

# Laudation for Thomas Schirmmacher

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On the occasion of the lecture by Thomas Schirmmacher "The Genocide at the Pontos Greeks: Lessons from History for Today" on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the final phase of the genocide of the Greeks in the Pontos area and Asia Minor, held on 19 May 2019 in the Greek Orthodox Church in Düsseldorf, <https://xeniteas-duesseldorf.de/event/vortrag-prof-dr-schirmmacher-einladung>

On behalf of the organizers:

1. the associations of the Greeks from Pontos of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia
2. the Institute for Diaspora and Genocide Research of the Ruhr-University Bochum and
3. the Committee for the Promotion of the Investigation and Recognition of the Genocide in the Federation of Greek Pontian Associations in Europe (OSEPE).



Dear Excellencies and Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen

Today I have the pleasure of welcoming a special guest who is actually unique in his knowledge of the religions of this world: Professor Dr. Schirmmacher.

Professor Dr. Schirmmacher, is not only Deputy General Secretary of the World Evangelical Alliance, and thus representative of 600 million Protestant Christians.

He is also Chairman of the Advisory Council of the Central Council of Oriental Christians in Germany, to which he provides advice on all important issues. In this function I got to know him.

But Dr. Schirmmacher is not only a theologian. The subject of ‚human rights‘ plays just as important a role in his life as religion. And especially the freedom of religion as part of the universally valid human rights is a matter close to his heart.

It is probably rare in life to meet a person who in a short life span has got to know, studied and internalized so many aspects of the most different religions. His explanations, studies and analyses on this subject should fill entire rooms and open up a fascinating world to many a young student, which one would not understand without a thorough introduction, for which Schirmmacher has created the basics.

And understanding also means acting. Acting in the sense of a partly critical, but peaceful and especially fair discourse between the ethnic groups and religions. And so one can rightly claim that the teacher, theologian, religious scholar, human rights activist and author that he is, is most valued by religious and political leaders for what distinguishes him most:

Professor Dr. Thomas Schirmmacher is a peace ambassador and mediator at the same time.

He is exactly the kind of person we need in a world that - strengthened by digital media - seems to be surrounded only by conflict.

On 18 October 2018 we met once again in the Deutsche Bundestag, the Federal Parliament. I was very impressed by his commitment to Christians around the world. It was then that I realized how important he is for us Pontos-Greeks, and at my request to give a lecture on the topics that concerns us, he kindly agreed immediately.

Dear Thomas Schirmmacher, welcome to the Pontos Greeks!

Anastasia Dick