

**RELIGION IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND FOREIGN POLICY  
INTERNATIONAL, EUROPEAN AND DANISH PERSPECTIVES**

**Wednesday November 1st, 2017 from 13:00-16:00  
Fællessalen, Christiansborg**

In the post-9/11 world order, there is little doubt that religion is a key factor in development cooperation and foreign policy. Religious actors, norms and practices play an important role in relation to e.g. counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism; conflict resolution and peace-building; and protection of religious minorities. But how can and should policy makers engage with religion in these areas? Discussing the role(s) of religion in foreign policy today, this conference presents different modes of engagement, opening up for a discussion of the opportunities and challenges that such engagement entails and providing inspiration for Danish foreign policy in this area.

The conference is organised in cooperation between the Danish Interparliamentary Network on Freedom of Religion or Belief, the Danish Mission Council and the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

**PROGRAMME**

- 13:00 Welcome  
*Daniel Toft Jacobsen, Member of Parliament, Socialdemokratiet, and chairperson of the Danish Interparliamentary Network on Freedom of Religion or Belief*
- 13:10 Introductory remarks  
*Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for Development Cooperation*
- 13:20 Engaging religion in US foreign policy: The opportunities and challenges  
*Peter Mandaville, Professor of international affairs, George Mason University, and former advisor to the US State Department*
- 13:50 Religion: A touchstone of European external identity and divisions  
*Francois Foret, Professor of political science, Université Libre de Bruxelles*
- 14:10 Religion and foreign policy: The Norwegian experience  
*Aud Marit Wiig, Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Norwegian Foreign Ministry*
- 14:30 The international struggle for freedom of religion and belief  
*Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin, Ambassador, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs*
- 14:50 Questions and comments
- 15:10 Coffee break
- 15:25 Debate: Danish perspectives on religion in development cooperation and foreign policy  
*Charlotte Flindt Petersen, Director, Udenrigspolitisk Selskab*  
*Jonas Adelin Jørgensen, Generalsekretær, Dansk Missionsråd*  
*Kirsten Auken, Programme Director, Danmission*  
*Mette Gjerskov, Member of Parliament, Socialdemokratiet*  
*Ole Wæver, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen*  
*Ulla Sandbæk, Member of Parliament, Alternativet*
- 16:20 Concluding remarks  
*Marie Juul Petersen, Danish Institute for Human Rights*

Participation in the conference is free of charge, but registration is necessary. Please send a mail Filip Buff Pedersen, Coordinator for the Danish Interparliamentary Network on Freedom of Religion or Belief, [fbp@dmr.org](mailto:fbp@dmr.org)

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

**Peter Mandaville** is Professor of International Affairs in the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University. From 2015-2016 he served as Senior Adviser in the Secretary of State's Office of Religion & Global Affairs at the U.S. Department of State where he led that office's work on ISIS and sectarian conflict in the Middle East. From 2011-12 he served as a member of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's Policy Planning Staff where he helped to shape the U.S. response to the Arab Uprisings. He is the author of the books *Islam & Politics* (2007) and *Transnational Muslim Politics: Reimagining the Umma* (2001) as well as many journal articles, book chapters, and op-ed/commentary pieces in outlets such as the *International Herald Tribune*, *The Guardian*, *The Atlantic* and *Foreign Policy*.

**François Foret** is Professor of political science and director of the Cevipol at the Free University of Brussels. His research interests are European politics and policies; interactions between politics, culture and religion; symbolics politics. He has written extensively on these topics, including most recently the book *Religion and politics in the European Union. The Secular Canopy* (2015) and the report *How the European External Action Service Deals with Religion through Religious Freedom* (2017).

**Aud Marit Wiig** is the Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. She has worked in the Foreign Ministry since 1983, from 1996 to 2001 at the Norwegian Embassy in Pretoria, and from 2001-2004 as Department Director in the Ministry. From 2004 to 2007, she was executive director of the African Development Bank in Abidjan. She was ambassador in Islamabad from 2007 to 2008, and deputy under-secretary of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2008 to 2012. Most recently, she was ambassador in Brazil from 2012 to 2017.

**Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin** is a Danish ambassador and professional foreign service officer with extensive knowledge and experience from Asia, including the Afghanistan/Pakistan region as well as working with terrorism, fragile and failed states. From 2013 to 2017 he was the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) for Afghanistan and Pakistan. In 2016 he facilitated the first significant Afghan peace accord in over 20 years with the Hezb-e-Islami group. In 2009 Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin received Japan's Cool Biz award for his efforts to publicly promote energy savings. Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin has received the highest civilian orders of Japan (Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun, 1st class) and Afghanistan (Ghazi Wazir Mohammad Akbar Khan Medal) for his exceptional efforts in those two countries.