

International Council for Human Development (ICHHD) & Kashmir Council EU
Av. Des Vaillants 36/3 1200 Brussels - Belgium

Announcement

**Cultural and Literary Fair on Kashmir: 'Beauty of Kashmir, Present and Past',
from 14 until 17 Sept. 2010 in Altiero Spinelli Building of EP, central exhibition zone 3rd floor.**

In last few years, more and more civilians but also politicians and diplomats in the EU became interested in the South Asian region in general and in the Himalayan region of Kashmir in specific. Kashmir, which was formerly known as Paradise on Earth because of its cultural and natural beauty, is nowadays mainly known as the zone of conflict, as 'nuclear flashpoint', between its neighbor states India and Pakistan. The beauty of Kashmir's cultural history became overshadowed by the present day sadness of the ongoing daily human rights violations and the lack of democratic space.

In the recent past, the European Parliament adopted a few specific resolutions on Kashmir as e.g. one about the issue of massgraves reported about by Kashmiri local human rights activists. The future of Kashmir is partly dependent on EU's future policy towards the South Asian region.

This is why we as *International Council for Human Development (ICHHD)*, supported by *the Dutch NGO IKV Pax Christi*, took the initiative to organize a Cultural and Literary Fair on Kashmir under the title: 'Beauty of Kashmir, Present and Past'.

It is our objective to, this way, encourage ongoing EU-attention for present day reality in Kashmir, that is: for the need for peace and justice in Kashmir and its relation to the chances for peace and justice in the wider South Asian region, e.g. Afghanistan.

Our event will give new MEP's an excellent opportunity to learn about past and present Kashmir and hopefully encourage ongoing attention for the issue of Kashmir in the EU.

'Beauty of Kashmir Present and Past' will be a three day event during which a Book Fair will be held on Kashmir's cultural and socio-political heritage. There will be a Reading & Meeting Room to offer the public a space to read and meet, and learn and interact about Kashmir. Alongside the three day book fair, specific activities will be programmed as e.g. Q & A sessions with specially invited authors about their work and a Q & A session with MEP's on the subject of the exhibition. The Book Fair/Reading & Meeting Room will expose titles ranging from academic research to literary novels and poetry.

Program in headlines:

- *Tuesday 14 September: inauguration of Exhibition and Book Fair*
- *Wednesday 15 September: Q & A with authors, artists and MEPs*
- *Thursday 16 September: Reading Room and Book Fair & Exhibition*

Soon after this first announcement we will send out invitations for the opening of the event.

We sincerely hope you will be our guest for 'Beauty of Kashmir Present and Past'.

Looking forward to welcome you,

Ali Raza Syed,
Chairman

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