

# **Our Shared Values Symposium**

**29 – 30 March 2010, Istanbul, Turkey**

**Jointly organised by the British Council, the Civilisation Studies Centre at Bahcesehir University and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (UK)**

The British Council, Bahçesehir University- Civilization Studies Centre (CSC) and Association for Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS UK) are jointly organising “Our Shared Values” Symposium which is the first Turkey based event of the British Council’s initiative “Our Shared Europe” Project. It is also the first of a series of “Our Shared Values” symposia being jointly organised in the UK and Europe by the AMSS UK in cooperation with HRH Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre for Islamic Studies at Cambridge University and the Center for the Study of Democracy at Westminster University.

The purpose of the symposia is to explore the key issues which need to be addressed by an alliance of communities in formulating a set of shared values and principles which underpin a common vision of a benign civil society and its deeper roots in the higher moral and spiritual order represented by the very idea of human civilization.

The essential premise of the symposium is that any alliance of communities dedicated to responsible citizenship and the health of wider society needs to be an alliance not only between followers of the ‘Abrahamic’ faiths and the composite Judeo-Christian-Islamic heritage which underpins our civilization, but between all people who seek to advance higher civilisational values and ethical principles for the common good, whether those values and principles are integral to other faith or wisdom traditions or based simply in a vision of what it means to be fully human.

Recognition of the importance of engagement, dialogue and debate in fostering a truly pluralistic society is central to the discovery of shared values and principles which can form a common bond between communities. The symposium will also explore how governments, instead of imposing upon communities an assumed set of supposedly ‘core national values’, can foster constructive engagement with diverse communities to reach a common understanding of what those values are and how such convergence might underlie a shared national narrative to which all citizens might subscribe.