

Peace Conference at the Catholic University of Leuven: Turkmenistan's Ambassador in Brussels Holds an Inspiring Meeting

On April 27, the Catholic University of Leuven, one of Europe's oldest and most prestigious institutions, hosted a Peace Conference featuring the participation of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Turkmenistan in Belgium, Sapar Palvanov.



The event was organized by the Embassy of Turkmenistan in Belgium in collaboration with the university's student association "KULTUR" and the EUROVIA company. It brought together representatives of academia, youth organizations, media, the diplomatic corps, the Belgian parliament, and municipal officials.

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In his meaningful speech, the Ambassador of Turkmenistan addressed a fundamental issue of modern times—peace and neutrality as the basis of international cooperation and development. He emphasized that peace is not merely the absence of war but a mindset, a way of life, and a conscious choice in favor of unity and mutual understanding. “Peace is built daily, choice by choice. It is the readiness to believe in the power of humanity, united by common values,” the diplomat remarked.

The ambassador elaborated on Turkmenistan's path, which embraced a strategy of permanent neutrality after gaining independence in 1991. A key milestone was the recognition of this status by the UN General Assembly in 1995. Turkmenistan, as noted by the Ambassador, builds its foreign policy on the principles of “active neutrality”: the country does not join military alliances and consistently advocates for dialogue and cooperation.

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During his speech, the Ambassador provided vivid examples of how neutrality policy yields real results. Turkmenistan played a crucial role in facilitating peace negotiations in Tajikistan in the 1990s and actively participates in rebuilding Afghanistan's economy through the development of energy and transportation corridors, such as the TAPI gas pipeline. Amid global challenges, Turkmenistan demonstrates a balanced approach, providing humanitarian aid while maintaining diplomatic relations with all parties.

The speech also highlighted Turkmenistan's initiative to proclaim 2025 as the International Year of Peace and Trust, which has received UN support. The Ambassador announced that in December 2025, Ashgabat will host a high-level international forum, serving as an essential platform for promoting preventive diplomacy, trust, and dialogue.

To offer a deeper understanding of Turkmenistan's rich cultural heritage, two video clips were shown to conference attendees. The first showcased ancient and modern Turkmenistan, highlighting its contributions to the Silk Road and cultural achievements. The second was dedicated to the legendary Akhal-Teke horses—the pride of the Turkmen people.

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The Ambassador noted that Turkmenistan had recently celebrated the National Day of the Akhal-Teke Horse.

At the conclusion of his speech, the Ambassador conducted a quiz among participants, asking questions related to his presentation. The most attentive and knowledgeable attendees received national gifts from Turkmenistan, sparking lively interest among the audience.

The warm and friendly atmosphere of the event was complemented by traditional Turkmen cuisine: guests were treated to aromatic Turkmen plov and national delicacies.

The conference brought together students, researchers, representatives of think tanks, and international media, including Diplomatic World, EU Reporter, Bruxelles Korner, and Kazinform, alongside Belgian parliamentarians and diplomats. Their participation underscored the significance of the topics discussed and the high level of interest in advancing the ideals of peace, trust, and cooperation.

The speech of Turkmenistan's diplomat continued the proud tradition of the Catholic University of Leuven, where world leaders such as Pope Francis, King Philippe of Belgium, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, EU High Representative Federica Mogherini, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and renowned British writer and actor Sir Stephen Fry have spoken in previous years.

The conference demonstrated that the pursuit of peace, trust, and mutual understanding unites representatives of diverse professions and social spheres. "Choose peace. Live by peace. Become a bridge between nations." This inspiring appeal from the Ambassador of Turkmenistan concluded the solemn event in Leuven.

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