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Subject: Terror attacks prompt moves for strengthened EU links with Islam

[IMAGE]
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TERROR ATTACKS PROMPT MOVES FOR STRENGTHENED EU LINKS WITH ISLAM

European Social Democrats will next week hold talks with leading Islamic and Israeli figures in a development of their pledge after the 11 September terrorist attacks to build greater understanding between European and Muslim societies.

Three themes will underpin discussions at a Winter University in Granada, Spain:

- Politics and religion
- Values, Rights and Civil Liberties after 11 September
- Evaluation of the Barcelona process and the Middle East crisis

The talks are organised by the Party of European Socialists in conjunction with the European Parliament Socialist Group and the Spanish Socialist Party. The PES last year held preparatory discussions with EU Muslim groups and has announced plans to establish an EU-Muslim network.

Said PES President Robin Cook: "We wish to bring together intellectual and political personalities from the two shores of the Mediterranean in the culturally symbolic city of Granada, Spain, in order to stimulate fruitful debate and build greater understanding between our cultures."

The talks, open to the media throughout, are from 10h00 to 19h00 on 14 February and from 09h30 to 13h30 on 15 February at the Palacio de Congresos de Granada, Paseo del Violín, 18006 Granada, Spain:

Senior political figures who have confirmed their participation include:

Chairman of Algeria's Socialist Forces Front Hocine Ait Ahmed; former Israeli foreign minister Shlomo Ben Ami; Special EU envoy to the Middle East Miguel Angel Moratinos; Palestinian deputy minister for international co-operation Anis Alqaq and the international secretary of Morocco's Socialist Union of Popular Forces, Khalid Alioua.

Academics confirmed as taking part will include: Rabat University's Professor of Law Malika Benradi; Fribourg University's Professor of Philosophy and Islamic studies Tarike Ramadan; Madrid University's Sociology Professor Gema Martin

Munoz; and Granada University's Professor of Political and Administrative Sciences, Juan Montabes Pereira.

Writers participating will include Alia Chamari of Tunisia, Bernard Ravenel of France and Andres Ortega of Spain.

The leaders of the three organising groups - Robin Cook of the Party of European Socialists, Enrique Barón Crespo of the European Parliament Socialist Group and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of the Spanish Socialist Party - will all make keynote speeches.

For more information, including a programme and full list of participants, please see the PES Web site (www.pes.org) or phone PES Spokesman Tony Robinson on

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