



*Joint Statement of the Presidents of COMECE and CEC
in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic*

LET US REMAIN UNITED

This is the time to show our commitment to European values

The COVID-19 pandemic and its dire consequences have hit Europe and the entire world with full strength. Putting to the test every person, family and community, the present crisis has exposed the vulnerabilities and apparent certainties of our politics, economics and societies.

Nevertheless, these trying times are also allowing us to re-discover our common humanity as brothers and sisters. We think of the many people who are sowing hope every day by exercising charity and solidarity.

We would like to pray with deep gratitude for all those who serve their fellow human beings with empathy and warmth by supporting them selflessly: medical doctors, nursing staff, providers of basic services, law and order forces – and persons involved in pastoral care. We wish to pray for all the people who are suffering during this crisis - in particular the sick, the elderly, the poor, the excluded and children experiencing family instability. We also remember all those who passed away in our prayers.

Furthermore, we gratefully welcome the many individual and collective initiatives that are reinventing new forms of solidarity and new ways of sharing beyond the necessary social distancing.

We gratefully commend the numerous policy actions of mutual support and encourage the political decision-makers in the European Union and its Member States, to continue acting in a determined, transparent, empathic and democratic way. We pray for wisdom and strength among leaders at both national and European level.

This is the time for all of us to demonstrate our joint commitment to the European project and to common European values of solidarity and unity, instead of capitulating to fear and nationalism.

Concrete expressions of this our shared European responsibility could, for example, be burden-sharing in the care for the sick, a facilitated exchange of medical materials, creative measures alleviating social, economic and financial shocks, as well as reinforced international cooperation and humanitarian assistance to support weaker health systems in needy regions of the world.

The Lenten journey towards Easter is in the substance of Christian faith. Let us regard this time of trial also as a time of grace and hope. Let us remain united and make our closeness felt to all, especially those in need.

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