CIBEDO – English

About us

CIBEDO was founded by the White Fathers in the late 1970s. Today, it is the centre of the German Bishops' Conference for the dialogue with Muslims and research about Islam in Germany. CIBEDO stands for *Christlich-Islamische Begegnungs- und Dokumentationsstelle*, which could be translated as "Centre for Christian-Muslim Encounters and Documentation". The logo, which can be seen in the top left, contains an Arabic writing, which can be translated to "with prudence and love". It originates from the Second Vatican Council document "*Nostra aetate*" and serves as a motto for CIBEDO. The main motivation behind the initiative had initially been to help Muslim guest workers, who came to Germany in the 1960s and 1970s, to gain access to German society as well as to create an infrastructure for their spiritual needs. The vast majority of them came from Turkey, but a significant number also came from Morocco, Algeria and former Yugoslavia. Another motivation was more academic, i.e. to accumulate information about Islam and document the development of Islam in Germany. In contrast to the longer historical presence and significance of Islam in other countries such as France and the UK, Germany's contact with Islam is comparably more recent, due to differing colonial pasts. To cope with this new situation of the 1960s and the lack of knowledge in Germany, the White Fathers started to gather material to form a large documentation base. For a long time, the documentation consisted of written contributions and articles in the form of thematic files, with recent additions compiled digitally. Apart from the documentation, the White Fathers compiled a library, which currently consists of about 15,000 books on Islamic Studies, Christian-Muslim dialogue and Islam in Germany. Today, this library stands out as the largest for Christian-Muslim dialogue in Germany.

In the 1990s, the Catholic Church in Germany came to recognise the increasing interest and relevance of these topics not only for Christians, but also for society in general. As the White Fathers decided to retreat from the institution in 1998, CIBEDO became a centre of the German Bishops' conference. Today, CIBEDO's office is located in the main building of the Jesuit Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology Sankt Georgen/Frankfurt am Main. CIBEDO currently has six employees, a secretary and a librarian, two theologians, an Islamic scholar and a student assistant.

CIBEDO's main tasks today are

To carry forward the work initiated by the White Fathers, CIBEDO was opened to the public as a center for documentation and research. Scholars and people working for or interested in dialogue may contact us for information. Our library and documentation is available for research online. Additionally, CIBEDO's website offers further relevant material, e.g. news updates and pastoral guidelines about questions concerning interreligious encounter and

Islam.

Furthermore, CIBEDO's own publishing activities include papers and guidelines for dialogue activities. CIBEDO publishes the quarterly academic journal *CIBEDO-Beiträge zum Gespräch zwischen Christen und Muslimen* and a book series called *CIBEDO-Schriftenreihe* on theological topics significant to dialogue, such as: "Did Jesus Foretell Muhammad?", "God and Humanity in the Teachings of the Anatolian Alevis", "The Qur'anic Theme of Scriptural Corruption (*taḥrīf*) by Jews and Christians", or "The Event of the Qur'an".

CIBEDO also serves as the link between the local and national levels of dialogue. In most of the German dioceses, especially with a significant Muslim population, there are representatives in charge of coordinating dialogue activities on local as well as regional levels. CIBEDO is not responsible for these activities in a hierarchical sense, but it offers assistance when requested. An annual consultation meeting held with those responsible for dialogue with Islam within the Catholic Church serves both to facilitate mutual understanding and to help gauge the current state of interfaith dialogue. Another annual conference organized by CIBEDO, the *CIBEDO-Werkstatt*, provides the opportunity to share opinions about various topics related to Christian-Muslim dialogue, especially from a Christian point of view. This collaborative conference is being organised jointly with the Chair of Catholic Theology in the Light of Islam at the Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology Sankt Georgen.

CIBEDO as a national organization is part of several institutional networks, dialogue activities and committees, like the subcommittee for Christian-Muslim relations of the German Bishops' Conference. CIBEDO also liaises and cooperates with Muslim organizations and their umbrella organizations on a national level. In addition, CIBEDO participates in further initiatives concerning interreligious dialogue in Germany, for instance in the "*Runder Tisch der Religionen*" or in the "*Abrahamisches Forum*".

Yet another area of responsibility includes science and teaching. In cooperation with the Graduate School of Philosophy and Theology Sankt Georgen, CIBEDO offers a qualification programme on Islam and Christian-Muslim encounter for students of Sankt Georgen. The same course is offered as a two-year programme in collaboration with Sankt Georgen and the Theological-Pastoral Institute for Continuing Education, designed to equip church staff with the necessary skills in dialogue. Referents of CIBEDO are often asked to hold seminars or lectures on a wide range of topics concerning Islam and Christian-Muslim dialogue, as well.

Stand: 17. November 2026