The Inter-cantonal Centre of Information on Beliefs

At the last meeting of Witnessing Together in Geneva, we had a fascinating talk by Mrs. Brigitte Knobel, director of the Inter-cantonal Centre of Information on Beliefs (CIC - Centre Intercantonal d'information sur les Croyances).

The CIC was founded in 2002 to respond to a concern and to political questions raised by the tragedy of the *Ordre du Temple Solaire* (OTS). The CIC is a private non-profit foundation for public service, based in Geneva, financed by the cantons of Geneva, Vaud, Valais and the Tessin, as well as by private organisations with specific mandates. It does not depend on any religious institution. There is a staff of six, sociologists and historians of religions.

They collaborate with universities for research. The aim of the CIC is to improve the "living together" by better understanding and more transparency. The CIC guarantees the neutrality and confidentiality of its interviews. The CIC does not judge, it informs and advises with a variety of practical information, quoting its sources.

- Information on the communities. It produced a cartography on religious diversity in Geneva entitled "D'église en Ashram", 2014 and it publishes other useful literature and helpful brochures, 800 specialised books.
- Information on Swiss legislation and policies in the field of religion and advice to improve the application of statutes.
- Practical advice and help in cases of problematic situations (difficulties within a community, radicalisation, religious discrimination, sectarian deviations, etc.).
- The CIC appreciates receiving information on the communities.
- Any person or community can ask for advice from the CIC.

The following are some responses to the questions asked:

For the CIC, a religious community is a group of people who share the same faith and gather together regularly in the same place of worship.

There are additional structures in other French-speaking cantons and in the Swiss-German cantons.

The CIC has no literature on discrimination of people with a handicap or on healers.

For more information refer to: www.cic-info.ch/ or info@cic-info.ch

Federal statistics are found at:
https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques.html

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