



DIASPEACE KICK-OFF WORKSHOP IN BRUSSELS, 5-6.5. 2008

The Kick-off Workshop of the DIASPEACE project was organised at *Hôtel des Colonies*, Rue des Croisades 6-10, 1210 Brussels, Belgium, on May 5th-6th, 2008. The workshop was organised by A team from the University of Jyväskylä, Project Coordinator, consisting of Julia Ojanen, Liisa Laakso, Päivi Pirkkalainen and Pekka Virtanen. Altogether some 23 participants attended the two-day workshop, including representatives from each of the eight partner organisations, the EC and our sister project INFOCON. The team was especially pleased to welcome three representatives from the project's African partner organisations, notably Dr. Kassahun Berhanu and Dr. Gebre Yntiso from FSS in Addis Ababa and Ms. Naima Abdullahi from APD in Hargeisa.

The programme started with a welcome dinner on Sunday night, which for many of us was the first time to meet our partners face-to-face. The dinner provided an excellent opportunity for 'breaking the ice' and preparing the project participants for the intense programme of the following two days.

After the usual opening and introductions by the JYU team, followed by brief overview of project objectives, the workshop programme continued with an extremely informative and thought provoking presentation on multi-sited research methodology by Dr. Cindy Horst from PRIO, which was followed by a general discussion on the same topic.



Picture 1. *Dr. Cindy Horst giving her presentation on multi-sited research methodology.*



In the afternoon the JYU team presented a review of literature on the migration-conflict nexus and highlighted some key concepts such as transnationalism, diaspora and multi-level governance. Also the regional context for peace building in the Horn of Africa was briefly sketched through the concepts of regional security complex and weak states.



Picture 2. *Prof. Liisa Laakso explaining selected key concepts.*

The last item of the day was discussion of basic joint guidelines for research under work packages 2 and 3, facilitated by Ms. Andrea Warnecke from BICC and Mr. Markus Höhne from the MPI.



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The second day started with presentations by Ms. Angela Liberatore from DG Research of the EU, who explained the EU's social science research programme and their expectations for DIASPEACE in this context. This was followed by a brief presentation of the INFOCON sister project by a team consisting of Elise Ferron, Stephan Kampelmann and Thomas Blumenfeld.

The afternoon session was dedicated to administrative issues, on which Dr. Pekka Virtanen from JYU presented a brief summary. This was followed by the first Management Committee meeting while the other participants had an opportunity to discuss potential areas of collaboration with the INFOCON team. The Workshop ended with a prompt but thought provoking summary presented by Dr. Cindy Horst.



Picture 3. *Workshop participants. From left to right Peter Croll, Naima Abdullahi, Volker Franke and Bettina Conrad.*



Picture 4. *In addition to the official programme during the day, informal meeting with colleagues constituted an important part of the workshop programme, providing a chance to exchange views and learn to know new colleagues. From left to right, Julia Ojanen, Awil Mahmoud, Markus Höhne, Päivi Pirkkalainen, Gebre Yntiso, Naima Abdullahi and Mahdi Abdile.*

This project is coordinated by the University of Jyväskylä and funded under the 7th EU Framework Programme.