

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

COMMISSION OF THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCES
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

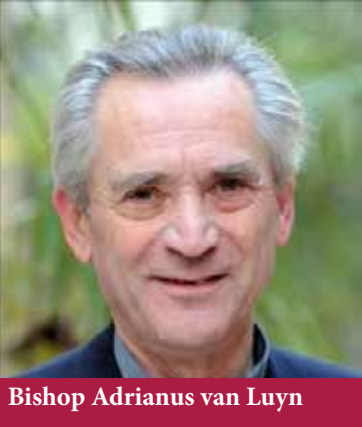


COMECE ANNUAL REPORT 2011

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Illustration Cover: The Arab Spring
 Saint Catherine's Monastery (Egypt) and Jasmine flowers symbolizing the «Jasmine Revolution» in Tunisia

1 | FOREWORD



Dear Readers,

A number of years ago, it would have seemed extremely odd to talk about leadership in the context of the renewal of Europe. The more obvious question would have been which skills and methods politicians and entrepreneurs need to restore Europe's political and economic strength, to breach the political chasms between the Member States and to strengthen business and get more people into work. Europe, it is said, needs stronger and more effective "management".

"Management" and "leadership" are sometimes used interchangeably, yet they are not synonyms. On the contrary, to manage is, first and foremost to establish rules, to steer and govern. It is a technique based on various methods, and its goal is to achieve a particular objective while using the available resources as efficiently as possible. People are one of the resources required: they are the "human resources" necessary for production and other processes and are expendable if they no longer meet expectations or are surplus to requirements. In management, it is all about the "how".

"Leadership", in contrast, is based on a vision to be realised, which relies on the involvement of other people. If the aim is only to achieve a particular objective on your own, it is not essential to be leader. A shared project, however - be it economic or political - benefits from leadership, from somebody who is inspired and able to develop and convey a vision and who can inspire others. Rather than viewing other people as an (expendable) tool for achieving a particular objective, leadership in the proper sense takes account of the other person's capacities and limitations. Leadership is supportive, encouraging, "enthusing" and compelling, in the positive sense of the word. In this sense, a renewed Europe today needs leadership and leaders - just as the «Founding Fathers of Europe» were inspired political leaders who had a vision and did not merely manage the integration process in Europe. It needs people who are able to explain the whys and wherefores of the further need for European integration ;

In 1931, Pope Pius XI wrote his major social Encyclical «*Quadragesimo anno*» in response to the economic and social crisis that held the world in its grip at that time. Now, eighty years on, we find ourselves once again in an even wider-reaching global crisis - a financial, economic and debt crisis. When this crisis erupted, many people - political leaders and economists among them - pointed out that there is an underlying moral crisis, a crisis of fundamental human values, and that this crisis is a wake-up call, illustrating the need for a realignment in respect of those values, in particular values such as the constitutional state, freedom and equality.

Indeed, based on the church's social teaching, this is the inevitable conclusion. This crisis has its origins in the distortion of values. We prioritise self-interest and personal ambitions and the balance is shifting towards fast profit, material gain, hedonism and greed, at the expense of solidarity and sustainability, and, above all, at the expense of human dignity. Behind this moral crisis lies an even deeper crisis of meaning. Due to impotence or indifference, we no longer ask crucial questions about human existence: the whys and wherefores, or the questions of meaning and ethics.

And yet, reflecting upon these questions is the only way to turn this crisis into an "opportunity", a "kairos", a "pivotal moment." In the Gospel, Jesus uses the term "krinein" (Luke 12, 56-57), which means "discernment": discerning what is valuable and what is not, the true from the false, the good from the bad, discerning the essence of the situation, the fundamental choices that people must face in order to promote and guarantee human dignity and seek the common good in a spirit of subsidiarity and solidarity.

Drawing on Christian social teaching, we can "monitor" social, economic and political developments in a constructively critical way; in other words, we can keep a critical eye on proceedings and scrutinise progress. The term has its roots in the Latin "monere", meaning both to "remember" - fundamental values - and "warn", against unbalanced growth, against making relative values absolute and against neglecting essential values and the proper hierarchy of and relationships between values.

There are many conclusions to be drawn for the policies of company directors and for political parties and governments, with reference to the principles upon which social teaching is based. Authentic renewal, however, cannot be achieved without self-examination. The crisis that is now afflicting us all requires everyone concerned to demonstrate sufficient capacity for self-correction. Unbiased self-criticism is the first prerequisite for a serious analysis of the causes and consequences of the crisis and for reaching consensus on the course of action.

Bishop Adrianus van Luyn sdb
President of COMECE



2 | REPORT OF PERMANENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Permanent 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 Permanent Committee of COMECE met on 5 occasions in 2011: 12-13 January, 6 April and 26 October in Brussels; on 31 May in Rome and on 28 September in Warsaw.

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 Permanent 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.

On 13 May 2012, after the appropriate procedures had been completed, the new COMECE Statute entered into force. Among the main new elements is the fact that the number of Vice-Presidents is increased from two to four and there are new modalities for the appointment of the Secretary General.

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 6-8 April 2011

This Spring Plenary Assembly of COMECE was dedicated to "Christian Churches in Maghreb and Mashriq".

After decades of diplomatic deadlock and conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, the COMECE Bishops declared in their final Statement that they see in the Arab Spring a clear sign of hope. The popular uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and other Arab countries represent a legitimate claim for freedom and human dignity for millions of people.

The COMECE Bishops warmly encouraged the citizens to continue their commitment to the establishment of fundamental rights and democracy in their home countries. The Bishops wished to pay special tribute to the younger generation, who in all these countries played a leading role by launching and organising this uprising in a courageous, peaceful and ecumenical way.

Recalling the conclusions of the Synod on the Middle East, the COMECE Bishops believe that Christians in these countries share a common citizenship with their fellow citizens from other religions and that each religion forms an integral part of their societies. The Bishops called on them to contribute on the basis of their faith to democratic change in their countries as fellow-citizens.

After having had the benefit of hearing from several experts from the Arab world and from the EU institutions, the COMECE Bishops made the following recommendations to the EU:

- More and concrete solidarity among the Member States of the EU is urgently needed to help in facing the inflow of migrants and refugees from North Africa and the Middle East (as provisioned in Directive 2001/55/EC on temporary protection)
- the EU should help in improving the deplorable situation in these countries by developing new tools to efficiently foster modernisation and democratisation in their societies
- in the context of changes in the Arab world, the EU should stress the importance of granting equal rights to all citizens of those countries, irrespective their ethnic or religious origin; including Christians.

For their part, the Bishops discussed the following possible actions:

- to organise regular exchanges with the Bishops' Conferences of North Africa and the Middle East in order to better assess the expectations of their local populations towards the EU
- to encourage reflection on "Democracy and Religion" together with Christians and Muslims from North Africa and the Middle East
- to promote the social and political education of young people from North Africa and the Middle East

They also addressed a letter to their fellow Bishops in the Middle East and North Africa in which they expressed their Solidarity and shared communion in prayers.

The insecurity and threats that Christian minorities are more and more facing in the Arab World are clearly intolerable.

The COMECE Bishops expressed similar concern about the way religious minorities are sometimes treated in Europe. They therefore called upon all citizens, especially Christians, and the political leaders in Europe to assume their responsibilities for promoting dialogue between cultures and civilisations in Europe as well as in the rest of the world.

3.2 | Autumn Plenary assembly 26-28 October 2011

The Autumn Plenary Assembly of COMECE was dedicated to the “Financial crisis and future of European integration”.

In the midst of the financial crisis of the Eurozone, the COMECE Bishops called on the European Union and its citizens to refrain from blaming one another; instead it is necessary to assume co-responsibility for finding solutions. They called on European leaders to adopt a long-term perspective to overcome the crisis.

The Bishops heard several specialists on this complex issue. Mr Peter Wagner, from the European Commission, presented the mission of the newly created Task Force for Greece. Prof. Dr. Lans Bovenberg, Tilburg University, Dr. Emmanuel van der Mensbrugge, Director of the IMF Office in Europe and M. Jean-Pierre Jouyet, President of the French Financial Markets Authority presented their views on the economic and political causes of the debt crisis in Europe.

The causes of the crisis are structural and they are mainly rooted in short-term and very often electorally motivated political choices over recent decades. These choices often reflect individual behaviour of credit-financed consumerism. In the current situation, a culture of blame will lead nowhere. Europeans should stay united and exercise solidarity in order to overcome the present crisis. Crisis does not necessarily mean

decline: it can be made an opportunity for renewal.

The President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, presented to the COMECE Bishops the outcome of the European Summit, which began on 26 October. The Bishops welcomed this result, as a response to the immediate crisis. Knowing, however, that technical and short-term solutions will be insufficient, they underlined the need for developing a long term vision concerning the European Institutions and the social and economic model they promote. The interests of the younger generation in particular, who risk being the major victims of the crisis, need to be better taken into account.

The Bishops were convinced that the Church can be a force for cohesion and hope within European societies, which are threatened by populism and division. The main roots of the present crisis are moral and spiritual. Moral relativism is changing the sense of personal and collective responsibility and the sense of the common good in the long perspective. Through their social services, Churches help the weakest in our societies; they promote human dignity and the common good against individualistic tendencies.

In October 2011, the COMECE Secretariat joined the joint EU Parliament/EU Commission ‘Transparency Register’. Despite some technical issues noticed in the implementation of the relevant interinstitutional agreement, all the formal steps necessary to enter the Register were taken. The Bishops were informed about this positive development.

COMECE Bishops also adopted a declaration on the Social Market Economy, a term which has been inserted into the Treaty of the European Union with the Lisbon Treaty. The text, “A European Community of Solidarity and Responsibility”, will be published in several languages in early January 2012.



Cardinal Naguib © Kerknet



COMECE Spring plenary Assembly

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 and economic Policy and prepares statements for the Bishops of COMECE.

Meeting of the 28-29 September

The Social Affairs Commission met from 28 – 29 September in Warsaw under the presidency of Archbishop Cardinal Reinhard Marx.

Mrs. Joanna Skoczek informed the Social Affairs Commission about the priorities of the Polish EU presidency and the members of the commission discussed and adopted the final draft of the document about the European Social Market Economy. The main topic of the meeting was, however the EU energy policy. Two presentations were given on this topic and the conclusion was that, contrary to the EU Treaty and despite of many initiatives in this field, there is a significant lack of solidarity in this field.

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.

Meeting of the 9 February

After a round table discussion on the main developments in the field of migration and asylum in the EU Member States, José Luis Bazán (COMECE) presented the topic Migration of Roma people inside the EU, with a historical approach to the current inclusion of the issue at the top of the political agenda of the EU and as a priority under the Hungarian Presidency. He pointed out the new perspective on inclusion following the work of the Council of Europe and OSCE, and the need for legally binding instruments as stated by MEP Járóka, rapporteur for the EU strategy on Roma inclusion.

A discussion on the future of the Common European Asylum Policy was finally held, including the EPP Common Position on Asylum published on 17 November 2010, which reiterates the principle of subsidiarity, the solidarity among the Member States and relocation of refugees within the EU on a voluntary basis.

Meeting of the 6 October

Mr. Carlo Ferrari, from the Permanent Representation of Italy to the EU spoke on the new challenges in the Schengen space, a system currently based on mutual trust and intergovernmental peer-to-peer monitoring among the Member States. Mr. Ferrari gave a historical overview of the Schengen agreement and convention up to the inclusion of the Schengen *acquis* into the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997). The new proposal for the Schengen Borders Code links migration and public order, but contains some ambiguities in its wording.

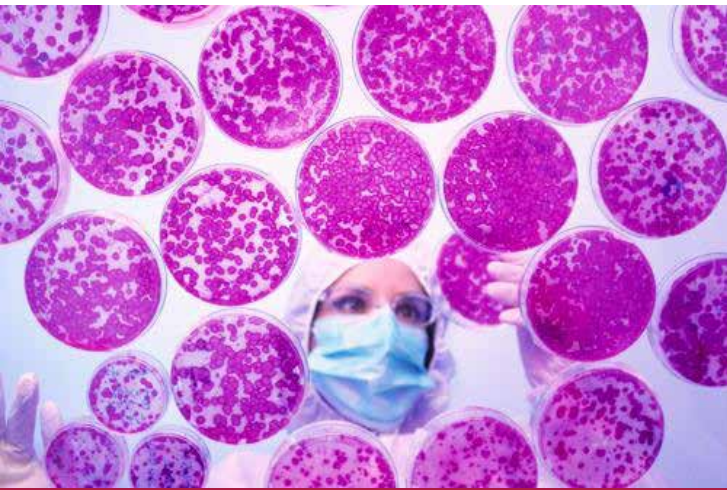
Some views and opinions were exchanged among the members of the Working Group concerning the situation in different Member States in the field of migration and asylum.



Cardinal Marx, President of the Social Affairs Commission



Refugees in Syria © afp.com



Stemcell Research



Ms. Xénia Messariti, Asylum Policy Officer (DG Home), explained the new process to amend the Directives on Procedures and Reception Conditions for asylum seekers. MEP Georgios Papanikolaou, from the LIBE Committee, presented the new proposal for a directive on seasonal employment commenting on the specific nature of this norm, which intends to promote legal seasonal work up to 6 months every 12 months, protecting the rights of workers, even sanctioning illegal actions by an employer.

Ms. Kristina Ravn, Attaché for Refugees, Immigration and Integration of the Permanent Representation of Denmark to the EU presented 30 years of Danish experiences in resettlement.

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 21 March

The Reflection Group examined the European Commission's public consultation, which was due to close on 20 May 2011, on the upcoming research funding cycle in the EU, launched with a Green Paper (COM(2011)48) called "From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation funding", accompanied by a Questionnaire. It tackles funding of research and innovation programmes, taken together in a Common Strategic Framework (CSF).

Meeting of the 10 October

The Reflection Group met in Brussels to discuss, as the main topic of reflection, the EU policies and legal framework concerning animal protection. The meeting started, as usual, with a round-table updating on bioethics issues in EU Member States.

In order to advance the main topic of the meeting two guest speakers were invited: Mr. Andrea Gavinelli, Head of Unit Animal Welfare of the Directorate-General Health and Consumers of the European Commission, to provide an overview of the EU policies and legal framework; and Prof. Alfredo Marcos, from the Department of Philosophy of the University of Valladolid, Spain, to present the Catholic perspective on animal protection and «animal rights».

Finally, the Group devoted special attention to the «Strategy for animal welfare» currently being prepared and foreseen to be adopted by December 2011.

The main conclusions of the this reflection are to be published as the next 'Opinion of the Group'.

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 3 February

The members of the Commission were updated on the main elements of the final draft inter-institutional agreement on the future establishment of a common 'Transparency Register'. The main positive and negative elements of the text were highlighted, with a generally favourable assessment. The members were also briefly updated on some current matters concerning the area of fundamental rights, as well as on the most recent developments concerning the protection of Sunday

The issue of data protection was also tackled, with specific reference to the COMECE Secretariat's contribution to the consultation carried out by the European Commission and in the light of future steps. It was agreed, upon a request of some members, that an ad hoc meeting of the Legal Affairs Commission, with the participation of additional Bishops' Conferences experts, should be fixed soon.

A short presentation then focused on the main elements of the European Commission's 2011 work and legislative programme. The members were alerted on the proposals that could have an impact on the activities of the Church and of her organisations.

The afternoon session was mainly devoted to the new consultation on the promotion of the free movement of public documents and the mutual recognition of the effects of civil status records.

An update dealt with the consultation on the future of VAT. The issue of reduced VAT rates and the possible impact on Churches' activities was highlighted.

Meeting of the 16 May

Following the announcement made at the 2011 Spring Plenary, the COMECE Secretariat organised an internal event on the theme "Data protection legislation and the Catholic Church: challenges and possible solutions".

The meeting saw the participation of the members of the COMECE Legal Affairs Commission, as well as of additional experts suggested by some Bishops' Conferences. It provided an opportunity to take stock of the experiences, solutions and legal considerations gathered - as well as of the problems encountered - in the field by the Catholic Church in a number of EU Member States. The forthcoming revision of Directive 95/46/EC on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data was also discussed, with some key suggestions for the improvement of the (soon to be revised) text.

Meeting of the 28 June

The members were informed about the entry into force of the new inter-institutional 'Transparency Register' as well as about the recent successful launch of the European Sunday Alliance.

The central point of the meeting was the presentation by Prof. Schiffauer (European Parliament) concerning the forthcoming accession of the EU to the European Convention of Human Rights. The members were extensively informed on the political context of the dossier and on the possible implications and added value for the EU. The issue of the com-

patibility between the two relevant systems was analysed. The discussion focused in particular on the balancing of the roles of the European Court of Justice and of the European Court of Human Rights.

Further discussion points were devoted to the new proposals on patrimonial regimes for 'international couples', fundamental rights (in particular: the draft non discrimination directive being discussed in the Council) and the Opinion of the European Court of Justice's Advocate General in the Brüstle case (the concept of 'human embryos' in the area of patenting of biotechnological inventions).

Meeting of the 20 October

The members were informed about the last necessary steps taken by the COMECE Secretariat to enter the Transparency Register, including the registration formula. Concerning the protection of Sunday, reference was made to the discussions between the social partners in view of the negotiations on the revision of the Working Time Directive, as well as to a possible future citizens' initiative.

A representative of the European Commission presented the two proposed Regulations on matrimonial property regimes and on the property consequences of registered partnerships. An extensive debate followed, with a number of issues being identified by the members. A short discussion also focused on the future legislative proposal on data protection, and on the consideration of possible future actions.

The afternoon session was mainly devoted to a presentation on the adoption of an EU research agenda on families and family wellbeing in Europe (some problematic aspects were highlighted). A short update focused on the recent proposal for a European Sales Law 'optional regime' and finally, a lively debate was held on the recent European Court of Justice decision in the Brüstle case (see item on 28 June meeting).

4.5 Ad hoc Group on the Roma issue

Meeting of the 1st March

Co-organised by COMECE and CCEE, this Group was set up as an instrument for a better understanding of the Roma issue in order to improve the EU policies on Roma inclusion, which was one of the Hungarian Presidency's priorities. The EP adopted on 9 March 2011 a non-legislative Resolution on the EU strategy on Roma inclusion, which sought to influence the Commission's strategy for Roma inclusion to be launched on April 2011.

DDr. Gernot Haupt (MAS, Institut für Sozialarbeit, Austria) presented the topic: Roma, a discriminated People. In the discussion which followed, the positive dimension of a healthy understanding of the Roma identity, and the importance of not forgetting the historical suffering of the Roma people were identified. Martina Staneva-Antonova (Don Bosco Bulgaria Foundation, Bulgaria) made a brief presentation on the social inclusion of Roma in her country.

Mr. Robert Neupart (Slovakia) pointed out that, although legally recognized as a minority, the programmes for Roma inclusion have failed in the last 20 years. Mgr. János Székely (Auxiliary Bishop of Esztergom-Budapest, and Promoter for the Pastoral of the Roma People of the Hungarian Catholic Bishops Conference) explained the social reality of Roma in Hungary. Mr. Leon Tambour (Observer of the Catholic Church to European Roma and Travellers Forum, ERTF, Bel-

gium) highlighted the importance of personal relationship with Roma people, being aware of the richness they can give us.

These reflections were taken into account in drafting a document entitled “Reflection on the EU approach to the Roma Issue: The role of the Catholic Church”, which was sent to MEP Livia Járóka (rapporteur on Roma inclusion) in March 2011.

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 Conference on the Social Market Economy in the European Union

27 and 28 May
in Mönchengladbach (Germany)

The conference on 27 and 28 May was organised by the COMECE Secretariat and the Katholische Sozialwissenschaftliche Zentralstelle (“Catholic Social Sciences Centre”) affiliated with the German Bishops’ Conference. A number of experts presented papers at the conference, and a draft text on the subject of the social market economy in Europe, to be presented to the COMECE Bishops for approval in November, was also discussed.

The conference took place in Mönchengladbach, located halfway between Düsseldorf and the Dutch-German border, and a stronghold of social Catholicism in Germany in the 19th and 20th centuries. Mönchengladbach was the headquarters of the Volksvereine für das katholische Deutschland (The People’s Associations for Catholic Germany), which at their peak, shortly before the First World War, had over 800,000 members. With their work in the field of education and their commitment to social welfare legislation, these associations made a considerable contribution to the development of the concept of the welfare state. This was pointed out to the delegates in the presentation by Professor André Habisch from Eichstätt.

The workers’ associations are the best proof that in a social market economy, balancing state solidarity and a competitive market, it is essential to be mindful of the need to ensure the viable existence of civil society, supported by many different kinds of self-help groups, associations and cooperatives where solidarity can develop freely, amicably and without state compulsion. In the middle of the last century that was taken for granted. Today this is no longer the case. Hence the plea by Stefano Zamagni, Professor of Economics at the

University of Bologna, that today’s social market economy should be understood in terms of a civil economy and that fraternity should be accorded equal status alongside the principles of solidarity and the market. His paper also referred to corresponding passages in the social encyclical *Caritas in veritate* of Pope Benedict XVI.

A French participant contributed further to the discussion by examining the historical context of the origin of the concept of social market economy. In the 1950s, protectionism dominated trade relations, the financial markets were very small, the top rates of tax were markedly higher than those we have today, and there were fixed exchange rates in the framework of the Bretton Woods Agreement. These factors should be taken into account in re-exploring the meaning of a social market economy for the European Union and the reform of the single market. The project of renovating the internal market was also the focus of the second main presentation at the conference. This was given by former MEP Philippe Herzog, who worked towards this central objective of the European Commission as a special adviser alongside Commissioner Michel Barnier. Dr Karen Horn from the Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft expressed scepticism in her response to Philippe Herzog. She argued that today the European Union still has no coherent energy policy, harmonisation has fostered egalitarianism, agricultural subsidies distort prices, and the parameters for monetary union have been wrongly set from the start.

Therefore, like many of the other speakers and participants at the conference, she emphasised – in the light of the financial crisis and the debt crisis in some of the Eurozone states – the importance of responsible and virtuous personal conduct for the economic viability of the EU. The fact that cultivation of moral sensibility is an indispensable prerequisite was also underlined in the comments made by Professor Gerhard Kruijff from the University of Mainz. Nevertheless, he stated, it is also necessary to have institutional rules of a kind that encourage morally good and proper conduct on the part of enterprises and bankers, consumers and workers alike.



Signature of the Founding Statement of the European Sunday Alliance, 20 June

In Europe, these rules are to a large extent made by or coordinated within the European institutions. The impetus of a social market economy, based on the Christian conception of humanity and the principles of Catholic social teaching, can be a compass for this, as Professor Markus Vogt from the University of Munich put it in his summing-up of the conference discussions. After all, following the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon, a “competitive and social market economy” is now one of the objectives of the European treaties, albeit not the only one.

5.2 Conference launching the European Sunday Alliance

20 June in the European Economic and Social Committee

COMECE co-organised this Conference on 20 June, when some 65 civil society organisations, trade unions, employers organisations and Churches launched the European Sunday Alliance at an event held in the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels. In their Founding Statement “Together for decent working hours” the signatories commit to safeguard and promote work-free Sundays and decent working hours throughout Europe. The launch was part of an expert conference on the impact of Sunday work on the health, safety and social integration of workers.

The conference was opened by Luca Jahier, president of Group III (Civil Society) of the EESC and brought to a conclusion by George Dassis, president of Group II (Employees). Luca Jahier emphasised that Europe needs a social model based not only on production and consumption, but also on shared free time for social interaction and societal engagement: “*We need time for the collective rituals of society, not only mass occupations like shopping.*”



LOGO ESA

Among the expert speakers were the psychologist Professor Friedhelm Nachreiner who recently testified in the German Constitutional Court proceedings on Sunday work that resulted in a ban on shop openings on Sundays in that country. He presented the results of numerous studies, proving: “*Whatever set of data you look at, whatever aspects you factor in or leave aside, the result is always the same: Any person working on Sundays is negatively affected both in terms of health and safety.*” The social scientist Dr Jill Ebrey, who undertakes research on the social value of synchronised free time at weekends for workers, helped in finding explanations for these results: “*Saturday and Sunday are not merely the end of the week, but form the weekend – a special time for almost anybody. Its demise causes great distress.*” Other aspects covered were the impact of volunteer work and economic pressures on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises.

The members of the Alliance demand that both European and national legislation needs to be more protective of workers’ private lives, including the right to shared free time for family, social and civic engagement, and culture. They emphasise that societies need a collective rhythm, because people are embedded in social structures that are necessary for their well-being and for social cohesion: “*Apart from our scientific findings, the political decision comes down to what sort of society we want to live in: a participative society, or a society where more and more people withdraw from interaction – with the negative impacts on democracy this would have,*” concludes Professor Nachreiner.

In asserting these rights, the Alliance refutes a purely economic-driven lifestyle, but argues for a better reconciliation of private and professional life. The Alliance urges the EU and Member States to take all legislative and political measures to promote these aims, including working time regulations that respect the right to limited working hours, to weekends and holidays, and collective agreements. It invites other actors to join the Alliance and promote the aims at all political levels.

5.3 International Summer school Seggau

2-16 July

The International Summer School Seggau took place for the 6th time. It was administered by the Carl-Franzens-Universität Graz in cooperation with COMECE and the Diocese Graz Seggau (Austria). This interdisciplinary meeting focused on East and South East Europe and dealt with the cultural and intellectual aspects and dimensions of contemporary European integration. It aims at helping to shape the profiles of future executives in areas such as politics, administration, economics, science and religion. This year's summer school was dedicated to the topic «US-Europe-Towards a multicultural continent» and brought together 72 students and 15 teachers.

5.4 Conference on the Encyclical Letter "Laborem exercens"

21 September
in the European Parliament

COMECE organised this Conference, together with the European Peoples Party (EPP) and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) Groups in the European Parliament, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the encyclical letter *Laborem exercens*. An audience numbering around 100 learned that the message of the central role of work for the human person, developed in this document dating from 1981, is still headline news today. Pope John Paul II had in fact written it primarily to encourage and guide the *Solidarnosc* movement in Poland, which at that time had just emerged as the first-ever free trade union in the Soviet bloc.

Looking beyond the immediate aim of the text, COMECE, the EPP & S&D Groups wanted to put the spotlight on the current importance of this text to a Europe at the crossroads for defining both its position and its role in a globalised economy. To this end, they invited a broad range of speakers from political, church, trade union and academic circles.

The conference was opened by Othmar Karas MEP, who made the connection between the encyclical letter and the Church's social teaching in general and also with the Lisbon Treaty, which establishes the 'social market economy' as one of the principal objectives of the European Union. The key speech of this event was delivered by Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. He emphasised that great care needs to be given to gaining a full understanding of human dignity and human work. "As a person, man is therefore the subject of work. As a person he works, he performs various actions belonging to the work process; independently of their objective content, these actions must all serve to realize his humanity."

Vittorio Prodi, MEP Socialists and Democrats (S&D), concentrated on the concept of the 'indirect employer' as mentioned in *Laborem exercens*. It is in fact a duty of the State "to conduct a just labour policy" (*Laborem exercens*, 17.2). This concept was also highly useful in the context of the global economy and globalisation and found support from Pierre Martinot-Lagarde SJ, Special Advisor for Socio-Religious Affairs of the International Labour Organization (ILO). In his contribution he presented an overall picture not only of *Laborem exercens* (1981) but also of the encyclicals *Centesimus Annus* (1991) and *Mater et Magistra* which Pope John XXIII had published in 1961. The fight against discrimination and unemployment, and the defence of trade union freedom was also, in his opinion, the principal contribution of the Church's social teaching in the contemporary search for the global common good.

Finally, the trade union world was represented by Jozef Niemiec, Deputy Secretary General of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). In his contribution he pointed out how important the encyclical letter in 1981 had been for the *Solidarnosc* movement and for him personally. Mrs Stanisława Golinowska, director of the Jagiellonian University of Krakow's Institute for Public Health, contributed some statistics illustrating the reality of youth unemployment (20% of those aged 15-24 last July), the shrinking trade union membership in Europe and the persistent gender-based discrimination in the world of work.

This last point was also emphasised by Mrs Sylvie Goulard, MEP Liberals and Democrats (ALDE), who particularly encouraged the Church to speak up for the poor in the economic crisis which was likely to become more acute in the next few years. The current generation of political decision-makers had a duty to recover some credibility in the management of public finances after so many years of wastefulness and indebtedness. Such mismanagement would inevitably have repercussions on the standard of living of the population. Greater attention should therefore be paid to those who were poorest.

In his concluding address, Fr Piotr Mazurkiewicz, the General Secretary, declared his satisfaction with the event as a whole, and particularly how it had shown that the Church's social teaching was not confined to only one political group. He recalled that Jesus, as a manual labourer Himself, had so to speak validated the dignity of human work, thus overturning the philosophy of antiquity which regarded work as a curse. Nevertheless, a balance needed to be found between work and rest. *Laborem exercens* includes a right to rest as one of its social provisions thus: "In the first place this involves a regular weekly rest comprising at least Sunday and also a longer period of rest, namely the holiday or vacation taken once a year" (L.E., 19.6) COMECE's commitment to a more explicit protection of Sundays at European level stems from, amongst other sources, this teaching of Pope John Paul II.

The most topical section of the Pontifical text was, however, the warning it gives on the danger of materialism: *“This fundamental error of thought can and must be called ‘an error of materialism’ in that economism directly or indirectly includes a*

conviction of the primacy and superiority of the material, and directly or indirectly places the spiritual and the personal [...] in a position of subordination to material reality.” (L.E., 13.3)

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

30 May

The Arab Spring was at the heart of this annual summit meeting of European Faith leaders with the Presidents of the EU Institutions. This was the seventh such high-level meeting which took place at the invitation of President José Manuel Barroso and was co-chaired by Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament and Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council.

Having experienced a similar wave of freedom and democracy in central and eastern Europe in 1989, which led to the reunification of the Continent, European leaders are willing to take the momentum of the Arab Spring to establish peace, democracy and prosperity around the Mare Nostrum. On 8 March, the European Commission issued a series of proposals establishing a partnership for the southern Mediterranean. In this context, the EU institutions intend to join forces with all partners who share the same willingness to defend and promote the same universal values. *“I strongly believe that these challenges cannot be met without the active contribution of religious communities”* stated President Barroso.

Mr Buzek, the President of the European Parliament, acknowledged that the revolutions in the Arab world were made by the people themselves expressing a deep call for Freedom and Justice. *“These are not our revolutions, but these are our values”* he stated, recalling the decisive role played by Churches in central Europe in fighting for Solidarity and Freedom 20 years ago.

Twenty senior representatives from the Christian, Jewish, Muslim religions as well as from the Buddhist communities answered the invitation and shared their experience and thoughts with the EU leaders.

Cardinal Marx, the Vice President, emphasised that Faith is a positive force, which invites and calls for a constructive shaping of the world. With a reminder that the limitation of power and violence is at the heart of democratic regimes, the Cardinal recalled that Faith protects against fantasies of

omnipotence. *“The human being is free but not omnipotent. Therefore Faith and Religions from a Christian perspective represent a source for a free State Order”*

“Christians are the natural allies of all those who love freedom” stated Cardinal Nycz, the Archbishop of Warsaw. He particularly asked the EU institutions to stand for religious freedom in the southern Mediterranean, recalling that this fundamental right not only covers freedom of worship but, most of all, freedom of conscience.

President Mgr van Luyn regretted that the coexistence of different religious communities in the Middle-East and North Africa was often manipulated to set them against each other. *“God wants us to be Christians in and for our Middle Eastern societies. This is our mission and vocation - to live as Christians and Muslims together.”* Referring to the project of the Order of the Dominicans to create an Open University in Bagdad, Mgr van Luyn recalled that Churches in the Middle East and North Africa are promoting similar projects of education, intercultural dialogue and citizenship which he trusts the European Commission will support and partner.

6.2 Meeting with the Hungarian EU Presidency

17 January

As part of the series of regular encounters between churches and the incoming EU Presidencies, a delegation of Hungarian and European church representatives was received by the Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orbán on Monday, 17 January 2011 in Budapest. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén and the Secretaries of State Mihály Varga, Peter Szijjártó, Zoltán Balog and László Szászfalvi as well as by several advisers.

Among the specific topics which the delegation of church representatives raised were questions with regard to family policies, the situation of the Roma communities in Europe,



Religious leaders meeting 30 May 2011 © EC

the implementation of religious freedom and the EU Danube Strategy. Topics also included the social dimension in European policies and, in particular, in relation to the implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy.

Prime Minister Orbán responded to the churches' concerns and welcomed their active engagement with the Hungarian government during the forthcoming 6 months and beyond. He asked the churches for their support in bringing all European governments and societies to recognise that the integration of Roma communities should be a European, and not just a national commitment of some European governments. It will only be possible to improve the living conditions of Roma throughout Europe, if all European governments cooperate. Identification of best practices is a priority for the Hungarian EU Presidency, to which the churches with their experience and well established relationships with Roma communities have much to contribute.

In view of the forthcoming debates in the European Parliament and the EU's Foreign Relations Council, the Prime Minister expressed his support for an effective response by the European Union to the persecution of Christians and the increasing attacks on Christian communities throughout the world. Such a response could be envisaged either by the Presidency itself or through the newly-established External Action Service of the European Union.

Regarding the first implementation phase of the EU Danube Strategy, the Prime Minister and the church representatives agreed on the need for strengthening reconciliation and intercultural dialogue as two important elements of cooperation between governments and civil society in the Danube region.

As one of the priorities of the Hungarian EU Presidency is to bring Europe closer to its citizens, the church representatives emphasised the involvement of civil society at large, as well as of religious communities in particular in the decision-making process on the European level. Prime Minister Orbán in his response acknowledged the difficulties of the European Institutions to get closer to the citizens. He encouraged the



Dialogue Seminar Rev. Rüdiger Noll and Mgr Piotr Mazurkiewicz

churches to maintain their important role as bridge builders, as churches are organised on the local, national and regional level and could, therefore, bring the "voice of the people" to the Institutions.

The meeting on 17 January is, therefore, to be seen as the starting point for an ongoing dialogue between the churches and the Hungarian EU Presidency. The churches used the occasion to present their programme, which will accompany the Presidency in the first half of 2011.

6.3 Meeting with the Polish EU Presidency

28 July

A delegation of Polish and European Church representatives was received by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Radosław Sikorski on 28 July in Warsaw. They had an exchange of views concerning a series of topics related to the political agenda of the Polish Presidency.

The Eastern Partnership is one of the major priorities of the Polish Presidency which is committed to the deepening of EU cooperation with partner countries on its Eastern borders by intensifying political association and economic integration. In this perspective, the Churches' representatives emphasised that reconciliation among people in this region should be an integral part of this Partnership. The Polish Catholic Bishops' Conference is currently working on a declaration of reconciliation with the Orthodox Church of Russia. On the basis of their experiences and initiatives in this field, the Churches' representatives therefore offered their help in working together on this reconciliation process. The Polish Presidency consequently suggested that Churches' representatives could participate as Observers in the forthcoming 2nd Eastern Partnership Summit which is due to take place in September in Warsaw.

The Church representatives voiced their concern about the continuing persecution of religious minorities throughout the world. The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs agreed that

respect for religious freedom should be a priority of the European External Action Service and that this priority should not only be reflected in a structural way but also in a mindset change within the EU diplomatic services.

Concerning the challenge of demographic change and ageing Europe, the Polish Presidency is committed to pursuing the efforts of the Hungarian Presidency in better coordinating family policies in Europe and exchanging good practice.

In the context of social rights the issue of work free Sunday was discussed. Churches, trade unions and civil society organisations have recently launched a “European Sunday Alliance” which aims at protecting a common rest-day as an essential element of workers’ health, family-work balance and social cohesion in Europe. In the context of the European Year for Volunteering, the Presidency expressed its interest and support for this initiative.

Finally, in order to help the victims of famine in the Horn of Africa, the Polish Churches’ representatives presented their project for a day of Solidarity in Poland, which will be organised together with Caritas. They suggested that this day of Solidarity could be organised Europe-wide. The Polish Presidency declared itself ready to support such an initiative.

6.3 Dialogue Seminar on Roma Inclusion

9 July

“Roma Inclusion: a need, a challenge, a duty”. This was the topic of the Dialogue Seminar which took place on 27 June at the European Commission. About 12 million Roma live throughout Europe today. To foster their inclusion, the EU recently adopted an EU framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020. Churches welcomed the adoption of this framework, especially as it looks beyond the existing EU and considers support to enlargement countries for the social and economic inclusion of Roma. However, this framework should better distinguish short and long term perspectives: access to employment, healthcare, education and housing should be achieved speedily while more fundamental societal changes may require more time. Churches’ representatives advocated more ambitious goals in access to justice, including the granting of official documents. Concerning education, the aim should be to ensure that all Roma children complete at least secondary school in order to get better jobs; and vocational training for adults should be envisaged. Confessional schools can play an important role here.

“Unemployment and lack of education are the two major challenges faced by Roma in Europe “ stated Mgr János Székely. The Auxiliary Bishop of Esztergom-Budapest referred to many successful initiatives of integration and education run by the Churches in Hungary. But he also recalled that, besides creating jobs and providing education, the formation of consciences is crucial: “Man is the principal agent of deve-

lopment, not money or technology”. Roma inclusion is a two-way process: public authorities and Churches can help Roma people become aware of their responsibilities and duties towards society.

Archbishop of the Church of Sweden Dr Anders Wejryd reported on the process of reconciliation and inclusion of the Roma Community by the Churches in Sweden: “Churches need to reflect about the role that they have played in excluding Roma people. The Church has committed members when it comes to the rights of minorities. Therefore the Church can be of importance in the public debate and also when forming opinions locally.”

When discussing the contribution of the Churches in the EU strategy on Roma inclusion the Church representatives emphasised the need to change discriminatory attitudes in majority societies towards Roma. They recommend that Member States actively tackle public discrimination and racism. At the same time, education about Roma culture, history and identity, as diverse as it may be, seems vital and would be recommended as a subject for teaching in schools.

EU officials admitted that the European Commission had not been fully able to evaluate the use of EU funds spent on Roma Integration at local level in past years. The new Roma Strategy therefore aims at bringing about better assessment and regulation of EU funds. While recalling that Roma inclusion lies within the competence of Member States, Mr László Andor, the EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion announced that the new Framework will make the EU Funds more accessible and focused on a territorial approach. “Churches are major social actors in the field of Roma integration: we need to work together and we count on your support” he concluded.

After the endorsement of the Roma Inclusion Framework by the European Council on 25 June, Member States were to elaborate the national inclusion plans. It is therefore crucial that governmental and non-governmental actors and Churches coordinate at national levels in order to achieve the goals of the Roma Strategy.

7 | LIST OF ACTIVITIES 2011

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 2011, COMECE took part in following consultations:

- Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat to the Consultation of the European Commission on **"A comprehensive approach on personal data protection in the EU"**

15 January 2011, European Commission

- Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat to the Green Paper on **Policy options for the progress towards a European Contract Law for Consumers and Businesses.**

31 January 2011, European Commission

- Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat to the public consultation on **"Less bureaucracy for citizens: promoting free movement of public documents and recognition of the effects of civil status records"**.

30 April 2011, European Commission

- Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat on the Commission's Green Paper on the Common strategic Framework

19 May 2011, European Commission

- Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat on the revision of the **Clinical trials directive.**

19 May 2011, European Commission

- Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat to the public consultation on a possible successor instrument to the **EU programme for employment and social solidarity** (Progress 2007 – 2013)

27 May 2011, European Commission

- Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat to the Green Paper on **the future of VAT.**

31 May 2011, European Commission

- Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat to the consultation on a **«Global approach to migration».**

6 June 2011, European Commission

- Contribution of the COMECE Secretariat to the public consultation on **future funding activities in the area of Justice, Fundamental Rights and Equality for the period after 2013.**

15 June 2011, European Commission

7.2 | Other contributions

Joint Letter to the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences in Europe of the General Secretaries of CCEE and COMECE on the position of the European Union regarding the persecution of Christians in the world

14 February 2011, COMECE, CCEE

7.3 | Seminars & Conferences co-organised by COMECE

- Seminar on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe

16 March 2011 at the European Parliament

Week for life conferences:

-The Role of family policy in the Demographic Change

-Coerced Abortion in China

-Ecology of the Human relations

-Life in extreme medical situations

21-24 March 2011 at the European Parliament

- Conference on the Social Market Economy in the European Union

27-28 May 2011 in Mönchengladbach, Germany

- Launching Conference of the European Sunday Alliance

20 June 2011 in the European Economic and Social Committee

- Dialogue Seminar on Roma inclusion, co-organised by COMECE, CEC and BEPA

27 June 2011 at the EU Commission

- International summer university of Seggau 2011

2-16 July 2011, in Seggau, Austria

- The Ethical Dimension of Politics

8-10 September 2011 in the Krakow, Poland

- Conference on the Encyclical "Laborem Exercens" co-organised by EPP & S&D Group and COMECE

21 September 2011 at the European Parliament

- Visit of an Indonesian delegation to the European Parliament

13 October in Brussels

- Conference on Christians in the Middle East

18 – 19 November 2011 in Beyrouth, Lebanon

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. These are some of the Groups who visited COMECE in 2011:

- Visit of a delegation of Iraqi Bishops 11 January
- Sternsinger 12 January
- Journalists from *La Croix* 11 January
- Group of Seminarians of Vienna 9 February
- Delegation of the US Catholic Bishops' Conference 14 February
- Migration Services of the Congregation of Scalabrian Missionary Sisters 14 March
- NGO on Counterterrorism 15 March
- Group of students of Thomas Hardy University 15 March
- Ensemble pour l'Europe 16 March
- Points Coeur 16 March
- Group of students of the Franciscan University of Stuebenville (US) 17 March
- Group of the Führungsakademie Baden-Württemberg (Germany) 31 March
- Group of students -Department of Politics, History and International Relation, Loughborough University UK 13 April
- European Office for Catholic Youth Work and Adult Education 13 April
- University Students from Paris visiting COMECE 15 April
- EPP Interns 15 April
- Group of Polish students 02 May
- EPP Interns 05 May
- Groupe IXE 06 May
- Institut Sophia Bruxelles 13 May
- Comité Ensemble pour l'Europe 18 May
- Students of the Institut zur Förderung publizistischen Nachwuchses e.V. (Germany) 27 May
- British interns 22 June
- Group Diocese of Bergamo, Italy 23 June
- EPP Interns 23 June
- EPP Interns 14 July
- Katholische St.Marien-Oberschule Berlin 24 August
- German European Studies Institute 02 September
- EPP Interns 07 September
- Directors of Caritas Institutions in Bavaria (Germany) 12 October
- Visit of KBW Wien 14 October
- University Students of Australia 14 October
- FEAMC meeting 22 October
- Students from Lycée catholique de Pontlevoy (France) 14 November
- Students from Borromäum Münster (Germany) 18 November
- Delegation of the Landeskirchenamt Kurhessen-Waldeck (Protestant Church in Germany) 1st December



CEMECE Bishops' visit to the Parlamentarium © EU Parliament

8 | COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION POLICY

8.1 | Europeinfos

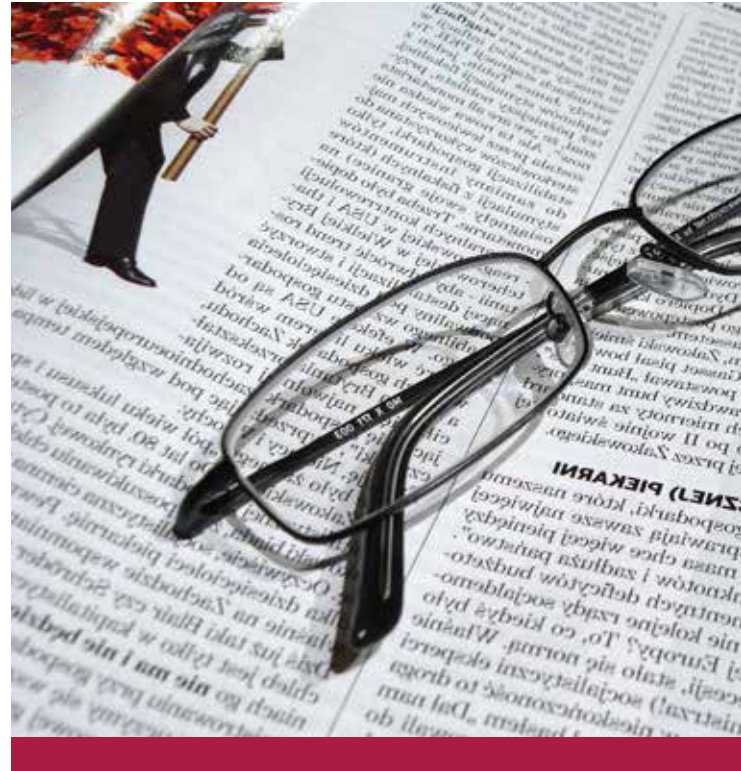
Europeinfos, a monthly review edited by COMECE and OCIFE, is published in English, French and German. *Europeinfos* aims to make the meaning and purpose of the European project better known to citizens, and especially to the local churches.

8.2 | Press releases

In 2011, COMECE issued 13 press releases, on various issues: Roma integration, Sunday protection, Research Policy, Transparency, the Arab Spring, Persecution of Christians.

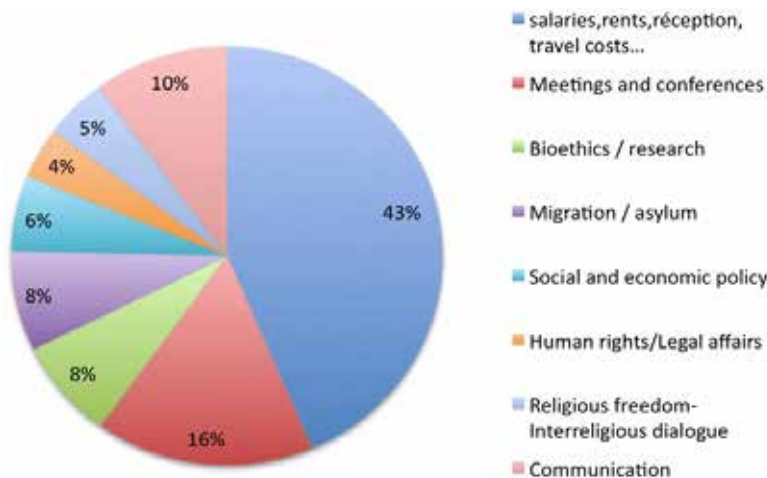
8.3 | Website

The COMECE Website (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 contributions are available on the website.



9 | FINANCES

2011 Expenses related to work areas



Total expenditure:
1 040 000 €

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



10 | GENERAL INFORMATION

10.1 | Members list for the end of the year 2011

H.E. Mgr. Adrianus van Luyn
Bishop emeritus 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. Zbignevs Stankevics
Archbishop Metropolitan of
Riga (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 Cserháti
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. Jean Kockerols
Auxiliary Bishop of Brussels
(Belgium)

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

H.E. Mgr. Rimantas Norvila
Bishop of Vilkauskis (Lithuania)

H.E. Mgr Theodorus Hoogenboom
Auxiliary Bishop of Utrecht
(Netherlands)

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

H.E. Mgr. Czeslaw Kozon
Bishop of Copenhagen
(Scandinavia)

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

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

H.E. Mgr. Jean-Claude Hollerich
Archbishop of the Grand
Duchy of Luxemburg

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

H.E. Mgr. Robert Bezak
Archbishop of Trnava (Slovakia)

Associated members:
- *H.E. Mgr Markus Büchel*
Bishop of St Gall (Switzerland)
- *H.Em. Cardinal Josip Bozanic*
Archbishop of Zagreb (Croatia)

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

COMECE would like to thank for their committed work over the years as delegates of their countries, the Bishops who left COMECE in the course of 2011: Mgr De Kesel (Belgium), Mgr Franck (Luxembourg), Mgr Justs (Latvia)



COMECE Bishops' visit to the Parlamentarium © EU Parliament



COMECE Bishops visit to the Parliamentarium © EU Parliament

10.2 | COMECE Secretariat

Mgr Piotr Mazurkiewicz

General Secretary

Drs. Michael Kuhn

Seconded by the Austrian Bishops' Conference
Advisor for Education, Culture and Youth policy

Anna Echterhoff

Legal advisor for Institutional and social affairs

Alessandro Calcagno

Seconded by the Italian Bishops' Conference
Legal advisor for Fundamental Rights

Mgr Joe Vella Gauci

Advisor for International Relations
Intercultural/ Interreligious Dialogue

Dr José-Luis Bazan

Legal advisor for Migration and Asylum

Stefan Lunte

Advisor for Economic and Social affairs,
Institutional issues

José Ramos-Ascensão

Legal advisor for Research and Bioethics

Johanna Touzel

Spokesperson & Press officer

Maud Oger (to September 2011)

Assistant to the Secretary general
replaced by

Leen Den Blauwen

Irmina Nockiewicz

Junior Secretary
(from November 2011)

Aimery de Vérac

Administration

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

Eleonora Tilse Germany

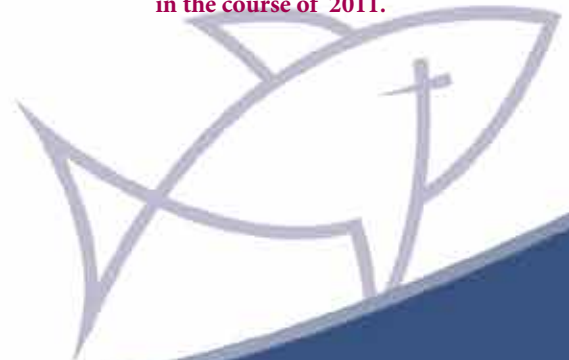
Noemie Mandin France

Peter Henrich OP Germany

Marie-Alix Dadillon France

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

COMECE would like to thank most warmly for her committed and highly competent work over the years Ms Maud Oger, who left the Secretariat in the course of 2011.





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