

Strasbourg, 18 march 2025

Subject: Speech delivered by Vice President Antonella Sberna during the Interinstitutional and interreligious conversation with Members of the European Parliament

Good evening distinguished guests and friends.

It is with great pleasure that I am here with you this evening, on the occasion of Iftar, a moment that for Muslims not only marks the end of a day of fasting but also represents an extraordinary opportunity to reflect, share, and strengthen the bonds of fraternity between us. Iftar, in fact, is not just a ritual act but also a moment of gratitude and communion uniting us in our shared humanity, in our search for peace, and in our desire to build a more inclusive and respectful society.

Today's event, promoted by EULEMA and organised by Leoluca Orlando and KAICIID, sees the participation of different European political groups, as well as representatives of various religious organisations, all united in the effort to strengthen cooperation between our communities. The diversity of voices present here this evening is a clear sign of how Europe can be a beacon of dialogue and understanding among different cultures and religions.

As you know, the United Nations' International Day against Islamophobia is celebrated each year on 15th of March. It is an important occasion, not only to promote concrete actions against discrimination and intolerance towards Muslims, but also to strengthen mutual respect and understanding between different faiths and communities.

As European institutions, our commitment must be to build a society that respects all religions, and which is united against all forms of discrimination. Diversity in every community- as an Islamic tradition reminds us - is a Mercy, a blessed occasion to be respected and celebrated, not a reason for division.

As Vice-President of the European Parliament responsible for the implementation of the Article 17 of the Treaty, I am deeply convinced that our task each day must be to promote a culture of respect and mutual solidarity.

From this perspective, Ramadan, with its teachings of patience, compassion, and self-control, represents a period of deep reflection and an opportunity to rediscover and reinforce universal values that unite humanity.

This is why I would like to express my sincere gratitude for EULEMA's and Imam Yahya Pallavicini's commitment, which also reflect our collective dedication in the fight against all forms of discrimination and in the promotion of a European culture of dialogue, cooperation and peace.

Thank you all and I wish you all a very good evening.

Antonella Sberna
Vice President of the European Parliament