

BERLIN / EVENTS

The Begum wants to help estranged spouses through their separation

Inaara Aga Khan fosters mediators

The year that is nearing its end was a year of shattered love, separations and divorces. **Stefan and Claudia Effenberg, Wayne Carpendale and Yvonne Catterfeld, Maybrit and Michael Illner, Oliver and Ulrike Geissen, Barbara and Bernd Herzsprung, Dominic and Kristina Raacke** and even Bishop **Margot Käsmann** and husband **Eckhard**. Some separations proceed amicably, and others end with a War of the Roses—in court. Because emotions are running high, because values and ideas have grown apart. It is particularly bad when children are involved. This is exactly where the idea of mediation comes in—a form of dispute resolution and an alternative to often bitter court proceedings. An initiative that is also supported by the **Begum Inaara Aga Khan**, who herself separated from her husband, the head of the Ismaelites, **Prince Karim Aga Khan**. “It is critically important how people deal with one another, even when they are not in agreement,” said the Begum, who holds a doctorate in law and is the founder of the Princess Inaara Foundation for needy and disadvantaged women and children in developing countries. “Mediation is a voluntary, constructive procedure in which the parties to the dispute seek an agreement themselves with the help of a neutral mediator, instead of going to court.”

The Begum just honored innovative projects aimed at avoiding court proceedings at Berliner Hotel de Rome. As a jury member, she, along with **Guido Westerwelle** and **Charlotte Knobloch**, Chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, decided on the prizes that the Contarini Institut für Mediation [Contarini Institute for Mediation] (Director **Katharina Gräfin von Schieffen**, info at www.dgm-web.de) had offered with Fernuniversität Hagen. This involves the fostering of the training of mediators. Mediation has been used at Berlin courts for just seven years. The trailblazer was Presiding Administrative Court Judge **Karsten-Michael Ortloff**, who, in addition to his activity as a judge, worked as a mediator for the Administrative Court and the Court of Administrative Appeals for the State of Berlin. The Berlin Court of Appeals and Berlin State Court have offered court-connected mediation in pilot projects since the beginning of 2006. Little by little, judge mediators are being added to nearly all municipal courts, Minister of Justice **Gisela von der Aue** stated.

“Mediation not only has the advantage of being more cost-effective. It is also sensible in situations in which it is better for the affected persons—who are the experts when it comes to their problem—to reach an agreement themselves, instead of imposing a court decision on one another,” the Begum stated. “Mediation is an intelligent and human approach. Unfortunately, it can only help if both parties have a true desire to reach an agreement.”

Franziska v. Mutius

[photo caption]

Katharina Gräfin Schlieffen (left) with the Begum Inaara Aga Khan in Berlin

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