

# ANNUAL REPORT 2010

COMMISSION OF THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCES  
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY



# COMECE ANNUAL REPORT 2010

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# 1 | FOREWORD



Bishop Adrianus van Luyn

## Dear Readers,

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of COMECE, allow me to shed a little light on its history and on the work it does in Brussels.

At the birth of the European integration process, as we all know, one great idea, or ideal, shone out: the project of the founding fathers of Europe. It was on 9 May 1950, 60 years ago, that Robert Schuman unveiled his plan in Paris, a plan to end wars between the large and small powers in Europe once and for all. He knew his initiative was a gamble, but also that there was no other way, since

*“world peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it.”* The risk taken by Robert Schuman in 1950 was mirrored in scope and boldness by Pope John XXIII, when he set up a Council in 1959. The move was his idea, and was motivated by a desire for the Catholic Church to be able to keep up with the challenges of the modern world.

This *aggiornamento* was developed and made more concrete in the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et spes* of the Second Vatican Council, in which the relationship between the Church and the world was readjusted. This Council gave birth to the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union, or COMECE, whose 30th anniversary we celebrated in 2010. COMECE's story can be summed up rather quickly and, to a large extent, runs parallel to the road towards European integration, whose progress it has keenly monitored: starting life as an information office, which familiarised the Bishops' Conferences with the structure and the operations of the European institutions; it grew into a kind of think tank, before becoming a partner in dialogue with the European Union. Throughout all of these developments, COMECE has held fast to its principles when it comes to working at the intersection between politics and the Church and has never ceased developing its *modus operandi*.

The Church cannot of course come up with a fitting response or propose solutions to the problems thrown up by each and every EU topic. Nor is this its task; but what it can do, without ever trivialising the seriousness of the situation, is allow itself to be guided by some important principles, which it has 'inherited' and would like to pass on: the inviolable dignity of every human being, the Common Good as well as the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity. These four principles overlap in Catholic social teaching and unfold still further when considered from the angles of justice and truth. It is the task of the Church to constantly remind us of this fact and to monitor the work of the EU and its institutions in this regard.

Given the current worrying developments in the global economy, an unpleasant truth has surfaced with regard to the present economic order and calls for justice can be heard demanding the universal provision of goods. A market economy set-up – irrespective of what level we consider it – can only be justified when it furthers the Common Good, aims for social equality and does not leave it to random acts of individual kindness or charity to deal with caring for the poorest and the weakest and for future generations. Inextricably linked to this is the pursuit of an appropriate and moderate way of life.

We must also not hide from the fact that Europe embodies both unity and diversity. It is subdivided, a result of both language and history. The inner cultural cohesion of European nations will remain in a united Europe. Any failure to observe these cultural identities will be interpreted as a lack of respect, an example of injustice, as a defiance of our own values, since – as we can read in the encyclical *'Pacem in terris'*: *'nations can be sensitive in matters in any way touching their dignity and honour; and with good reason'* (Nr. 89). Europe must do justice to its peoples and its nations.

In February 1992, Jacques Delors, in his capacity as President of the European Commission, invited Churches and religious communities to participate, in their own ways, in the European integration process: *“help us to give Europe a soul – a spirituality, a meaning”* COMECE took him up on the offer. But it was also a call for self-reflection. There is a genuine need for Churches to take a long hard look at themselves and apply criticism where necessary – that is the first condition any interlocutor needs to fulfil if a real dialogue is to take place. This reflection then leads, without fail, to the question as to what decisive contribution Christians can make to Europe today. This contribution is twofold: commitment and dialogue.

First and foremost, Churches need to pay greater intellectual and spiritual attention to the process of European unification in order to fully grasp its long-term significance. A greater level of curiosity within the Church with respect to how the European institutions go about their work and make decisions would be something to be welcomed. For this, a deeper understanding of the processes and mechanisms underpinning European Union policy is also required. Christianity will only survive in Europe if Christians show willing to play an active part in shaping European construction and work towards a more humane future for our continent.

Second, a just world order based on solidarity is inconceivable without an understanding between religions and cultures. Due to Europe's history and the situation we find ourselves in today, with cultures pressed up close against one another, there is a longing in Europe for understanding between religions and cultures, the fervency of which we might well have difficulty finding anywhere else. For this reason, the Church in Europe today must practice intercultural dialogue as its foremost task and promote dialogue between religions to this end.

The dialogue between cultures, ideologies and religions is not so much a dialogue of a theological nature, rather it is, in the first instance – and most importantly – a dialogue concerning moral values between individual people, who live in different cultures and civilisations. Its content chiefly addresses questions about the *'whys and wherefores'* on issues relating to meaning and ethics. Humankind can avoid these questions in its thoughts, but not in its actions. It is important here that Churches lend their religious perception of humankind and the world. We are not just discussing 'one issue' matters, but rather we are examining ethical topics. These questions need to be asked against the backdrop of a personalised idea of man which, for Christians, is enshrined in the image of God. Thanks to this relational understanding of humans as people in a community; people, be they Christian or non-Christian, become aware of responsibilities towards other people today and in the future – for *“the best possible level of humanity”* (Paul Ricoeur) – or the best which is humanly possible. The goal of the dialogue interpreted in this way is therefore to arrive at a humane and humanising society, in which people of different religious and cultural origins can live together peacefully in Europe.

**Bishop Adrianus van Luyn sdb**  
**President of COMECE**

## 2 | REPORT OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Executive Committee consists of the President, Bishop Adrianus van Luyn, two Vice-Presidents, Cardinal Reinhard Marx (Archbishop of Munich-Freising) and Bishop Piotr Jarecki (Auxiliary Bishop of Warsaw) and the General Secretary, Mgr Piotr Mazurkiewicz.

The Executive Committee of COMECE met on 3 occasions in 2010: 15 April and 15 September in Brussels, and on 9-10 June in Rome. The Apostolic Nuncio to the European Communities H.E Mgr Dupuy also attended these meetings.

At each meeting, the President and the Vice Presidents received a report on the current activities and initiatives of the COMECE Secretariat as well as an information report on current EU issues. The Executive Committee prepared the material for submission to the Assembly for examination, took care of the implementation phase of the Assembly's decisions and gave its approval of the administrative system and agreed the proper balance between operating expenses and available resources.

### Vice President of COMECE becomes Cardinal:

COMECE is delighted by the nomination as a Cardinal of Reinhard Marx (57), the Archbishop of Munich & Freising. Through the nomination into the College of Cardinals of the Catholic Church on 20 November, Pope Benedict XVI honours the action and personality of Archbishop Marx as well as the Diocese of Munich & Freising. Archbishop Marx has been a Member of COMECE since 2006 and became its vice President in 2009.

Mgr Ardrianus van Luyn, President of COMECE, declared:

*“We rejoice together with our Vice President, Archbishop Reinhard Marx and we congratulate him for his nomination as a Cardinal. Because of his profound knowledge of the Catholic social teaching and his deep understanding of the social, economical and political situation in the EU, Archbishop Marx is highly appreciated, not only by COMECE but also by the EU Institutions. His contribution to the socio-political reflection of COMECE will gain a new dimension thanks to his nomination as Cardinal.”*

## 3 | COMECE PLENARY ASSEMBLIES

**COMECE holds two plenary meetings each year, which set out the main lines of its work. The Apostolic Nuncio to the European Communities participates in these meetings. A seminal issue of the European integration process provides the core theme of each meeting.**

### 3.1 | Spring Plenary Assembly 14-16 April 2010

The fight against poverty was the main theme of the Spring Plenary Assembly of the Bishops of COMECE, which was held from 14 to 16 April in Brussels. The EU has chosen to dedicate 2010 to the “European Year against poverty and social exclusion”. A major theme for the Church is that, through her numerous organisations, it is one of the most important actors in the fight against poverty in Europe. The Bishops have suggested to the EU decision-makers that they broaden the current tools used to measure poverty in order to include not only material criteria, but also the relational dimension.

Poverty, which has already been faced by too many citizens in Europe, is further being aggravated by the world economic crisis. Yet the politicians have not succeeded in addressing the problem at its roots so that future crises do not arise. It is the issue of the origins of the crisis that the Bishops wished to highlight as well as to prompt a reflection. It is indeed a moral crisis that we face, which is marked by excesses and a confusion of values. The key is thus to restore a balance between individual interests and the interests of all – i.e. the Common Good – as well as a better conciliation between what is legal

and justified, on the one hand, and what is just, on the other hand. It is only through this fundamental balancing that our present crisis will result in “salutary change”.

On this issue, as well as on other issues, the proposals elaborated by the Church will be better related to requests made by the European decision-makers in the framework of the “open, transparent and regular” dialogue between the EU and the Churches that has recently entered into force with Article 17 of the Treaty. During their Plenary Assembly, the Bishops reflected on the practical implementation of this Dialogue.

Religious freedom in the world figures among the concrete topics that the Bishops of COMECE wished to address within the framework of this Dialogue. The Bishops received a report by the COMECE Secretariat entitled ‘*Religious Freedom, Pillar of the Human Rights Policy in the External Relations of the European Union*’. This Report reminds us of the origins of the right to religious freedom, mentions the violations of this right throughout the world and proposes a series of recommendations for the attention of European decision-makers in order to promote this basic right. The Report will be circulated to the Members of the European Parliament, and to Baroness Ashton, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

In addition, the Bishops received the report of the group of experts set up by COMECE with a view to the Conference on the revision of the Treaty on Nuclear Non-Proliferation, to be held in May. This document makes a series of proposals to the EU negotiators, notably to promote nuclear disarmament on the principles of transparency, verification and irreversibility, but also to include more of civil society in this fundamental debate for the future of Mankind. The report will be transmitted to the EU Institutions, and specifically to Baroness Ashton.

The Bishops referred to the catastrophe that struck Poland and celebrated Mass in memory of the victims. They also celebrated a Mass in memory of the former President of COMECE, Mgr Homeyer, emeritus Bishop of Hildesheim, who passed away 30 March last. Finally, they welcomed as the new Member for Cyprus Mgr Youssef Soueif, Archbishop of the Maronites (Cyprus).

### 3.2 | Autumn Plenary assembly 24-26 November 2010

The Autumn Plenary session of COMECE met from 24 to 26 November in Brussels. It reflected on the topic of populism, which was introduced and presented by Prof. Dr. Frank Decker, University of Bonn, Prof. Dr. Bart Pattyn, University of Louvain and Prof. Dr. Chantal Delsol, University of Marne-la-Vallée. The Bishops adopted the following statement:

#### Assessment

*We notice a significant increase of movements and tendencies with “populist” characteristics in countries throughout the EU.*

*This phenomenon is very complex: it has a variety of manifestations, from certain forms of regionalism to nationalism and also extremism; it spans from the left to the right of the political spectrum. Nevertheless, there are striking similarities: a simplified*

*presentation of problems and solutions, the search for scapegoats, the instrumentalised distinction between ‘them’ and ‘us’.*

#### A concern for Christians

*We are deeply concerned because this phenomenon tends:*

- to divide societies and undermine social cohesion and solidarity
  - to discriminate against the weakest in society: minorities which are labelled as scapegoats
  - to offer the illusion of simplistic solutions to complex problems
- We recall that populism is the very opposite of the European idea, which has its roots in the notion of solidarity. We regret that even some Christians are tempted to follow these trends. Populism is truly incompatible with the universal vocation of the Church.*

#### A commitment

*Being faithful to our vocation, we will continue :*

- to promote intercultural dialogue in fraternity and truth
- to encourage Christians to further civil and social engagement at the service of their neighbour
- to reinforce our efforts in education for responsibility

*We realise the uncertainty and insecurity of the present time. Yet we call upon Christians to resist the pull of populism and to swim against the tide: the Gospel calls us to do this today as it did former generations. Not in order to engage in a battle of cultures or ideologies, but rather to lay down the principles that are at the root of everything: the steadfast dignity of every human person – as so loved and wished for by God – and the Common Good, which reminds us time and again to show solidarity and to love our neighbour.*



Prof. Bart Pattyn and Prof. Chantal Delsol



Cardinal Reinhard Marx

## 4 | WORKING GROUPS

In order to monitor the political processes of the European Union in all areas of interest to the Church, the COMECE Secretariat set up a number of commissions, working groups and other bodies. These consist of specialists from the national Bishops' Conferences and lay people from the Member States providing the necessary expertise on the relevant fields.

### 4.1 Social Affairs Commission

The COMECE Commission on Social Affairs is composed of Bishops and/or Secretaries of the Social Commissions of Bishops' Conferences and is chaired by Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich & Freising, Member of COMECE. It discusses socio-ethical questions raised by the process of European integration in the field of social & economic Policy and prepares statements for the Bishops of COMECE.

#### Meeting of the 29-30 September

In June, the COMECE Presidium discussed the proposal to prepare a COMECE document on the 'European Social Market Economy'. They asked the Social Affairs Commission under the presidency of Cardinal Reinhard Marx to prepare a first draft of such a document. The final adoption of the document by COMECE bishops should be possible in November 2011. At the end of September, the COMECE Social Affairs Commission addressed the issue at its annual meeting. Mr van de Voorde, a close collaborator of Belgian Prime Minister Yves Leterme, Mgr. Prof. Peter Schallenberg, director of the Catholic Centre for Social Studies in Mönchengladbach, Mrs Sylvie Goulard MEP and the former EU commissioner Mario Monti spoke to the members of the Social Affairs Commission. In his conclusions Cardinal Reinhard Marx stressed the importance for COMECE that the new Treaty explicitly counts among its objectives a "highly competitive social market economy". The historical roots of the concept, its potential for further integration, but also the connection with the US on the basis of this concept would have to be considered in any COMECE document. The planned text should be consi-

dered as a constructive contribution of the Church to the debate about the future of Europe.

### 4.2 Working Group on Migration

The COMECE Working Group on Migration is composed of experts appointed by the interested Bishops' Conferences and discusses EU policies in the field, often in dialogue with representatives of the EU institutions. During the course of 2010 the Working Group met twice (February and October).

#### Meeting of the 4 March

The meeting was mainly devoted to the Joint EU resettlement programme and to the proposal to revise the provisions on EU funding for such initiatives. Mr. Rui Tavares MEP presented the main lines of his two draft reports. The Working Group stressed the essential importance of Churches in improving the quality of resettlement efforts while, in relation to the resettlement of members of persecuted religious and ethnic minorities, it was stressed that it is necessary to find a balance between resettlement and the avoidance of support for 'cleansing' policies carried out in the respective regions. The Working Group also discussed the internal draft paper on family reunification and had an exchange with a Commission representative on the proposed recast of the so-called Qualification Directive (part of the asylum package).

#### Meeting of the 13 October

The members discussed with a representative of the European Commission the recent proposal for a Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of seasonal employment. The Working Group



Mario Monti



Refugee Camp in Tunisia



appreciated the fact that the proposal is market-oriented while providing a legal framework which respects human rights. The importance of taking into account family life in such a context was also underlined. The Working Group also discussed recent developments concerning the expulsions of Roma people from some EU Member States. Finally, the Group had an exchange with the *rapporteur* MEP Lambert (Greens, UK) on the Proposal for a Directive on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection and the content of the protection granted.

### 4.3 Bioethics Reflection Group

**The Bioethics Reflection Group of COMECE is composed of experts from different EU Member States, who were chosen so as to provide for a multi- and inter-disciplinary exchange of views. They combine theological, philosophical, ethical, legal, medical and other disciplines in the natural sciences. On a number of the subjects, specialists are invited to provide the Group with more specific knowledge. Since its establishment in 1996, the Group has produced 16 Opinions on a wide range of bioethical issues such as euthanasia, cloning, stem cell research, nanomedicine, patenting issues and organ donation.**

#### Meeting of the 22 March

The meeting started with self-presentations by all the members as six members and one observer were new to the Group. They were appointed as a response to a circular letter asking for nominations sent by the Secretariat of COMECE to all Bishops' Conferences of the new Member States of Central and Eastern Europe. The main theme of the meeting was: the origin, meaning and scope of the expression "sexual and reproductive health and rights" (SRHR) which appears more and more in international and European documents and, being quite ambiguous, is interpreted by many, among them the World Health Organisation, as including the «right to abortion». The Group would draft an Opinion on this issue. Another topic on which the meeting focused was the negotiations on the proposed Directive on the fight against discrimination



outside the area of employment. In this regard concerns were expressed about the lack of legal clarity provided by the text.

#### Meeting of the 18 October

The main theme of the meeting was: conscientious objection, namely in the field of lawful medical care, a matter that was subject of a resolution adopted on the 7 October by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Resolution No. 1763/2010). This Resolution proclaims a wide-ranging right to conscientious objection, stating that no one – including the institutions – shall be coerced, held liable or discriminated against because of a refusal to perform or submit to euthanasia or an abortion or any act which could cause the death of a human foetus or embryo. In this context, the Group discussed, firstly, the legal sources of this natural corollary to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, namely: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 18), the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 9) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (Article 10).

### 4.4 Legal Affairs Commission

**The Legal Affairs Commission is a forum for discussion and exchange of information on legal and political matters pertaining to the institutional setting of the European Union, fundamental rights issues and equal treatment, dialogue between the EU and Churches, employment law, civil justice, and other legal matters. It is composed of legal experts delegated by the Bishops' Conferences of EU Member States. Currently it consists of 12 members meeting three times a year at the COMECE offices in Brussels. Officials of the European institutions are usually invited as external experts. These encounters contribute to maintaining an open, transparent and regular dialogue between Churches and the EU. Each meeting starts with a roundtable discussion allowing members of the Legal Affairs Commission to present recent developments of importance for the Church in their respective countries. A considerable part of the meetings is devoted to**

### discussions on the institutional framework of the Union and relations between Churches and the EU.

#### Meeting of the 24 February

The meeting was mainly dedicated to analysis of the new provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, especially its protocols 1 and 2 concerning the enhanced role of national parliaments in the process of EU law making. The invited guest, Ms Magdalena Skrzynska, representative of the Polish Sejm Chancellery to the EU (Lower House of the Polish Parliament) presented the legal framework and the practical aspects of the new legislative tools. According to these provisions, draft legislative acts shall be forwarded to national parliaments, which may question the proposal once they find it not compliant with the principle of subsidiarity.

#### Meeting of the 22 June

The members were updated about the ongoing discussions between the European Commission and the Churches on the revision of the Register of Interest Representatives. Ms. Joanna Lopatowska then presented the EU accession to the European Convention of Human Rights. She also updated the members on the state of play in the negotiations on the proposal for a Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Finally, information from the Secretariat was given on two recent proposals presented at the EU level, the one on the so-called European Protection Order (about which the possible conflict with the principle of subsidiarity was underlined) and the Directive on child abuse and pornography.

#### Meeting of the 4 October

The members were updated on the most recent positive developments concerning the interinstitutional agreement between Commission and Parliament on a common transparency register. The members also discussed the concerns related to the proposed Regulation for an enhanced cooperation on the law applicable to divorces and legal separations. Part of the meeting was also devoted to the possible formulation of a future Citizens' Initiative concerning the protection of Sunday. There was also discussion on the main recent developments concerning the area of non-discrimination (with a special focus on the principle of freedom of movement of per-

sons and the recognition of same-sex couples and registered partnerships).

## 4.5 Ad hoc Group "2010 Non Proliferation Treaty Review Conference"

#### Meeting of the 5 February and 26 March

In November 2009 the Plenary meeting of COMECE mandated an expert working group to draft a proposal for a COMECE contribution to these negotiations. This working group consisted of experts from Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands, and coordinated by the COMECE Secretariat in Brussels.

The conclusions of this working group titled '*Seizing the momentum*' were well received by the COMECE Plenary on 16 April 2010. The president of COMECE presented them to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the European Union and to Baroness Ashton, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

## 4.6 Other Groups

#### Religious Education in the European Schools

The Superior Council of the European Schools (ES), consisting of 14 schools for the children of EU personnel in 7 European countries, decided to review the curriculum on the teaching of religion in these ES and, after consultation with religious authorities, including COMECE, set up denominational working groups for this review.

On 15 March, 25 May, 20 September, 18 October and 9 December 2010 this Working Group on the revision of the curriculum for Religious Education at the European Schools (Ecoles Européennes) met and worked on a new curriculum. The local bishops concerned are the (arch)bishops of Haarlem–Amsterdam; Brussels, Antwerp; Luxemburg; Munich; Freiburg; Limburg; Milan; Orihuela–Alicante; and Birmingham (ES Culham will cease to exist in 2012). On 6 December 2010, during a meeting with the inspectors and the secretary-general of the ES, the working group presented the draft curriculum and discussed two main points that are closely connected with the curriculum: the evaluation of the pupils and the teachers.



Hydrogen Bomb

## 5 | INITIATIVES & EVENTS

COMECE organises conferences on major issues of current interest, information sessions and seminars to promote contacts between Church bodies and people from the European Institutions.

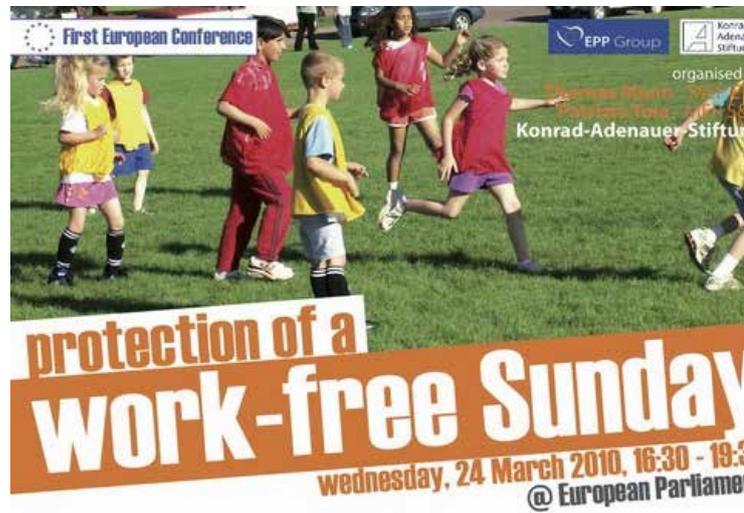
### 5.1 First European Conference on work-free Sunday 24 March in the EU Parliament

European parliamentarians from all the major parties in the European Parliament, as well as representatives of the Churches, trade unions and civil society met to support the protection of Sunday as a work-free day at a high-profile and very well-attended conference with around 400 participants, at which the EU Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs also took part as a speaker.

The protection of Sunday as a work-free day in the European Union has been the subject of a campaign by a broad alliance of politicians, Churches, trade unions and civil society organisations. The conference, organised under the aegis of German MEP Thomas Mann (EPP), was supported by over 70 trade unions as well as civil society and Church organisations from the EU and from even further afield. A call for work-free Sundays, drafted in advance by its backers, was handed to the EU Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, László Andor, during the conference. The call to protect Sunday as a work-free day was also endorsed on the Churches and Catholic side by COMECE, the Commissariat of German Bishops and the European Jesuit Bureau OCIFE.

The EU Social Affairs Commissioner left it open whether the new proposal expected from the Commission concerning revision of the EU Working Time Directive would provide for a work-free Sunday. However, the EU Commission would in any case examine how atypical working times impact on the health of workers and families. László Andor promised to listen attentively to the arguments of those advocating work-free Sundays, while also referring to the fact that it had so far been left to the EU Member States to stipulate the weekly day of rest. He added that Sunday already enjoyed special protection in the majority of the Member States.

The numerous speakers from the realms of politics, trade unions, churches and civil society – including nine MEPs from the six largest political Groups in the European Parliament – all supported the principle of a work-free Sunday. They emphasised that the protection of Sundays was of paramount importance for the health of workers, for them to be able to reconcile family and working life as well as for social cohesion. The significance of preserving Sunday as a work-free day for the practise of religion and worship was also mentioned. The focus, however, was by no means on the religious argument. This is to be welcomed as the EU has no competence whatsoever for the regulation of religious matters and can therefore only be convinced by way of ‘secular’ arguments



such as worker protection or the balance of working and family life.

Guiding the participants through the three-hour conference with an assured manner, the chairman, Thomas Mann MEP, announced that there would be an examination as to whether a petition for a referendum (made possible under the new EU Treaty) could be launched for the protection of Sunday as a work-free day. It is anticipated that this new instrument, created through the Lisbon Treaty, will be available to EU citizens.

The Bishop of Linz, Ludwig Schwarz, warned against the loss of Sunday as a time for pause. Sunday, he said, was the first social law of the Jewish-Christian tradition. People, he continued, can only fulfil the point of their existence by not fully surrendering themselves to the business economy. The purpose of a work-free Sunday is to protect people from themselves. “*The business economy is there to serve the people and not vice versa,*” quoted the Bishop from Pope John-Paul II.

Elmar Brok MEP, Chairman of the EU umbrella organisation of Christian-democratic workers, commented that if families were to continue to exist, a free day together was crucial. Rather than seeing Sunday as creating additional costs, he argued, it actually saved society some quite substantial costs.

The Vice-Chairman of the Federation of German Trade Unions, Ingrid Sehrbrock, emphasised that the observance of Sunday as a day of rest, guaranteed in Germany under the Constitution, had been insidiously undermined. She said this had always been done under the guise that it only concerned exceptions in a narrowly defined area which was hardly of any consequence.

Industrial psychologist Friedhelm Nachreiner explained that it could be proved that working on Sundays led to damage to workers' health, an increase in the incidence of industrial accidents as well as social disruption. Those who had to work outside normal working hours suffered from a loss of social contact, he continued. On the contrary, he concluded, a work-free Sunday was good for employees and for all of society.

Italian socialist Vittorio Prodi, a brother of the former Italian premier and later President of the EU Commission Romano Prodi, described Sunday in his closing speech, which was poetic in parts, as a metaphor standing for the spiritual and non-material values of our existence and called for a new "culture of sustainability".

The organisers and supporters of the conference hoped that this had been just the start of a wider mobilisation for the protection of Sunday as a work-free day, a movement which could gain new momentum through the founding of a European Sunday Alliance and the organisation of a petition for a European Citizen's initiative in the future.

## 5.2 International Summer school Seggau

1-17 July

The International Summer School Seggau took place for the 5th time and provided an open platform to debate the diversity of European cultures and ways of building bridges beyond the divisions.

The project, which was co-organised by the University of Graz, diocese of Graz-Seckau and COMECE, gathered together some 80 students and 15 lecturers from all over Europe: the majority from Eastern Europe and the Balkans. This year's main topic focused on "European Cultures. The Challenge of Diversity and Unity" and provided an interdisciplinary forum for a debate concerning the meaning of cultural and national diversity and the intellectual dimension of European integration.

The topic relating to culture as broadly understood was an innovative way of bridging many disciplines such as law, economics, political and social sciences, history, media and

communication. As in previous years, both the topic and the format proved to be a brilliant way of engaging students and academics in debate often continuing outside the seminar rooms. Each day there was an open lecture followed by a question and answer session. Later on the students divided into smaller groups and continued discussions in one of 6 seminar modules. These were: *Law and Politics* concerning cultural diversity management as well as State formation and nation-building in Europe; *Economy and Innovation* debating the influence of culture on the re-emergence of entrepreneurship and the dynamics of modern economies; *History and Power* discussing various aspects of Christian-Muslim relations as well as Islam and Europe; *Society and Culture* on cultural diversity as an important background for creative developments while at the same time as a problem for the cohesion of society; *Ethics and Religion* on different models of thinking about the relationship between religion and politics; *Media and Communication* on the transformations taking place in the current media system.

The Summer School is an internationally recognised academic initiative of the University of Graz. Nevertheless, it also has a strong Catholic input. Open to students of all religions and denominations it is co-organised by COMECE and takes place in the premises of the diocese of Graz-Seckau, Austria. The hospitality and the welcoming atmosphere of the place and the inclusive approach of the organisers stimulate debates beyond religious and national divisions. The discreet, yet powerful message of the true openness of the Church is sent to all participants: nobody is a stranger here. It coincides with the mission of COMECE: to inspire and shape the minds and hearts of the future intellectual elites, to demonstrate Christian values, to promote dialogue, especially between religion and politics and to highlight the value of true engagement for the benefit of all in society.

## 5.3 Conference on the Encyclical Letter "Caritas in Veritate"

14 September in the EU Parliament

In conjunction with COMECE, the EPP Group in the European Parliament organised a dialogue on the encyclical 'Caritas in Veritate' (Charity in Truth) on the occasion of the first anniversary of its publication.

Joseph Daul MEP, Chairman of the EPP Group, László Tőkés MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Othmar Karas MEP, Vice-Chairman of the EPP Group responsible for inter-religious dialogues, Archbishop André Dupuy, Apostolic Nuncio to the EU, and Father Piotr Mazurkiewicz, General Secretary of COMECE and many other clergy, scholars and politicians participated in this dialogue. The Acta of the Conference are available on request.



President Buzek and Fr Mazurkiewicz at the Conference on Poverty

## 5.4 Conference “New Ways of Solidarity”

**30 September in the EU Parliament**

On 30 September Caritas Europa, COMECE, CSC/CEC and Eurodiaconia organised a conference on “*New ways of solidarity*” in the European Parliament under the patronage of EP-President Buzek, who personally took part in the event. Among the other speakers were the Belgian Secretary of State Philippe Courard and Cardinal Reinhard Marx. MEPs from the four main political groups as well as representatives of the EU Commission and of the Belgian EU presidency reacted positively to the proposals. After the conference an exposition on initiatives of the Churches to combat poverty in Europe was opened in the European Parliament. The conference, which was well attended with about 150 participants, was also the occasion to officially sign and present a joint report from the above-mentioned organisations.

## 5.5 Conference on Persecution of Christians

**5 October in the EU Parliament**

The Conference, co-organised by COMECE and the EPP and ECR Groups of the European Parliament, gave the floor to major witnesses of Christian persecution across the world: Mgr Eduard Hiiboro Kussala, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Tombura, Yambio in South Sudan, Mgr Louis Sako, Chaldean Archbishop of Kirkuk, Iraq, Dr T.M. Joseph, Principal of the Newman College in Thodupuzha, India and Kok Ksor, President of the Montagnard Foundation (Vietnam).

On the occasion of this conference, the COMECE Secretariat presented its ‘*Memorandum on Religious Freedom*’. The text contains 11 recommendations addressed to the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council and the European External Action Service of the EU so as to contribute, within their respective responsibilities, to the furtherance of religious freedom in the external relations of the EU. The Memorandum recalls that “*the right to religious freedom is so closely linked to the other fundamental rights that respect for religious freedom is like a ‘test’ for the observance of fundamental rights*”.

## 5.6 COMECE at 30 years

**24 November at the Bavarian representation to the EU**

On the occasion of its 30th anniversary, COMECE organised an evening debate with Jacques Delors, former President of the European Commission, and Mgr Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for promoting new evangelisation in the Representation of the Free State of Bavaria to the EU. The Conference, which was introduced by Mgr van Luyn, was entitled ‘*Shaping the EU of tomorrow*’. Mr Delors addressed



Mr Jacques Delors at the COMECE evening debate

the economic and political challenges for the EU and Mgr Fisichella addressed the ethical dimension of European integration. After an exchange between the two keynote speakers, the conference was brought to a conclusion by Cardinal Marx. The Conference was well attended, with 250 participants.

## 5.7 Second series of seminars on “Islam, Christianity and Europe”

A first series of four seminars took place during the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID 2008). In order to continue raising awareness among EU political decision-makers and civil servants of the importance of the challenges facing this area beyond EYID 2008, a new series of seminars had been set up for 2009-2010. The new series successfully came to an end in October 2010.

- 4 March « *The Role of Religious Actors in strengthening civil society and democratisation in the European Neighbourhood*»
- 14 July « *The Role of Religious Actors in the fight against Discrimination and Defamation on Religious grounds*»
- 11 October « *Freedom of Religion in the European Neighbourhood: What role for religious actors and EU external action?*»

The seminars were organised by COMECE together with the European Office of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD)'s Brussels Office.



## 6 | DIALOGUE WITH THE EU

The dialogue between the European Union and the Churches has developed in an informal way over the past years on the initiative of EU officials and Church organisations based in Brussels, but without enjoying a legal basis. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty has created legally binding grounds for the first time in the history of the EU, for the dialogue between the EU and the Churches and religious communities..

### 6.1 Summit of religious leaders with the EU

**19 July**

The meeting was hosted by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission and co-chaired by Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council and Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament. It was dedicated to the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Around twenty senior figures from the Christian, Jewish and Muslim religions as well as from the Sikh and Hindu communities - coming from fourteen Member States - met to discuss the importance of combating poverty and social exclusion from the perspective of European governance.

Bishop van Luyn warned against adopting a way of fighting poverty that relies only on technical or administrative measures: *“It will most probably fail to reach its goals: it confers on the poor the role of ‘objects of welfare’”* he said. *“On the contrary, what is needed is a way of helping poor people that will allow them to be ‘players’ in the joint struggle with society against poverty and exclusion.”*

Appraising the efforts of the EU to overcome the economic crisis, the Bishop added: *“we can neither allow the poorest and the weakest in our society to yet again become the victims of this crisis, nor can we burden future generations with the task of cleaning up after our mistakes while failing to do anything ourselves.”*

This responsibility of the EU should also apply towards the poorest in the developing countries, especially in Africa, as well as to migrants: *“We must not shirk the responsibility of*

*joining forces to achieve the objectives concerning poverty in the Millennium Development Goals”* he concluded.

In order to defeat the spread of individualism, Archbishop Zvolensky from Bratislava, called for *“a concrete commitment to solidarity and charity, beginning in the family”*. Quoting Pope John Paul II, the Archbishop said: *“It is urgent therefore to promote not only family policies, but also those social policies which have the family as their principal object”* (Centesimus Annus, 49).

Dr Flaminia Giovanelli, from *Justice & Peace* mentioned that the Catholic Church supports and sometimes helps to create businesses that are in-between profit and non-profit companies, *“a broad new composite reality embracing the private and public spheres, one which does not exclude profit, but instead considers it a means for achieving human and social ends.”*(Caritas in Veritate 46)

Presidents Barroso, Van Rompuy and Buzek all valued the contribution of Churches in the fight against poverty, as they are important providers of social services in EU Member States. This summit meeting was the first held under the new Lisbon Treaty, which foresees in its Article 17 that the EU maintains *“an open, transparent and regular Dialogue”* with Churches and conviction communities. All three Presidents announced their intention to enhance the implementation of this Dialogue at a working level in the coming months.

### 6.2 Meeting with the Belgian EU Presidency

**12 October**

On 12 October, representatives of the Churches in Belgium and in Europe met with the Belgian EU-Presidency in Brussels. This meeting took place in the framework of Article 17 of the EU Treaty establishing a regular dialogue between Churches and the EU. It also follows a well-established tradition of meetings between the Churches and the rotating EU Council Presidencies. The Belgian Prime Minister Yves Leterme received the Church representatives for a one hour meeting at his residence.

The Churches’ representatives addressed the following issues in relation to the Belgian EU Presidency:

- Poverty and Social Exclusion in Europe: in a follow-up to the many activities and contributions of the Churches in the framework of the *“European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion”*, as well as to the development of an EU 2020 Strategy, the Churches’ representatives reiterated their



President Buzek, Barroso and Van Rompuy at the religious leaders’ Meeting



Dialogue Seminar on Poverty at the European Commission

plea for further strengthening the model of a social market economy which keeps competitiveness in balance with social cohesion and the limits to growth. “*The protection of human dignity, social cohesion and sustainable development in a globalised world must be at the heart of EU policies*”, they stated. In view of increasing poverty in Europe and worldwide and the envisaged European Platform on Poverty as a flagship initiative of the EU 2020 strategy, the Churches pressed for a strong involvement of civil society and of the Churches, in addressing these issues.

The Belgian Prime Minister, in his response, emphasised that the European Union is not simply an economic space but a value-driven community, even if, due to the financial and economic crisis, questions of economic governance seem to dominate at present. He envisaged that an important discussion on European social standards would emerge rather soon and he indicated his willingness to work with the Churches on issues related to social cohesion beyond the Belgian EU Presidency.

With regard to the External Action Service of the EU (EEAS), the delegation raised three issues: the importance of religious freedom being protected in the foreign relations of the EU and the importance of balance between commercial and political interests in the EU’s relations with other countries. In relation to religious freedom, the special situation in Turkey and the importance of stressing the implementation of religious freedom for all communities in that country as part of the accession negotiations was highlighted.

The Belgian Presidency declared its willingness to support the introduction of religious freedom as a fundamental right to be promoted within the future External Action Service and the Prime Minister promised to take active steps to this effect.

The Churches’ delegation also discussed the implementation of the “*open, transparent and regular dialogue*” between the Union and the communities of faith and conviction (Article 17c, TFEU). Interest was expressed in implementing such a dialogue at the national level as well.

Finally, in view of the upcoming 16th Conference of Parties to the Convention of Climate Change in Cancún (Mexico, 29 November - 10 December 2010), the Churches’ representatives asked the EU to assume leadership in combating climate change. The Churches expressed their hope that an agreement could be reached which would go beyond the pro-

posed reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 20 per cent. Recalling the essential Christian conviction of a ‘*preferential option for the poor*’, the Churches urged getting the ‘*Fast Start Finance Mechanism*’, as agreed in Copenhagen, started as soon as possible and with sufficient resources.

The Church and Society Commission of CEC and COMECE welcomed the quality of the exchanges which took place during the Belgian Presidency of the EU and were particularly pleased with the commitment of Prime Minister Leterme to follow up on some of the proposals presented by the Churches. The dialogue between the Churches and the Belgian EU Presidency is a good example of the “open, transparent and regular dialogue” between the EU and the communities of faith and conviction.

## 6.3 Dialogue Seminar on Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

### 9 July

László Andor, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, welcomed the seminar as an occasion for an exchange with the Churches. He stressed the importance of the Churches as partners in order to achieve the goal of reducing poverty and social exclusion in the EU.

Churches and Church-based organisations are major social actors in the EU. With their longstanding record of combating poverty, they have an intimate knowledge of peoples’ actual suffering and have developed successful initiatives and tools to address it. Organised at local, national, European and global levels, Churches are strong partners for the European Commission in raising awareness and meeting the targets for significant reductions in poverty.

Europeans are currently experiencing the social impact of the economic crisis and unemployment and poverty are on the rise. Being on the frontline, Church organisations are very aware of the alarming situation of families, children and the elderly – all of whom are particularly vulnerable groups. At the Dialogue Seminar, several delegates took the floor and suggested initiatives, explaining how they are trying to break through the poverty circle.

# 7 | LIST OF ACTIVITIES 2010

## 7.1 | Consultations

The European Commission has a long tradition of consulting interested parties from outside when formulating its policies. It incorporates external consultation into the development of almost all its policy areas. Depending on the issues at stake, consultation is intended to provide opportunities for input from representatives of regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, the individual citizens concerned, academics and technical experts. In this context, the COMECE Secretariat itself participates or encourages the COMECE Member Bishops' Conferences to participate in the Consultations on issues which are of interest to Churches and Church-organisations. In 2010, COMECE took part in following consultations:

- Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat to the Consultation of the European Commission on **the future Strategy «European Union 2020 »**

*6 January 2010, European Commission*

- Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat to the Consultation of the European Commission on **the European Citizens' Initiative**

*29 January 2010, European Commission*

- Joint Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat, CEC and the GEKE to the Consultation of the European Commission on **the «Danube Strategy »**

*12 April 2010, European Commission*

- Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat to the Consultation of the European Commission **«Towards adequate, sustainable and safe European pension systems»**

*15 November 2010, European Commission*

## 7.2 | Other contributions

Letter to the Permanent Representatives of the EU Member States concerning the Contribution of COMECE to the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference

*21 April 2010, COMECE,*

Letter to the Permanent Representatives of the EU Member States presenting the COMECE Memorandum "Religious Freedom, Pillar of the Human Rights Policy in the External Relations of the European Union"

*11 May, COMECE*

Letter to the Presidents of the 3 main EU Institutions concerning the EU Dialogue with Churches under Article 17(3) TFEU

*26 May 2010, COMECE, CEC*

## 7.3 | Seminars & Conferences co-organised by COMECE

- 2nd series of seminars co-organised by COMECE – KAS – EKD on « Islam, Christianity and Europe »:

2. « The Role of Religious Actors in strengthening civil society and democratisation in the European Neighbourhood»

*4 March 2010*

3. « The Role of Religious Actors in the fight against Discrimination and Defamation on Religious grounds»

*14 July 2010*

4. « Freedom of Religion in the European Neighbourhood: What role for religious actors and EU external action?»

*11 October 2010*

International summer university of Seggau 2011

*1st-17 July 2010, in Seggau, Austria*

Dialogue Seminar on Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Framework of the EU 2020 Strategy, co-organised by COMECE, CEC and BEPA

*9 July 2010 at the European Commission*

Conference on the Encyclical "Caritas in Veritate" co-organised by EPP Group and COMECE

*14 September at the European Parliament*

Conference "New Ways of Solidarity" and Exhibition on poverty co-organised by Eurodiaconia, Caritas Europa, CES-CEC, European Parliament and COMECE

*30 September at the European Parliament*

Conference on Persecution against Christians, ECR, EPP, Kirche in Not, Open Doors and COMECE

*5 October at the European Parliament*

## 7.4 | Visitor Groups

The COMECE Secretariat receives every year a number of delegations and visitor groups from the different EU Members States but also from further afield, in order to inform and raise awareness among the Church community about questions of special common interest dealt with by the different institutions of the EU. The COMECE Secretariat organises visits for Church-linked groups to the EU institutions.

**Europe Commission of the German Bishops' Conference**  
20-21 January

**Canadian Group (through the Chapel of Resurrection)**  
28 January

**EKD Delegation** 8 February

**Delegation "Entraide d'Eglises" from Lithuania**  
17 February

**Delegation of the Portuguese Bishop's Conference**  
23-25 February

**Representatives of the Department for Religious issues of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs**  
3 March

**Group of students from Great-Britain** 8 March

**Group of the Europaakademie Germany** 15 March

**Group of pupils from Austria** 22 March

**Group of Priests from Châlons (France)** 6 April

**Group of Priests from "Chemins d'humanité" (France)**  
12-13 April

**Group of the Diocese of St. Denis (France)** 29 April

**Group of the Sophia Institute Brussels** 6 May

**Group of the Fachschule Ritzlhof (Austria)** 7 May

**Group of students from University of Tilburg** 10 May

**Group of interns of the EPP Group, European Parliament**  
25 May

**Group of the Movement of Catholic Workers (KAB) from Aachen (Germany)** 27 May

**Group of German Catholic Journalist students from Munich (Germany)** 31 May

**Group of Parliamentary Interns of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales** 1-3 June

**Group of German Bundestag (Germany)** 3 June

**Delegation from Manipur** 7 June

**EPP Interns** 24 June

**Group of Journalists of La Croix (France)** 25-26 June

**Group of seminarians of the diocese of Versailles (France)**  
30 August - 2 September

**Group of journalists (Radio and Television) responsible for content related to Catholic Church (Germany)**  
22 September

**Delegation from Sweden** 13 October

**Group of Polish priests** 10 November

**Representatives of the Church of Finland** 17 November



## 8 | PUBLICATIONS

### 8.1 | Seize the momentum

A Contribution of the COMECE Expert Group to the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference

21 April

The report, *Seize the momentum*, was drafted by the group of experts set up by COMECE in view of the Conference on the revision of the Treaty on Nuclear Non-Proliferation, which was held in May. This document makes a series of proposals to the EU negotiators, notably to promote nuclear disarmament on the principles of transparency, verification and irreversibility, but also to include more of civil society in this fundamental debate for the future of Mankind.

### 8.2 | Religious Freedom, Pillar of the Human Rights Policy in the External Relations of the European Union

A Report to the Bishops of COMECE

6 May

The text calls upon the EU Institutions to give their full consideration to the different recommendations figuring in this Memorandum so that they may contribute, within the scope of their respective competences, to the furtherance of religious freedom in the framework of the Human Rights policy conducted by the European Union in its external relations.

### 8.3 | Developing Fair Non-Discrimination EU Legislation

A Working Document of the Secretariat of COMECE

1st June

Over recent decades there has been a steady development of law at national and international levels with the aim of putting an end to differences in treatment between persons perceived as unjustified. This has grown organically, rather than as a

concerted and planned programme. The acknowledgement of the existence of the principle of equal treatment does not automatically lead to the emergence of a directly enforceable and directly effective right which would lay down a free standing legal basis for undertaking legal action by individuals. Fair non-discrimination legislation requires respect for the self-determination of Churches and Religious organisations in defining their own set of ideas, organisation and offices, the manifestation of religion as well as its performance in daily life.

### 8.4 | Proposals for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the EU

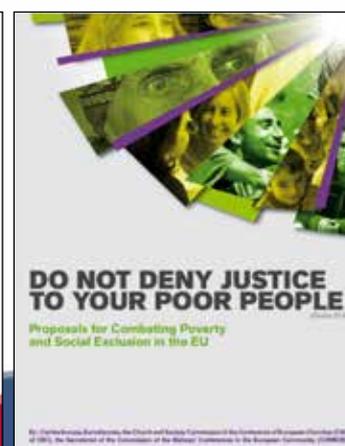
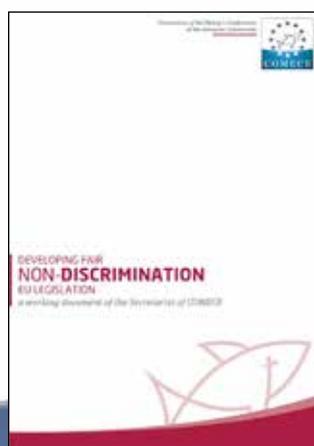
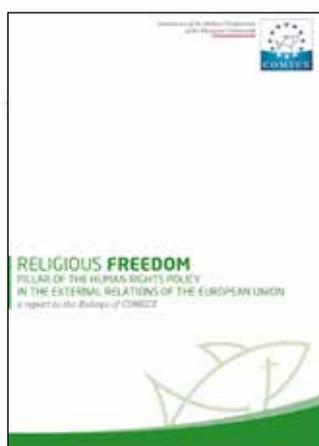
30 September

'Do not deny Justice to your people – Proposals for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion in the EU' was prepared and published in an ecumenical partnership with Caritas Europe, Eurodiaconia and CEC. The report presents in its first part an analysis of the situation. The second part provides an interpretation of poverty as a multi-dimensional reality, including its spiritual dimension. The third part recalls "Our ethical requirements – responsibility for our neighbour and universal human dignity" and finally fourteen detailed policy recommendations. The document proposes to implement the social clause of the Lisbon Treaty, to aim for access for all to services of 'general interest', to adopt a long term vision on the issue of homelessness and housing exclusion, to value unpaid work and to support families at risk of poverty. The report was generally well received and translations into French and German are now available.

### 8.5 | Acta of the First Catholic Social Days for Europe

Gdansk, 15 November

This joint publication of COMECE and the European Solidarity Centre contains the texts of the various contributions that were delivered on the occasion of the First Catholic Social Days for Europe, which took place in Gdańsk on 8-11 October 2009, on the initiative of COMECE with the assistance of the European Solidarity Centre.



# 9 | COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION POLICY

## 9.1 | Europeinfos

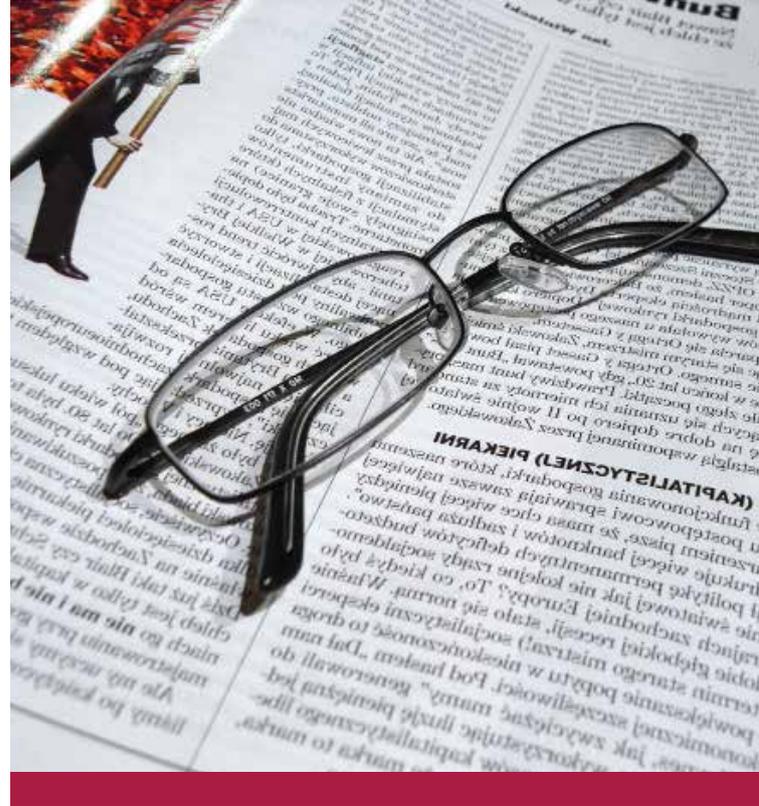
*Europeinfos*, a monthly review edited by COMECE and OCIPE, is published in English, French and German. Europe Infos aims to make the meaning and purpose of the European project better known to citizens, and especially to the local churches.

## 9.2 | Press releases

In 2010, COMECE issued 14 press releases, on various issues: Religious freedom, Sunday protection, Animal protection, Poverty, Populism, Persecution of Christians.

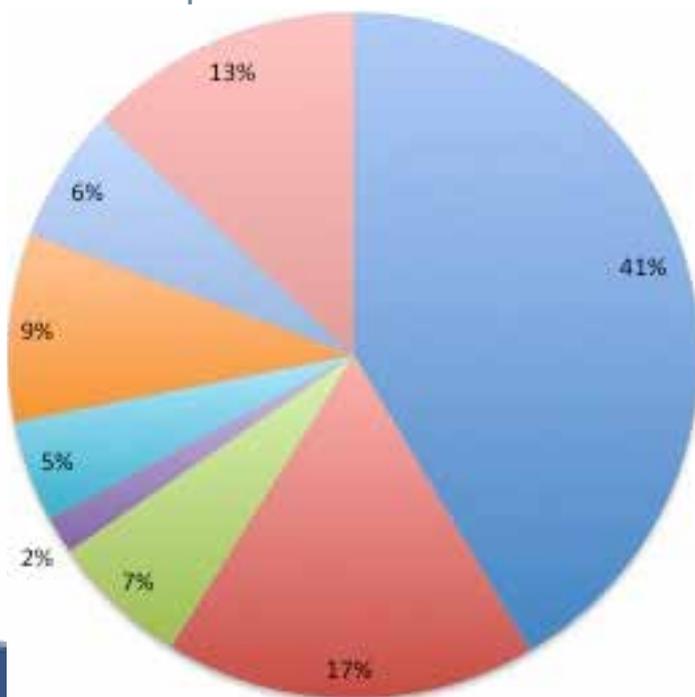
## 9.3 | Website

The COMECE Website ([www.comece.eu](http://www.comece.eu)) is a major tool of the communication and transparency policy of the organisation. It is available in English, French and German. It presents the History, Structure and Mission of COMECE, the Policy working areas of the Secretariat, the Structure of the EU-Church Dialogue, links to the Member Bishops' Conferences. For each Event organised or co-organised by COMECE, a report, photos, videos and text of the interventions are available on the website.



# 10 | FINANCES

## 2010 Expenses related to work areas



### Total expenditure:

1 020 000 €

The COMECE Secretariat and its activities are exclusively financed by the contributions of the Member Bishops Conferences.

- 'salaries, rents, réception, travel costs...
- Meetings and conferences
- Bioethics / research
- Migration / asylum
- Social and economic policy
- Human rights/Legal affairs
- Religious freedom-Interreligious dialogue
- Communication



# 11 | GENERAL INFORMATION

## 11.1 | Members

**H.E. Mgr. Adrianus van Luyn**  
Bishop of Rotterdam (Netherlands)  
President of COMECE

**H.E. Mgr. Piotr Jarecki**  
Auxiliary Bishop of Warsaw (Poland)  
Vice-President of COMECE

**H.Em. Cardinal Reinhard Marx**  
Archbishop of Munich-Freising  
(Germany) Vice-President of COMECE

**H.E. Mgr. Virgil Bercea**  
Bishop of Oradea Mare/Gran  
Varadino (Romania)

**H.E. Mgr. Adolfo Gonzalez  
Montes**  
Bishop of Almeria (Spain)

**H.E. Mgr. Vaclav Maly**  
Auxiliary Bishop of Prague  
(Czech Republic)

**H.E. Mgr. José Amândio Tomás**  
Coadjutor bishop of Vila Real  
(Portugal)

**H.E. Mgr. Mario Grech**  
Bishop of Gozo (Malta)

**H.E. Mgr. Anton Justs**  
Bishop of Jeglava (Latvia)

**H.E. Mgr. Gianni Ambrosio**  
Bishop of Piacenza-Bobbio (Italy)

**H.E. Mgr. Noël Treanor**  
Bishop of Down & Connor (Ireland)

**H.E. Mgr. Ferenc Cserhádi**  
Auxiliary Bishop Esztergom-  
Budapest (Hungary)

**H.E. Mgr. Egon Kapellari**  
Bishop of Graz-Seckau  
(Austria)

**H.E. Mgr. Peter A. Moran**  
Bishop of Aberdeen (Scotland)

**H.E. Mgr. Youssef Soueif**  
Archbishop of the Maronites  
(Cyprus)

**H.E. Mgr. Jozef De Kesel**  
Bishop of Bruges (Belgium)

**H.E. Mgr. William Kenney**  
Auxiliary Bishop of Birmin-  
gham (England and Wales)

**H.E. Mgr. Rimantas Norvila**  
Bishop of Vilkaviškis (Lithuania)

**H.E. Mgr. Philippe Jourdan**  
Bishop of Tallinn (Estonia)

**H.E. Mgr. Nikólaos Fóscolos**  
Archbishop of Athens (Greece)

**H.E. Mgr. Czeslaw Kozon**  
Bishop of Copenhagen (Scan-  
dinavia)

**H.E. Mgr. Christo Proykov**  
Apostolic Exarch of Sofia (Bulgaria)

*Associated members:*

**H.E. Mgr. Fernand Franck**  
Archbishop of the Grand Du-  
chy of Luxembourg

**H.E. Mgr. Christian Kratz**  
Auxiliary Bishop of Strasburg  
(France)

**S.E. Mgr. Robert Bezak**  
Archbishop of Trnava (Slovakia)

- *H.E. Mgr. Markus Büchel*  
*Bishop of St Gall (Switzerland)*

**H.E. Mgr. Marjan Turnšek**  
Archbishop coadjutor of Maribor  
(Slovenia)

- *H.Em. Cardinal Josip Bozanic*  
*Archbishop of Zagreb (Croatia)*

## 11.2 | COMECE Secretariat

**Mgr Piotr Mazurkiewicz**  
General Secretary

**Drs. Michael Kuhn**  
Deputy General Secretary  
Seconded by the Austrian Bishops' Conference  
Advisor for Education, Culture and Youth  
policy

**Alessandro Calcagno**  
Seconded by the Italian Bishops' Conference  
Legal advisor for Migration and Asylum

**Vincent Legrand** (*till September 2010*)  
Advisor for International Relations  
Intercultural/ Interreligious Dialogue  
Replaced by **Mgr Joe Vella Gauci**  
(*from October 2010*)

**Joanna Lopatowska** (*till September 2010*)  
Legal advisor for Fundamental Rights  
Replaced by **Dr José-Luis Bazan**  
(*from October 2010*)

**Stefan Lunte**  
Advisor for Economic and Social affairs,  
Institutional issues

**Thomas Pickartz** (*till April 2010*)  
Legal advisor for Institutional affairs,  
Environmental and Social issues

**José Ramos-Ascensão**  
Legal advisor for Research and Bioethics

**Johanna Touzel**  
Spokesperson & Press officer

**Maud Oger**  
Secretariat  
Assisted by **Leen Den Blauwen**  
(*from October 2010*)

**Aimery de Vérac**  
Administration

The Secretariat was assisted in the course  
of the year by voluntary interns:

**Stefan Thönissen**  
**Christopher Morillon**  
**Anastasia Chelini**  
**Marion-Valérie Grasset**  
**Christian Wehking**  
**Camille Albrioux**  
**Michal Matlak**  
**Kelly Stoeppel**

The Secretariat thanks them for their  
committed work and wishes them God's  
blessing for their future life.

COMECE would like to thank most warmly for their committed and highly competent work over the years  
Mr Thomas Pickartz, Ms Joanna Lopatowska and Mr Vincent Legrand, who left the Secretariat in the course of 2010.





**CEMECE**

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