

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA



AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE SUFI ISLAM OF THE BALKANS

SARAJEVO
FROM 27 DECEMBER 2024
TO 1 JANUARY 2025



Association Internationale
Soufie Alâwiyya | **ONG**

THE TRADITION OF END-OF-YEAR MEETINGS AND SEMINARS IN THE ALAWIYYA SUFI ORDER

The holding of end-of-year meetings and seminars by AISA International NGO is part of a venerable tradition in the Alawiyya Sufi Order.

The first meeting of its kind was held in 1916, just two years after the construction of the main Zawiya in Mostaganem in 1914 by Sheikh Ahmed Ben Mustapha Al Alawi, who had been elevated to the position of Sheikh of the Tariqa Alawiyya in 1909. These annual reunions took place in October, in step with the agricultural calendar observed by society at that time.

Below are the oldest known photographs of these meetings, dating from 1925 for Mostaganem and 1928 for Algiers.



Mostaganem 1925



Algiers 1928

These annual meetings of the Alawiyya Order, which were first celebrated in 1916, are moments of spiritual union and intellectual exchange. They were first held in Mostaganem, then in Algiers in the Sidi Ramdane mosque situated in the district of the Casbah, in 1922 and 1924. They then returned to Mostaganem from 1925 to 1927, before moving back to Algiers in 1928.

The program for these assemblies went far beyond the scope of ordinary spiritual meetings. It often included talks on subjects such as current events, with the participation of guests from various countries and from diverse confessional backgrounds. These exchanges of ideas reflected the openness of the Alawiyya Order, and the active role it played in the crucial events of the time.

Sheikh Khaled Bentounes became the spiritual guide of the Alawiyya Sufi Order in 1975 and ever since then these meetings have taken place at the end of the year, a more propitious period as it is better adapted to the present-day organization of society, especially in Europe.

Each year, the country hosting the event and the keynote themes change, though for most of the more recent meetings the main theme has been Education for a Culture of Peace.

In 2024, it was decided to organize the end-of-year meeting in Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in order to discover and explore the Sufi Islam of the Balkans.



Mandelieu-la-Napoule, France 2017



Murcia, Spain 2018



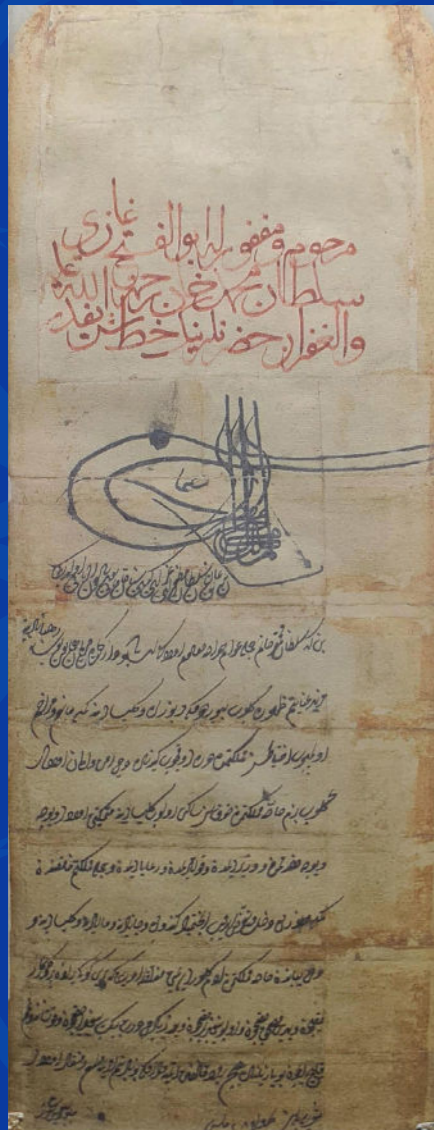
Hammamet, Tunisia 2019



Hammamet, Tunisia 2023



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Ottoman Firman of 1463 guaranteeing freedom of worship to Christians, signed by Sultan Mehmed II, on display at the monastery of Fojnica, Bosnia.

Şeyh Mağribi Mosque, 16th century, located in the old town of Sarajevo, named in tribute to a Maghrebi sheikh.

AISA International NGO would like to invite you to join us in meeting our Sufi brothers and sisters of Bosnia-Herzegovina, from 27 December 2024 to 1 January 2025.

It is thus in the very heart of Europe that we will meet with European Islam and Sufism, which have been present here since at least the 14th century.

It is important to know that Sufi orders, spread primarily by dervishes (practitioners of Sufism) were here well before the arrival of the Ottomans. It was these dervishes who planted the seeds of an open and tolerant form of Islam.

The capital, Sarajevo, was founded in 1462 by the Ottoman governor Gazi Isa Bey (1439-1470) who first built his own residence with a convent for the dervishes, who were already present there. This convent served as a stopping-place for travellers on a prairie along the river Miljacka. The name of the city is likely based on the Turkish “Saray Ovasi”, which means “prairie of the palace”.

Numerous « turuq » (Sufi orders) have since prospered in this region and remain alive and active throughout the Balkans to this day. Among them are Qadiriyya, the Naqshbaniyya, the Mawlawiyya, the Khalwatiyya, the Rifaiyya, and the Bektachiyya. The majority of the Muslims of Bosnia belong to one or another of these orders. Strong ties exist between orthodox Islam and Sufism, unlike in many other Muslim countries.

The first initiative of the Ottoman rulers was to enshrine “living-together” amongst the various religious confessions. This fact is attested by the Ahdanama, pacts which guaranteed for the Christians freedom of movement, freedom of worship, and protection, as testified by the Firman (decree) exhibited in the Franciscan monastery of Fojnica, in central Bosnia. This document was drafted in 1463 and bears the “tugra”, calligraphic signature of Sultan Mehmet II (1432-1481).

Ties between the Balkans and the Maghreb exist to this day, as we can see in the surname Bouchenaqi (Bosniac) of some Algerian families. A mosque dating from the 16th century in the old city of Sarajevo bears the name of a Sheikh originally from the Maghreb, Seyh Magribi Camii. One can also still find traces of this influence in the local cuisine, in clothing styles, and certain handicrafts.

These ties survived in Yugoslavia under the communist regime of president Josip Broz “Tito”. During the Algerian war of independence (1954-1962). Tito dispatched the cameraman Stevan Labudovic to the front, where he compiled the largest archive of images from this war.

In spite of the war and the genocide which took place between 1992 and 1995, surprising and shocking the entire world, the Muslims of this country managed to preserve the traditionally fraternal relations with their Christian and Jewish fellow countrymen.

In the wake of this devastating war, Bosnia rose from the ashes. In spite of all the violence and the scars that can still be seen, Sarajevo - often called the “Jerusalem of Europe” - continues to embody the spirit of “living-together”. It is as if a sort of Andalusia were still alive right in the heart of Europe, where native European Muslims and other communities continue to live side by side.

For this edition of its end-of-year reunion, AISA International NGO is pleased to share these moments of celebration in the hope that they might restore and strengthen our solidarity with the inhabitants of Bosnia, and to allow for the discovery of historical sites which demonstrate the cultural and spiritual wealth of this beautiful country, first and foremost thanks to its mosques, tekke, madrasas and libraries.



PEACE AT THE HEART OF EDUCATION

What kind of world will we leave to our children? Humanity today is facing a host of challenges that it helped to create and exacerbate. “Living Together in Peace” has thus become an absolute necessity, one of extreme urgency. The Education for a Culture of Peace (ECP) project proposed by AISA International NGO is a direct response to the challenges described in the 2015 Millennium Declaration of the United Nations Organization and in the 2023 UNESCO Recommendation on Peace Education.

This project makes the notion of peace the focal point of the entire learning process. Peace becomes the matrix of a pedagogical exercise which fosters a delicate interaction between Disciplines and Skills, with the goal of transmitting Knowledge that opens pathways to Peace.

Through the study of the various subject matters such as ethics, science, arts and languages, and by activating various skills such as meditation, mediation, and the Circle, this pedagogical approach fosters a whole spectrum of “life knowledge” (Savoir-Vivre): Savoir-Etre (knowing how to be), Savoir-Dire (knowing how to say), and Savoir-Faire (knowing how to do), which all combine to produce the Pathways to Peace: peace with oneself, peace with others, and peace with the environment.

This ECP model is accompanied by a pedagogical guide, as well as teaching and training manuals. It has also led to the creation of ECP programs and schools in Algeria, The Netherlands and Indonesia.

« Placing Peace at the heart of education and learning” was the call to action voiced by AISA International NGO in the Geneva Declaration proclaimed on 16 May 2024 during the celebration of the 7th edition of the International Day for Living Together in Peace (IDLTP/JIVEP).

The ECP pedagogical model was put into practise with 800 students in the township of Bernex in Switzerland in May 2024. This experiment was followed by numerous training workshops: for diplomats at the United Nations University in March and September of 2024; at the request of FASe (Fondation Genevoise pour l’animation socioculturelle) in March and November of 2024; during Peace Week in Canada in September 2024; and finally at a conference of the Global Summit for Peace Education hosted by UNESCO in November 2024.

The ECP model can be accessed on line at: <https://www.culturedepaix.fr/>.



Geneva Declaration



www.culturedepaix.fr





Reception for the Encounter with the Sufi Islam of the Balkans, and its various workshops



Sebilj fountain, Sarajevo: iconic monument in Sarajevo, the heart of its historical heritage



Mostar bridge: icon of the Balkans, linking culture and history over the centuries



Blagaj tekke: spiritual haven hidden near the source of the Buna, emblem of Sufism in Bosnia

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING WORKSHOPS

The health and well-being committee of AISA International NGO is pleased to offer five different health and well-being workshops

- **WORKSHOP 1: "GET MOVING FOR BETTER HEALTH"**
Directed by Dr. Amine Babouch
- **WORKSHOP 2: "BREATHING ALONG WITH THE CYCLE OF THE SEASONS"**
Directed by Mme Salima Aissani
- **WORKSHOP 3: "BETTER BREATHING: A CURE WITHIN OUR REACH"**
Directed by Mme Malika Talbi
- **WORKSHOP 4: "THE HUMAN BODY, AN EXAMPLE OF LIVING TOGETHER IN PEACE"**
Directed by Dr Abdelkader Zoulim
- **WORKSHOP 5: "FREE UP YOUR DIAPHRAGM"**
Directed by Dr Mohamed Chetouane

Please remember to bring suitable clothing for sporting activities, and a bath towel.

SIGN-UP FOR THE WORKSHOPS:
EDUCATION FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING COMMITTEE
SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW TO SIGN UP



PROGRAM FROM 27 DECEMBER 2024 TO 1 JANUARY 2025

HOUR	PROGRAM	PLACE
FRIDAY 27 DECEMBER 2024		
08H00-00H00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reception of participants at Sarajevo airport and Hotel Terme Transportation from airport to Hotel Terme Badge distribution Room allocation 	Airport and hotel reception
12H00-14H00	Lunch	hotel restaurant
19H30-21H00	Dinner	hotel restaurant
21H30-23H00	PLENARY : OPENING EVENING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of the seminars Islam in Bosnia-Herzegovina Presentation of the general seminar program Presentation of the "Education for a Culture of Peace" workshops (workshops in French, Arabic, English) 	Conference Hall
SEMINAR TO BE BROADCAST LIVE		
SATURDAY 28 DECEMBER 2024		
07H00-9H30	Breakfast	hotel restaurant
09H30-11H00	"EDUCATION FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE" WORKSHOPS (French, Arabic, English)	Conference Hall
11H00-11H15	Coffee break	Conference Hall foyer
11H15-12H45	"EDUCATION FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE" WORKSHOPS (French, Arabic, English)	Conference Hall
12H45-14H00	Lunch	hotel restaurant
14H00-16H00	Free time (Dohr, 'Asr)	Thermal, spa, visits
16H00-17H30	"EDUCATION FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE" Debriefing and debate for each of the workshops	Conference Hall
17H30-18H00	Afternoon break (Maghreb, 'Aisha)	Conference Hall foyer
18H00-19H30	"HEALTH AND WELL-BEING" WORKSHOP (Registration online)	Conference Hall
19H30-21H00	Dinner	hotel restaurant
21H30-23H00	PLENARY SESSION: HISTORY OF SUFISM IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA Speech by Sejh Čazim Hadžimejlić, President of Tarikat Centar	Conference Hall
SUNDAY 29 DECEMBER 2024		
07H00-9H30	Breakfast	hotel restaurant
09H30-11H00	"EDUCATION FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE" WORKSHOPS (French, Arabic, English)	Conference Hall
11H00-11H15	Coffee break	Conference Hall foyer

11H15-12H45	"EDUCATION FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE" WORKSHOPS (French, Arabic, English)	Conference Hall
12H45-14H00	Lunch	hotel restaurant
14H00-16H00	Free time (Dohr, 'Asr)	Thermal, spa, visits
16H00-17H30	"EDUCATION FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE" Debriefing and debate for each of the workshops	Conference Hall
17H30-18H00	Afternoon break (Maghreb, 'Aisha)	Conference Hall foyer
18H00-19H30	"HEALTH AND WELL-BEING" WORKSHOP (Registration online)	Conference Hall
19H30-21H00	Dinner	hotel restaurant
21H30-23H00	PLENARY SESSION: "LIVING-TOGETHER" IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA Speech by Professor Mustafa Cerić, Rais El Oulama of Bosnia-Herzegovina	Conference Hall
MONDAY 30 DECEMBER 2024		
07H00-7H30	Breakfast	hotel restaurant
07H30-18H30	Excursion Group A - free lunch in Blagaj Excursion Group B - free lunch in Mostar	Blagaj then Mostar Mostar then Blagaj
19H30-21H00	Dinner	hotel restaurant
21H30-22H30	PLENARY SESSION : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk by Madame Saïda Benouari "Presentation of the Mediation and Professional Training Committee" for 2025". Screening of the Foundation's teaser presentation Adlania 	Conference Hall
22H30-23H30	Screening-debate of the film «Putting peace at the heart of education» in three languages: French, English, Arabic»	Conference Hall
TUESDAY 31 DECEMBER 2024		
07H00-9H00	Breakfast	hotel restaurant
09H00-17H00	Excursion in Sarajevo - Groups A and B - free lunch	Sarajevo
17H00	Groups A and B, departure for the Istiqlal Mosque	Tramway/Bus
17H30-21H00	'Isha prayer, spiritual meeting with Sufi brotherhoods	Istiqlal Grand Mosque
21H30-22H30	Festive dinner	hotel restaurant
23H00	Spiritual evening with Sufi musical group from the Meyli, Sejh Čazim Hadžimejlić Foundation	Hotel Austria
MERCREDI 1^{ER} JANVIER 2025		
07H00-10H00	Breakfast	hotel restaurant
	Room check-out	Hotel reception
	Shuttle service to Sarajevo airport	Hotel lobby
12H00-13H30	Lunch for afternoon departures	hotel restaurant

For those who wish to bathe in the hot springs, please inquire with reception. Remember to bring your bathing suits.





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