the “Israel Museum” of Jerusalem.

Paul Spiegel, head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, was also part of the initiative, until his death in April, 2006.



A new member since March 2006 is the former President of the German Bundestag Prof. Dr. Rita Süßmuth. She supported the processes which encouraged people to live peacefully next to people of different origins and religion and is internationally respected. The DINO-Initiative welcomes her willingness to join this voluntary and engaged team.

In June 2006, the circle was once again enlarged by His Beatitude Gregorios III., Patriarch of the Melkite-Greek Catholic Church of Antioch and all the East of Alexandria and of Jerusalem. The reason for his participation: “26 years in the Holy Land - for me it is an engagement for the peace in the Holy Land, which is the key of peace in the Middle East and the whole world.”

Rudolf Dreßler, having been the ambassador of Germany in Israel for many years and former politician (SPD-MdB) and parliamentary State Secretary, also joined the Initiative. He stood up for the region, especially Israel and Palestine, with more engagement than his actual work demanded.

Dr. Klaus Kinkel also promised his commitment and support to DINO in September 2006. He was the German foreign secretary and Vice Chancellor of Germany. Now, Kinkel is CEO of the Deutsche Telekom Trust.

Dr. Kinkel has supported the peace process in the Middle East for many years now and launched several projects and meetings. Despite of his numerous charges and duties, he finally joined initiative, after having close contact with DINO-spokesman Manfred Erdenberger.

In February 2007 the Prime Minister of Northrhine Westphalia and former Minister of Economics Wolfgang Clement decided to become a member of the initiative. Clement has been a frequent visitor to the Middle East, particularly to Israel, especially during his time in Northrhine Westphalia. All of the members of DINO are thankful for the joining of Wolfgang Clement.

In April 2007 Muhammad Salim Abdullah, Senior director of the Central Institute Islam Archive in Germany, decided to become a member as well. Thus for the first time one representative of the Muslim Confraternity joined the initiative.

In November 2009 two new members joined the initiative: Prof. Sari Nusseibeh, president of the Al-Quds University in Jerusalem and the Israeli historian Prof. Moshe Zimmermann.

„Both of them have been working on possible solutions for bringing peace to the region, both of them have made various significant contributions to the public discourse”, DINO-spokesman Manfred Erdenberger appreciated the work of the new members. “Their aims coincide with the assumptions of our initiative.



Therefore, they will be a great contribution for us in the process of bringing peace to the region.”

DINO-spokesman Manfred Erdenberger invited the two new members to Muenster in October 2009, where the event “1648 – Dialogues on Peace” on the occasion of the Treaty of Westphalia took place. The president of the University of Jerusalem Nusseibeh and the historian Zimmermann accepted right away.

Since 1986, Zimmermann is director of the Richard Koebner Minerva Center for German History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His fields of interests and studies are social and cultural history of Germany in the 18th to 20th centuries, the history of the German Jews, and the history of Anti-Semitism.

In 2003 Nusseibeh, together with the Israeli Ami Ajalon, founded the initiative Peoples’ Campaign for Peace and Democracy, which espouses an independent Palestinian state in West Jordan Land and the Gaza-Strip – along with a waiver of right of return of the Palestinian people. The plan contains the vision of Jerusalem as an open capital for both nations.

February, 2011

4th Initiative Symposium on March 20/21, 2009 in Münster Syria and its neighbors - Every country for itself or a joint effort for peace?



Ambassador Dr. Hussein Omran

According to Syria's Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr. Hussein Omran, growing acknowledgment for the key role that Syria is playing in the Middle East is a highly positive development that will ultimately help to resolve the Middle-East conflict.

In this context, Omran emphasized how "delighted" he was that Germany's Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier was the first to establish direct contact with Syria. "Syria," Omran stated in a stimulus address at an event organized by Germany's Initiative for the Middle East (DINO) in Münster, "is very pleased that other countries are recognizing the importance of our role." "Contact," Omran continues, "spells security." He underlined the fact that Syria has all the prerequisites that will enable a course of reconciliation and dialog to effect a change in the present relationships.

At the same time, the ambassador expressed his optimism that the Middle East would "at last be given more attention" under the new US administration. Syria wants an end to the conflict, as well as prosperity and development for the entire region. In his welcoming address, Dr. Gernot Erler, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, underlined Germany's support for Syria in its economic reforms.



Ambassador Omran
Manfred Erdenberger

He also expressed his conviction that Syria stood to gain as hugely from cooperation with Europe as Europe did itself. He emphasized that peace could only be reached in the Middle East if all countries were involved and participated actively in the process, and that Syria itself had a key role to play. For this reason Syria could and should make a constructive contribution to the peace process. In this context, he welcomed the Initiative's Symposium as providing "outstanding support".



Prof. Rita Süßmuth

During the event, the former president of the German Bundestag and member of the DINO Initiative, Prof. Rita Süßmuth, warned listeners not to assume that the conflicts in the Middle East were solely of a religious nature.

According to Süßmuth, another vital issue is to take up the fight against poverty in these societies. There was no hope of solving the problems by military means. Nor could they be resolved from outside, as the will for peace must come from within, from the heart of the region's population. Süßmuth called on the people not to resign. Each failure is, at the same time, a signal to carry on.

The Greek Catholic Patriarch Gregorios III reminded listeners in Münster that the border with Israel and half a million refugees who have fled into the country link Syria inextricably with the peace process.



Patriarch Gregorios III



Contract-signing in Ramallah:
Dr. Mitri Raheb, Gerhard Schlaudraff
(deputy head of the rep. office)

The German Initiative for the Middle East already has the backing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for two projects that support political culture and continuing education in Bethlehem. The aim of the "Youth vote – Jugend wählt" project is to get 1800 young people ready for democracy and elections. Elections are due to be held in the West Bank in 2010.

Besides this, a university of applied media and art is being set up in Bethlehem under the leadership of the two-time Nobel Peace prizewinner and Lutheran pastor Dr. Mitri Raheb in order to prepare the ground for free, democratic and professional media work. The Initiative has called on a group of North Rhine-Westphalian institutions – universities and broadcasting companies – as well as the state government to cooperate, and has networked the extremely positive responses.



Dr. Mitri Raheb



3rd symposium in Bethlehem, Ramallah and Jerusalem (April 2008).

After six days of preliminary talks in the region, including talks with the Palestinian President, Mahmud Abbas, and members of the Knesset, the delegation came away with the impression that a potentially decisive window of opportunity for peace is open at this precise time. The initiative would like to lobby for a stronger commitment on the part of the Federal Republic and the European Union in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

The German government enjoys a good reputation on both sides in the region. This is an excellent starting point for bringing some movement into the peace process, whilst keeping in contact with all involved.

The Middle East security conference in Berlin in June provides an opportunity that should not be missed.

Success in the ongoing peace talks is a question of political survival for both the present Israeli government and for President Abbas. The initiative calls on the German government to strengthen contact with all the concerned parties in the region, and to involve countries such as Turkey with their useful connections.

We will continue to follow two political projects that the parties involved have agreed to keep confidential for the time being.



President Abbas and chief negotiator Ahmad Qurei (Abu Alaa) have expressed "cautious optimism" regarding the delegation, despite the difficult beginnings. Peace is possible, they both announced. However, they also made it clear to Israel that time is a decisive factor – that they are in a

"race against time". The people in the West Bank and throughout Palestine must be able to see successes and an improvement to their situation if they are to continue supporting Fatah's peace efforts.





President Abbas emphasized to the DINO delegation that an international peace force under European command is very important for the process. This peace force could guarantee the safety concerns of both sides and greatly facilitate success in the negotiations.

The Israeli side partly welcomed and supported the idea of deploying an international peace force.



Former Minister of Industry and current member of the Knesset, Ran Cohen, and DINO member and former Israeli ambassador to Germany, Avi Primor, expressed agreement. According to them, this would at least be a way of providing lasting support for guaranteeing Israel's inalienable security concerns. In Primor's view, the force would need a strong mandate and be able to enforce security. After the countless attacks in the past, the security situation is very important to Israeli citizens, he stressed.



Against the backdrop of these discussions, the initiative was able to gain an impression of the wall and the Israeli barriers. It understands Israel's arguments for setting up the barriers and recognizes the evidence that the number of attacks has decreased dramatically since they were set up. In this respect, Israel should, in principle, be endorsed.



At the same time, however, the initiative received the impression that the course of the fence was frequently planned not with security reasons in mind, but in order to gain land. Particularly in the West Bank, many inhabitants are put at a significant disadvantage for long sections of the barrier. Combined with the multitude of checkpoints – which are not only located at the border with Israel – freedom of movement and economic exchange are severely limited.



DINO is therefore campaigning for the German government and the EU to put these arguments forward clearly in talks with Israel and to appeal for a review.

The initiative also took pains to find out about the difficult situation facing Christian communities in the Middle East. During their tour, the seven members of DINO spoke with representatives from politics, society and the churches in the West Bank and Israel.



Christians in the Holy Land.

The patriarch Theophilos III (Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem) and Archimandrite Joseph Saghbini, vicar general of the Melkite Greek Catholic Patriarchy in Jerusalem, described the situation of



Although the Middle East conflict is not a religious conflict, religion plays a central role in the "real day-to-day lives of people", according to the episcopal official in Münster, Monsignor Martin Hülskamp. Local Christian communities have now dwindled to a small group, which is standing "on the balance between impassivity and emigration".

Stopping the flow of emigration is not only in the interests of the local churches, for which this is literally a question of survival: the actual Christian presence in the Holy Land also represents a "direct route to inner solidarity" with the crisis region for the rest of the world. The imminent disappearance of the Christians as a small but significant group between Jews and Muslims threatens the role of the "unique political and religious biotope" in the Holy Land as an "experimental ground" for world peace, according to DINO member Msgr. Hülskamp, who is also the diocesan chair of the German Association of the Holy Land in Münster.

DINO member and former chairman of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany, Manfred Kock, reported as the initiative's Protestant representative on the "extraordinary commitment" shown by individual Palestinian Christians to "relieving the many years of suffering of their fellow men, despite countless difficulties".



The example shown by the head physician at the Caritas Baby Hospital, Dr. Hiyam Marzuka, impressed him; she "gave up a safe career in the USA" to make it possible for children in her home country to have a better start for the future. This commitment originates in a "deep-rootedness in the Christian faith".

At the same time, Kock emphasized that Christian bodies should be "critical of religion", in order to counteract the misuse of religion as a justification for violence or territorial claims.



The delegation held further talks about the situation on the ground with the heads of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Jerusalem, Dr. Lars Hänsel, and the East Jerusalem office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Knut Dethlefsen.



The DINO delegation included Manfred Erdenberger, Rudolf Dreßler, Martin Hülkamp, Manfred Kock and Jürgen Bremer, as well as Ulrich Keudel from Deutsche Telekom AG. DINO members Avi Primor and Dr. Mitri Raheb took part in the meetings in the region.

Further persons involved in the talks and not mentioned in the text include:

Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan

Dr. Victor Batarseh

Raji G. Zeidan

Salah Tamari

Dr. Samir Hazboun

Jörg Ranau

Dr. Khouloud Daibes

Suleiman Abu Dayyeh

Michael Wohlrab

Faten Mukarker

The Evang. Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

Mayor of Bethlehem

Mayor of Beit Jala

Governor of Bethlehem

Chairman of the Board, Bethlehem

Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Head of the Federal Republic of

Germany's agency abroad in Ramallah

Bethlehem Minister of Tourism

Head of the Palestine Department

at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation

Rector of the Empress Auguste

Victoria Foundation in Jerusalem

Palestinian Christian

2nd initiative symposium on August 31/September 1, 2007 in Cologne "DINO – Ways towards peace"

The 2nd symposium of the German Initiative for the Middle East was held in Cologne on August 31/September 1, 2007 under the patronage of the Mayor of Cologne, Fritz Schramma.

Its motto was "DINO – Ways towards peace."

The initiative took stock of the Middle East peace process and ventured a look at the future together with its members, guests and selected speakers. The meeting also focused on the fate of the people affected in the region.

In addition to a reception and working meeting with members of the initiative, there were various introductory presentations and a panel discussion with invited guests.

The program included:

Prof. Dr. med. Joachim Gardemann, Head of the Competence Center Humanitarian Aid at Münster university of applied sciences on "Humanitarian action as a fundamental part of all world religions"

Monika Möller, Chairwoman of the association to promote the twinning program Köln-Tel Aviv-Yafo e.V., "Cologne-Tel Aviv – Difficulties of twinning"

Heinz-Rudolf Hönings, Chairman of the association to promote the twinning program Köln-Bethlehem e. V., "Cologne-Bethlehem – Difficulties of twinning"

Abdallah Frangi, Foreign Policy Spokesman and Head of the Foreign Policy department of Fatah, on behalf of the President of the Palestinian Autonomy Authority, Mahmud Abbas: "Conveying the President's greeting message"

Panel discussion with His Beatitude, Patriarch Gregorios III., Abdallah Frangi, Rudolf Dreßler, Prof. Dr. Joachim Gardemann and Manfred Erdenberger.



Reception in the Hansa room by Mayor Fritz Schramma
(left to right Dr. Klaus Kinkel, Wolfgang Clement, Fritz Schramma,
Patriarch Gregorios III., Abdallah Frangi, Manfred Erdenberger)
(Photo: Loehrer)

1st initiative symposium on January 26-27, 2007 in Münster

The German Initiative for the Middle East took stock of the current situation for the first time at its 1st symposium on Saturday, January 27, 2007 in Münster. Following an internal session, invited members of the public were welcomed to the public session in the Freiherr-vom-Stein room in the district government building Von-Vincke-Haus by the district president Dr. Jörg Twenhöven. Archimandrite Mtanios Haddad then passed on best regards from the Patriarch, His Beatitude, Gregorios III. and outlined the situation in the Middle East under the influence of the different religions. Four introductory presentations subsequently gave different views of the current situation in the Middle East:

Major General Hans-Werner Ahrens,

Commander of the Air Transport Commando in Münster, spoke on the subject of "Flying for Peace",

Rudolf Dreßler,

Former ambassador of Germany in Israel, analyzed German-Israeli relations in the Middle East conflict,

Hermann-Josef Großimlinghaus,

Vice-President of the German Association of the Holy Land, presented the situation of Christians in Israel and Palestine,

Manfred Kock,

Former Chairman of the Council of the Protestant Church of Germany, talked about the initiative's contribution to peace in the Middle East.

This was followed by a panel discussion led by DINO spokesman **Manfred Erdenberger** with the following participants:

Clemens Verenkotte,

ARD correspondent in Tel Aviv,

Jörg Kaminski,

ARD correspondent in Amman,

Monsignore Martin Hülskamp,

Episcopalian official, District of Münster.





DINO Development Association

At the working meeting of the 2nd DINO symposium on September 1, 2007,

the "Förderverein Deutsche Initiative für den Nahen Osten e.V." (German Initiative for the Middle East Development Association), a registered non-profit organisation,

was established with its headquarters in Cologne.

That gives potential supporters and sponsors the opportunity to make a direct donation - tax-deductible due to its certified donation status.

The association is creating the financial basis for the varied tasks of the initiative. Nevertheless, the members of the initiative are still working voluntarily for this body.

Deutsche Telekom has provided material and communications resources to the association since it was established.

Chairman: Manfred Erdenberger

Managing Director: Jürgen Bremer

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