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**COMECE**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2001**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE) is tasked with monitoring the evolution of European policy-making by the European Union institutions. It is also charged with making input to the European Union institutions in a range of policy areas. It fulfils this mission on behalf of the fourteen Bishops' Conferences in the Member States of the European Union. To this end throughout the year 2001 COMECE continued to provide for encounter and dialogue with EU officials through a range of activities: the two annual Plenary meetings, two meetings of the Executive Committee, initiatives undertaken by its Bishop members in their respective countries, the monthly publication and through of a range of activities involving the EU institutions on the one hand and exchanges and encounters with groups and organisations from the local Churches in the Member States on the other.

This report is therefore a record of the contribution made by COMECE to the European project on behalf of its member Bishops' Conferences and the local Church in the Member States. It indicates some of the initiatives undertaken to assist the local Churches and their episcopates in keeping abreast of developments in European policy-making. In carrying out its mission the COMECE secretariat maintained contact and collaborated with the Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union, with Catholic Organisations which liaise with the EU and with the offices of the other Churches in Brussels.

The final section of the Annual Report for 2000 outlined a series of areas in which the COMECE secretariat would concentrate its work throughout the year 2001:

- (i) monitoring of developments in EU policy-making via staff and Working Groups
- (ii) contributions to the preparation of the White Paper on Governance of the EU and to the European Strategy for Sustainable Development
- (iii) facilitating the preparation of a report on Global Governance being prepared by a group chaired by M. Camdessus
- (iv) advancing the deliberations on the creation of Commissions
- (v) co-organising with CCEE a seminar for the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences of South-East Europe
- (vi) develop closer contacts with the Directorate General for Enlargement and support the Episcopal Conferences of candidate countries in engaging with the challenge of enlargement

- (vii) prepare a seminar on the future of Europe debate with the Catholic university of Lille
- (viii) plan a Social Congress in co-operation with the Spanish Bishops' Conference and with CELAM, to take place in Madrid in May 2002, in view of the EU-Latin American summit
- (ix) hold a third summer university in Goslar, Germany
- (x) visit Bishops' Conferences and take part in seminars on European issues organised by Episcopal Conferences in both Member States and candidate countries
- (xi) assist UNIAPAC in preparing a seminar for Christian businessmen, Bishops and Church leaders
- (xii) support the Semaines Sociales de France and the Central Committee of German Catholics in preparing a European seminar to be held at end of February 2002
- (xiii) produce a special issue of Europe-Infos on Sustainable Development
- (xiv) meet with the Conseil Supérieur of the European Schools to discuss future provisions for the teaching of religion in the European schools
- (xv) further the preparation of the COMECE website

This report shows that objectives set out in the aforementioned areas were achieved and that other significant initiatives were undertaken in the course of the year. Amongst the latter were responses - in the form of prayer services and a statement - to the tragic events of 11 September in New York and Washington.

In 2001 the Presidency of the European Union was held by Sweden for the first six months of the year and by Belgium from July until December. The Swedish Presidency followed upon that of France which concluded with the Treaty of Nice. The Swedish Presidency set out its priorities as the "the 3 Es" namely, enlargement, environment and employment to which were added renewed efforts in foreign policy (the northern dimension) and of course the pursuit of the post-Nice agenda on the future of Europe. The European Council meeting in Stockholm, 23-24 March, marked a first effort to assess progress in regard to the Lisbon strategy to render the Union "the most competitive and dynamic economic area in the world, capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion by 2010". The Gothenburg summit, 15-16 June, advanced the process of enlargement. It also witnessed violent demonstrations in the streets, testimony to the gulf emerging between the EU and sections of public opinion. For its priorities the Belgian Presidency trained its sights on advancing the debate on the future of Europe, the social agenda, promoting sustainable economic growth, making progress in the fields of freedom, security and justice, promoting sustainable development, progressing with the enlargement agenda and profiling the role of the EU in world. Preparations for the introduction of the Euro also figured among its primary objectives. The preparation of a declaration for the Laeken summit, 14-15 December, constituted a central aim of this Presidency. The attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and on the Pentagon in Washington on 11 September changed the geo-political context of this Presidency. The COMECE secretariat monitored the work programme of both Presidencies. Its staff members had numerous contacts on policy-related issues with the Presidencies and the Permanent Representations of both countries.

On May 3 the secretariat had the honour of a visit from Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran, Segretario per i Rapporti con gli Stati, Segretaria di Stato, on the occasion of his visit to the European institutions in Brussels. On 19 December the President hosted a lunch at the secretariat for Cardinal Francis Arinze, President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and Dr. G. Filibeck, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, who attended the Inter-Religious conference (viz 4.6) organised by the Ecumenical Patriarchate on 19-20 December. Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata, the Apostolic Nuncio to Belgium and Luxembourg and Archbishop Faustino Sainz Muñoz, Apostolic Nuncio to the European Communities were also graced the secretariat with their presence on that occasion.

This report sets out the main activities carried out by COMECE in the course of 2001; it does not attempt to provide an exhaustive listing of all the initiatives undertaken by the staff of the secretariat. It seeks simply to give an overview of the main activities undertaken in the service of the Bishops' Conferences and of the European project.

## **1. COMECE FROM WITHIN**

### **1.1. The President**

- 1.1.1. The President chaired and directed the two Plenary meetings (29-30 March and 22-23 November) and four meetings of the Executive Committee.
- 1.1.2. He continued the annual visits to the Orthodox Churches to discuss and explore the mission and role of the Churches in regard to European integration. He visited His Beatitude Maxim, Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Bulgaria (14-16 January) and His All Holiness Bartholomaios, the Ecumenical Patriarch, (16-18 January). He delivered a speech on Church-State relations in Europe to a Conference on Church – State Relations in Serbia, Berlin, (6 June). He addressed the Renovabis International Congress, *Europa wächst zusammen – aber wie?* (30 August 01 September). He also gave numerous interviews on subjects related to European integration and on the work of COMECE. He also participated in the inter-religious conference organised by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Brussels on 19-20 December and delivered a seminal address entitled, *Der interreligiöse Dialog Europas vor der Krise des Westens*.
- 1.1.3. During the aforementioned visits to Orthodox Churches and on the occasions of the meetings of the Executive Committee the President and General Secretary had opportunities to discuss and plan the ongoing work of the secretariat.

### **1.2. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- 1.2.1. The Executive Committee – the President, the two Vice-Presidents, Bishop A. van Luyn and Bishop A. Nicora and the General Secretary – met on three occasions in the course of the year. The meetings were also attended by the Apostolic Nuncio to the European Communities.

- 1.2.2. The first meeting of the year was held on 25-26 January in Turin at the Salesiani di Valdocco, Turin. Having surveyed the work of the secretariat since the previous meetings of the Committee and the Plenary in November 2000, particular attention was given to the core issues on the EU agenda and to the results of the Council of Nice, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, adopted in Nice. The Commission Working Paper in view of the preparation of a White Paper Governance was presented and discussed in detail. It was decided to address a letter to President Prodi setting out reasons for including an explicit reference in the text of the White Paper to the Churches and religious communities as institutions playing a specific role in civil society. The meeting deliberated further on the creation of Commissions within COMECE, discussed the creation of the post of assistant general secretary and the consequent amendment to the statutes and initiated preparation of the Spring Plenary meeting to be held in Rome.
- 1.2.3. A second meeting of the Executive Committee took place at the Katholisch Soziales Institut, Bad Honnef, on 20 June. A report was given of the chief activities undertaken by the secretariat since the previous meeting and on significant developments in the EU such as, the results of the Göteborg Council (15-17 June), the rejection of the Nice treaty in the Irish referendum. This meeting initiated a new element in COMECE's methods for co-operating with the Bishop' Conferences. With a view to the debate of the future of Europe and to preparation of a statement to mark the Laeken summit, the Committee requested that the secretariat prepare a discussion document for the Bishop' Conferences of both the Member States and the candidate countries. To be sent to the Episcopal Conferences before the end of the summer, this document should aim to engender a debate within the conferences, invite them to seek meetings with a representative of their government and then appraise the COMECE secretariat of the results of these discussions, whilst setting out issues they would wish to include in a statement in view of the Laeken summit and its proposed declaration. This meeting also reviewed the reply of President Prodi to Bishop Homeyer's letter in regard to the White Paper on Governance. It was decided to engage in further analysis and reflection on the contents of President Prodi's letter and to intensify efforts to gain an explicit reference to the Churches and religious communities in the text of the White Paper, scheduled for presentation to the European Commission at the end of July 2001. Among the other topics dealt with were: staff changes at the secretariat, progress in constituting the Commissions, efforts to draft a paper on Sustainable Development with the Commission for Church and Society of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), the results of the second meeting of the group (Bilbao 11-14 May) tasked with preparing a report on Global Governance for the COMECE.
- 1.2.4. The third meeting took place at the COMECE secretariat, Brussels on 17 September. It had been planned to initiate this meeting with reports from staff members on the policy areas they monitor. The events of 11 September required attention. After a lengthy discussion led by the President, it was decided to proceed with the preparation of a statement on the basis of draft texts. A statement entitled, *An Appeal for Justice, Responsibility, and the Conversion of our Hearts and Minds*, was published by the meeting. The document sent to the Bishop' Conferences in early August following upon the decision of the previous meeting of the Executive Committee was discussed. The success of the efforts and representations made to the European Commission in June and July in respect of the White Paper on Governance were noted and the resulting sentence in the text of the White Paper was evaluated. It

was agreed to proceed with further documented analysis on the role of the Churches in Europe, the need to provide for appropriate recognition in the relevant EU Constitutional Treaty or legal dispositions of their specific quality as institutions and subjects of rights in this capacity. It was recommended that a compendium of the recent and relevant letters, analyses and comments (Bishop Homeyer, President Prodi, Professor Robbers, Bishop Nicora) be prepared for the autumn Plenary meeting. The report, *Global Governance, Our Responsibility to make Globalisation an Opportunity for All*, together with the Executive Summary, was adopted by the Executive Committee at this meeting. The Committee recommended the preparation of a preface to be included in the publication. It was also agreed that the report should be launched by M. Camdessus at a soirée in the secretariat. The Executive Committee requested that the report be presented to the Plenary meeting in November, that the secretariat provide for its translation and that it be sent to the relevant ecclesiastical and political authorities. The members of the Committee had an extensive discussion on Agricultural and Rural policy, especially in relation to Poland and the candidate countries, during lunch. It was agreed that Bishops' Conferences could play a significant role in promoting reflection on the future of agricultural communities in these countries and that efforts should be made to imagine concrete steps which might initiate such a process. Having received brief reports on the work currently in hand at the secretariat, the Committee members were updated on progress made in creating a group of theologians to work towards a seminal paper on the Christian Faith and the process of European integration. The Committee members met with Professor H-G. Poettering, President of the Group of the European People's Party and European Democrats in the European Parliament. Among the issues discussed were: Laeken, the proposed Convention on the future of Europe; enlargement; contacts between COMECE and the EPP Group; relations with the Orthodox Churches.

### **1.3. THE PLENARY MEETINGS**

- 1.3.1. On the invitation of the Secretary of State, Cardinal Sodano, the Spring Plenary meeting of COMECE was held in Rome, at the Domus Sanctae Marthae, 29-30 March. The working title chosen for this first meeting between a COMECE Plenary meeting and representatives of the Holy See, *The Church and the Construction of Europe*, was introduced by the Secretary General with a review of the major issues on the agenda of the European Union, with presentations on the ECOFIN disciplining of Ireland regarding its budget as threatening the Stability Pact (Mgr. Duffy), on draft legislation on euthanasia in Belgium (Mgr. De Hovre) and on agricultural and rural policy issues in Poland (Mgr. Muszynski). Dr. Michael Weninger, a member of the Forward Studies Unit, (to become the Group of Political Advisers some months later in May 2001), addressed the assembly on the EU's perspectives for South-East Europe.

H. E. Cardinal A. Sodano, who was accompanied by H. E. Archbishop J-L. Tauran and Mgr. C. Migliore, recalled the meeting held at the Secretariat of State on 21 November 2000 at which the invitation had been issued. Welcoming the members of COMECE and the Presidium and Secretary General of CCEE, who also attended this meeting, he underlined the importance of the mission entrusted to COMECE. Presentations were made by the President on key challenges for the Church in EU policy areas and in the process of European unification, on the quest for a model of

society for Europe (Mgr. Van Luyn), and on the constitutional and legal challenges posed by the debate on the future of Europe (Mgr. Nicora). The Annual Report of the activities of COMECE for the year 2000 was outlined. Archbishop J-L. Tauran underlined the difficulty in maintaining the rightful place of Christianity in the public domain in contemporary Europe. Stressing the irreplaceable role of Catholic schools and universities to train the professionals of tomorrow, he encouraged the Bishops' Conferences to also address the European agenda with their national ministers, politicians and governments. These contributions were followed by an extensive discussion which concentrated on subjects such as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the debate on euthanasia, the importance of the Church's presence to the European institutions.

With an eye to the future of Europe debate, three Ambassadors to the Holy See (H.E. Mr. B. Henrikson, Sweden, H. E. T. Muuls, Belgium, and H.E. M. Stropnický, Czech Republic) addressed the meeting on the nation in the Europe of the future.

On the second day of the meeting reports were taken from the staff members on the activities of the Working Groups and on the initiatives in hand. A report on the activities of CCEE was also given. Drafts of three significant statements on (i) the crisis in agriculture, (ii) asylum and immigration policy, (iii) media and youth: the protection of minors, were received, amended and prepared for publication.

The Audience with His Holiness Pope John Paul II at 11.45 am. on Friday, 30 March, marked the high-point of the Plenary meeting. In his address the President outlined the mission and work of COMECE. Pope John Paul II, in his discourse, welcomed the president and members of COMECE, the representatives of the Episcopal Conferences of the candidate countries, the Presidium of CCEE, stressed the importance of the work undertaken by COMECE, re-echoed his desire that the new Europe be established on a recognition of the dignity of the human person and his inalienable fundamental rights, the inviolability of life, freedom, justice and solidarity, recalled the work of the two Special Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops of Europe in 1991 and 1999, emphasised the specific contribution of the Church in its espousal of the transcendent and eternal to public policy-making and encouraged COMECE to pursue its mission. Having bestowed His Apostolic Blessing, he greeted all present individually.

- 1.3.2. The European Union reacted swiftly to the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on Tuesday, 11 September: inter alia, the Foreign Ministers of the fifteen Member States met in Brussels on 12 September to signal solidarity with the American people and to pledge their full support in fighting terrorism, the Ghent summit encouraged a dialogue of equals between civilisations and significant advances were made in Justice and Home Affairs. Thus it was decided to choose *the European Union and the Challenge of Terrorism* as the principal theme for the Autumn Plenary meeting, held in Brussels on 22-23 November. Commissioner A. Vitorino addressed the assembly on whether further integration is called for in the area of Justice and Internal Affairs in the aftermath of 11 September and in view of the forthcoming 2004 IGC. He gave an overview of the historical development of policy in the sphere of Justice and Internal Affairs, outlined the proposals regarding a definition of terrorism, a common arrest warrant, extradition etc. General Ph. Morillon, Member of the European Parliament, spoke on the need to promote inter-religious dialogue to establish and stabilise security and

peace in the Euro-Mediterranean area. Mr. C. Heugen, Director of the Policy and Early Warning Unit at the Council addressed the meeting on the development of a common EU foreign policy.

A public event in the form of a discussion on *Europe and inter-religious dialogue* with contributions from Mgr. Bernard Panafieu, Archbishop of Marseilles and H.E. F-J. Conde de Saro, Permanent Representative of Spain to the EU, was cancelled at the last moment due to the sudden death of Archbishop Panafieu's sister. H.E. Mr. Conde de Saro kindly agreed to address the meeting on the priorities of the forthcoming Spanish Presidency.

The second part of the Plenary was composed of four sections: a breakfast meeting with Commissioner Franz Fischler, Laeken and the future of Europe, a presentation of the report to COMECE on *Global Governance, Our Responsibility to make globalisation an opportunity for all*, and reports by staff members on the work in hand regarding EU policy issues. The breakfast discussion with Commissioner Fischler gave rise to a proposal by the President to organise a seminar on CAP reform and rural policy for bishops from the candidate countries. With respect to the Laeken summit and the future of Europe, a short report was given of the response of the Bishops' Conferences to the secretariat's document, sent to the Episcopal Conferences in August 2001 and a draft for a COMECE statement in view of the Laeken summit was discussed, amended and designated for publication on 5 December. Noting the reference to the Churches and religious communities in the White Paper on Governance, the efforts which COMECE invested in advocating an explicit reference to the Churches and religious communities therein, Mgr. Nicora outlined a series of matters to be addressed by COMECE in view of 2004. It was agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Working Group to work on these issues in view of the post-Laeken Convention and 2004. The report to the Bishops of COMECE, *Global Governance Our Responsibility to make globalisation an opportunity for all*, was presented by Mr. P. Tran van Thinh, former chief negotiator of the European Community at the GATT/WTO, by Mr. R. Felke, European Commission and by S. Lunte. The report was received by the COMECE Plenary. On behalf of the bishop members the President thanked the members of the eminent group under the chairmanship of M. Camdessus, former Managing Director of the IMF, who gave voluntarily of their time, expertise and energy to produce the report. A series of decisions were made regarding its translation and dissemination among Church and political leaders and to the EU institutions and also regarding seminars on its contents. This Plenary approved the creation of two COMECE Commissions: the Commission for Social Affairs, its President being Bishop A. van Luyn; the Commission for Legal Affairs, with Bishop A. Nicora as its President. A report on the activities of CCEE was delivered by its President, Bishop A. Grab. Reports on the work of the secretariat on EU policy issues were provided by members of staff.

#### **1.4. THE SECRETARIAT: STAFF**

- 1.4.1. All members of staff were involved in preparing and achieving the activities and events described in this report.



- 1.4.2. Staff meetings were held regularly in order to execute the decisions of the Plenary meetings, to prepare the forthcoming Plenary meetings, to plan the ongoing work of the secretariat and to provide for exchange of information between staff members.
- 1.4.3. Efforts to seek a member of staff to monitor Research Policy, Bio-technology and ethical and bio-ethical issues arising in these spheres were continued. In October 2001 Frau K.Schauer joined the secretariat and assumed responsibility for this area of EU policy. Fr. Hans Vöcking also joined the secretariat in August as a half-time member of staff to work on Islam and inter-religious dialogue. In November Marilena Missouri also joined the secretariat to work on behalf of the Italian Bishops' Conference and as a COMECE staff member. After one year with COMECE Mgr. Marian Subocz decided to return to Poland and take up a pastoral appointment in his native diocese.
- 1.4.5. For varying periods of time the secretariat was assisted by voluntary stagaires: Diana Tereze Kudrjavceva, lawyer, Latvia; Birgit Neurathner, theologian, Austria; Angela Schnepel, student, Germany; Stefan Lunze, law student, Germany; Michal Rynkowski, lawyer, Poland; Martin Hannig, law student, Germany; Lola Carmona Zafra, lawyer/political scientist, Spain.

## 1.5. THE SECRETARIAT: WORKING GROUPS

- 1.5.1. The **Working Group on Legal Affairs** met on 15.03 and on 15.11. Reports on the work of the group were given to the COMECE Plenary meetings. Both meetings began with brief reports on juridical matters of current concern to the Church in the Member States represented in the group. The March meeting considered the following issues: the transposition into national legislation of Directive 2000/78/ EC on the equality of treatment in employment and work; the Nice treaty and the post-Nice agenda; the Work Programme of the European Commission for 2001; issues attendant on the White Paper on Governance; matters arising from the European Parliament temporary committee on the human genome; a European Parliament draft resolution on euthanasia. The second meeting of this Working Group examined the White Paper on Governance and the reference to the "particular contribution of Churches and religious communities" therein. M. M. Kröger, General Secretariat of the European Commission, contributed to this discussion. The Laeken and post-Laeken agenda on the future of Europe was addressed with particular reference to the Church-State interface. A draft report - by any standards problematic and severely criticised by many Groups and Member of the EP - adopted by the Committee on Womens' Rights and Equal Opportunities of the European Parliament on Women and Fundamentalism was examined and orientations were identified for appropriate responses. The Group also received an update of the work of the Legal Service of the European Commission from M. S. Rating, a member of the same service.
- 1.5.2. The **Reflection Group on Bio-ethical Affairs** met on 26.03 and on 26.10. At the March the group discussed the follow-up to the seminar *Responsible Biomedical Research: A Way Forward for Europe* which it organised on 07.12.00 and decided to publish the proceedings. The Group also considered the ethical implications of codifying human DNA; the members of the group also conferred with M. E. Magnien, Directorate General Research of the European Commission on bio-medical

issues. The second meeting of this group focused on new ethical issues arising in the sphere of medical experimentation: the application of new and experimental medical procedures to volunteers and the linked financial and commercial interests; absence of consent, or lack of informed consent in respect of the aforementioned; performance of such questionable procedures with the support of western companies on populations in under-developed countries. The work of this Group was complemented as of October by a new member of staff who closely followed the final stages of the EP temporary Committee on the human genome and the Caudron Report on the Sixth Framework Research Programme.

1.5.3. The **Working Group on Social Affairs**, presided by Bishop by Bishop A. van Luyn, met in Brussels on 09-10 February in Brussels for the first time in its second mandate of three years and also on 09-11 November in Rotterdam. Reports on the work of the group and documentation were presented to both Plenary meetings of COMECE. The February meeting addressed the theme *The Social Dimension of European construction – issues and perspectives*. Notable contributions were made by Mr. B. Pronk, Member of the European Parliament and a member of its Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and Ms. Anne Houtman, a member of the cabinet of President Prodi, who considered the EU social agenda adopted at Nice. Members of the group provided comments and analyses. The November meeting, the first to take place outside Brussels, was held in Rotterdam at the invitation of Bishop van Luyn. Taking *From tolerance to respect and sharing – Rethinking the humanist concept of tolerance in an indifferent society - A Task for Christian Social Thinking* as its theme, the meeting opened with an exchange among members on recent EU initiatives in the area of social and economic policy. Thereafter proceedings continued in the Wereldmuseum with invited guests. Papers were presented by Prof. A. C. Zijderveld, Prof. S. Zamagni, and by Mr. Roger van Boxtel, the Dutch Minister for Policy on Cities and Integration. Presentations on social exclusion were made by members of the group and also by Mr. A. Silva, Directorate General Social Policy of the European Commission. A memorandum entitled, *Solidarity and Tolerance*, was elaborated on the basis of the deliberations and presented to the Plenary meeting, 22-23 November. A cultural programme, hosted by Bishop van Luyn, included a boat trip with dinner in the port of Rotterdam and a guided tour of the Hieronymus Bosch Exposition.

1.5.4. The **Working Group on Information Society, Communications and Media Policy** held three meetings in the course of the year. The meeting, 24-25 January examined a reflection paper on the future of EU media policy. A report on a discussion with Mr. H. Sand, Counsellor for Media Policy at the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU (23 January) was received. Members of the group met with Commissioner V. Reding (Education, Culture, Media) to discuss current issues in media and information society policy with particular attention to the group's preparation of a statement on media education in the information society. On this occasion the Group also met with M. Martens (NL) and with R. Perry (UK), both Members of the European Parliament and of its committee on Culture, Education and Media. On the basis of this work the draft of a statement entitled *A Call for Media Education* was presented to the COMECE Plenary in Rome, 29-30 March and duly published thereafter. The meeting of 08-09 May considered the reactions to the aforementioned statement and discussed follow-up. Items on the agenda were: the Protection of Minors from Harmful Content in the Media, a subject of a Commission

report and of a then forthcoming report in the European Parliament; E-learning and the review of the Television Without Frontiers Directive. A COMECE seminar on the latter was planned. Members of the group attended the E-learning summit in La Hulpe, Belgium, 10-11 May. A submission to the Commission consultation on the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning was also planned and submitted in the form of a letter. The seminar on “*Television without Frontiers*”, planned by the group, took place on 10 October at COMECE secretariat. Contributions were given by Mr. V. Jamois, Directorate General for Education and Culture, European Commission, Frau R. Hieronymi, Member of the European Parliament who was also rapporteur on the implementation of the Directive, Mr. P. Albrechtskirchinger (ZDF), Mr. J. Laitenberger, member of the cabinet of Commissioner Reding and M. Martens, Member of the European Parliament.

- 1.5.5. For various reasons the **Working Group on Islam** had to cancel its meeting scheduled for 07-08 March. A survey of the work of the first mandate of this Working Group was given by P. H. Vöcking at the autumn Plenary meeting in November. He presented the multilingual COMECE publication entitled, *Islam en Europe, Législation relative aux Communautés Musulmanes*, the fruit of work carried out by the Working Group. The Plenary was informed of the efforts to find new members for the group and of the issues which the newly constituted group would address, inter alia: developments in the political and legal integration of Islam in the Member States, the EU-Mediterranean process, the dialogue between civilisations and the inter-religious dialogue in respect of the EU political arena, the candidacy of Turkey.
- 1.5.6. The COMECE **Platform on Migration issues** brings together specialists from the Bishops’ Conferences and representatives of the Brussels-based Catholic organisations working on migration, asylum and refugee issues. An ecumenical dimension has also been given to this platform through the presence of a representative of the Churches Commission for Migration in Europe (CCME). The platform held four meetings in the course of the year: 19.03; 28.05; 10.09; 07.12 and reports together with documentation were presented to the COMECE Plenary meetings. The March meeting addressed issues such as, Council Proposals for EU Measures against irregular migration; EU initiatives regarding trafficking of women. It also prepared the basis of a contribution to the debate on the European Commission Communication, *Towards a common asylum procedure and a uniform status, valid throughout the EU, for persons granted asylum*. It also worked towards a contribution on the debate on the Communication from the European Commission on a *Community Immigration Policy*. The May meeting worked on statements on a common asylum procedure and on a community immigration policy. It also examined the then state of negotiations in the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council regarding family reunification. M. F. Lutz, Directorate General JHA gave a presentation on a forthcoming directive on *Conditions of entry and residence for the purpose of paid employment and self-employed economic activity*. The September meeting received an update on the priorities of the Belgian Presidency regarding asylum and immigration policy from Mr. J-L De Brouwer, Head of Unit, Asylum and Immigration, European Commission. Comments on the Commission proposal for a Council Directive *Laying down minimum standards on the reception of applicants for asylum in the Member States* (COM 2001 181) were also prepared, as were comments on the Commission’s proposal for a Council Directive *on the status*

*of third-country nationals who are long-term residents.* The meeting of 7 December began with an assessment of the EU's asylum and immigration policy two years after the Tampere summit. A proposal for a Council Directive laying down *standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals and stateless persons as refugees*, COM (2001) 510 final, was examined. Other issues on the agenda were: a report on a Round Table concerning the carriers' liability related to illegal immigration (30 Nov. Brussels); a communication from the Commission to the Council and the EP on a *common policy on illegal immigration* COM (2001) 672 final; a communication from the Commission to the Council and the EP on the *common asylum policy, introducing an open co-ordination method* COM (2001) 710 final. The draft statement, *Towards a Community Asylum and Immigration Policy for the European Union*, which emanated from the work of this platform, was presented to the COMECE March Plenary meeting, discussed, amended and duly published. A document submitted to the COMECE Plenary in November indicated the comments on various policy issues put forward on behalf of the COMECE secretariat to the relevant EU institutions.

- 1.5.7. The COMECE **Reflection Group on EU Foreign and Security Policy** met on 15 January. Reports were given on meetings with officials of the European Commission, the Council of Ministers Policy Unit and the European Peace Building Liaison Office by Dr. T. Hoppe and on the basis of contributions offered by B. Schennink (Pax Christi), Dr. T. Mayr-Harting, Ambassador of Austria to Belgium and NATO, Mr. C. Donnelly, NATO. The group proceeded to establish a work programme and priorities for the year. A second meeting was held on 5 April. Three issues were addressed: the ethics of interventions, conflict prevention and the preparation of a COMECE study day for staff of the national Episcopal Conferences on current developments in European foreign, security and defence policy. On May 15 the COMECE secretariat produced a text entitled, *Comments of the COMEC Secretariat on the European Union's Contribution to Conflict Prevention*, on the basis of the work undertaken by the group. The Study Day entitled, *The European Union in the World – The Foreign, Security and Defence Policy of the European Union*, took place at the COMECE secretariat on 27 June. Attended by some forty persons from Church, political institutions, academic life, diplomacy and the military, it gave rise to intense and profound debate on ethical issues attendant on the Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy. A consultation between representatives of the Churches and officials of the EU on EU policy in Central Africa was held in the COMECE secretariat on 7 November. Plans for a seminar in 2002 on the ethics of intervention were made and steps were taken to launch an information network on European foreign and security policy. Reports were given to both COMECE Plenary meetings on all of the initiatives taken by the group and the secretariat in this area of policy.
- 1.5.8. A number of working sessions with the financial advisers assisted the secretariat in preparing and managing the annual budget and in preparing the accounts for the November 2001 Plenary meeting.
- 1.5.9. In preparing and carrying forward the agendas of the Working Groups, the secretaries and staff members of the secretariat, maintained contact with other Church-linked offices in Brussels, especially with CARITAS, CIDSE, ESPACES, OCIPE, Justice and Peace, Pax Christi International. They also kept close contact with offices of the other Churches working in the same policy areas. They also exchanged information

with the officials of the EU institutions and with relevant policy centres and think-tanks.

## **2. COMECE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION**

### **2.1. Encounter and Exchange**

- 2.1.1. The two Plenary meetings were times of direct exchange between the Bishop members of COMECE and officials of the EU institutions. In the course of the year further contacts were made with European civil servants by the President, by members of the secretariat and, on occasion, by members of the Working Groups. The COMECE secretariat was contacted on occasion by officials of the institutions and by Members of the European Parliament in search of a Church viewpoint or input on EU policy matters.
- 2.1.2. On the occasion of his visit to Brussels on 19 December 2001 the President met with Herr Hagen, Head of the Social Policy Department of the Permanent Representation of Germany to the EU with whom he discussed the developments in social policy and the outcome of the Laeken summit. He visited the Representation of Poland to the European Union where he met with H.E. Iwo Byczewski, its Ambassador. The subjects discussed inter alia were: the current state of the accession negotiations between the EU and Poland, factors influencing Polish public opinion regarding the European Union, the future of Polish agriculture and rural development, the Church and the debate on accession. The President also met with Lieutenant General R. Schuwirth, Director of the Military Committee at the Council of Ministers to whom he outlined the work of the COMECE secretariat of CFSDP. Among the subjects discussed were: developments in Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy and the situation in south-east Europe.
- 2.1.3. In accordance with established practice COMECE, together with the Commission for Church and Society of the Conference of European Churches, requested meetings on their own behalf and on behalf of representatives of the local Churches in the member state about to assume the Presidency of the European Union. As indicated in the Annual Report for 2000, a meeting took place in Stockholm on 28 November 2000 with Ms. Lena Hjelm-Wallén, Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden. She was accompanied by a number of government officials. The discussions focused on issues identified as priorities by the Swedish government for its Presidency (January-June 2001): enlargement, global solidarity, environment and sustainable development. There was a short exchange on European demography and the need for a family friendly social policy. In the course of the exchange recommendations were made to the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of issues in common European migration policy and in regard to support for inter-religious dialogue and projects in the context of both the Stability Pact for South-East Europe and also of the Barcelona Process. A letter from the leaders of the Churches in Sweden regarding the status of Jerusalem was handed over to the Deputy Prime Minister. In the case of the Belgian Presidency (July-December 2001) a request to Prime Minister Verhofstadt's office was refused with advice to contact the Foreign Minister. L. Michel. Whilst the Foreign Minister expressed an interest in a meeting, the events of 11 September were said to have so disrupted his diary that a meeting could not be scheduled. Towards

the end of the year initial contacts were made with the Spanish government with a view to requesting such an encounter in regard to the Spanish Presidency (January – June 2002).

- 2.1.4. In the context of their daily work and in the course of preparing the meetings of the Working Groups staff members were in regular contact with the European Commission, its cabinets and Directorates General, with staff and members of the European Parliament and with services of the Council of Ministers. The daily Press Conferences at the European Commission were attended by the COMECE press officer and journalist. COMECE documents were submitted, as appropriate, to officials and services. Throughout the year numerous officials of the EU institutions visited the secretariat for discussions, briefing sessions and to address visiting groups as well as COMECE Working Groups.
- 2.1.5. Close working relations were maintained with the Forward Studies Unit (FSU) of the European Commission both as FSU and then in its new form, the Group of Political Advisers to the President of the European Commission (GOPA). Dr. M. Weninger made numerous visits to the secretariat in the course of the year to discuss the challenge of the future of Europe debate for the Churches, to assist in planning various common initiatives, to address visiting groups, to seek input in efforts to develop dialogue with Islam in the aftermath of 11 September and to keep abreast of the work of COMECE.
- 2.1.6. Staff members took part in the Briefing session organised by the Group of Political Advisers (GOPA) for the Church-linked offices in Brussels on the European Council of Göteborg 15-16 June.
- 2.1.7. Members of the secretariat, specialists from Catholic organisations and Catholic universities throughout Europe participated in the two Dialogue seminars co-organised by the Group of Political Advisers of the European Commission, COMECE and the Commission for Church and Society of the Conference of European Churches (CEC). The first was held on 21-22 May on *Conflict Prevention – the Role of the Churches*. The seminar examined the evolving policy of the EU in relation to conflict resolution, the role of the Churches and political institutions in regard to early warning systems of potential conflict, instruments for resolving conflicts. The seminar also provided an opportunity for COMECE and CEC to present their work on promoting stability, security and reconciliation in south-east Europe. The second Dialogue seminar took place on 30 October. The theme of this event, readily agreed by the three partners was, *The Future of the European Union: Laeken and after*. This seminar examined the key elements of the reform of the EU under four headings: (i) what are the core issues for the Declaration of Laeken? (ii) to what challenges from the citizen should EU reform respond? (iii) the shape of the post-Laeken process, (iv) what kind of Europe do the Churches want?
- 2.1.8. The Plenary sessions of the European Parliament in Strasbourg were covered and reported. The proceedings of the EP committees pertinent to the COMECE Working Groups were monitored by staff members. There were several meetings with Members of the European Parliament and with officials both in the COMECE secretariat and in the European Parliament.

- 2.1.9. The staff of the secretariat liaised with officials of the Permanent Representations of the Member States and the Missions of the candidate countries. Officials of various Representations addressed meetings of the COMECE Working Groups and attended other meetings at the secretariat.
- 2.1.10. Contacts were maintained with offices representing the regions of the Member States. Staff members participated in events organised by policy centres, in particular by the European Policy Centre (EPC) and by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS).

## **2.2. INPUT TO THE EUROPEAN UNION**

- 2.2.1. COMECE and its secretariat contributed to the debate on the preparation of the White Paper on Governance of the European Union adopted by the European Commission on 25 July 2001. Reference has already been made to the correspondence between the President of COMECE and President Prodi. Members of the secretariat had numerous exchanges with officials of the European Commission in order to ensure that an explicit reference be made to Churches and religious communities in the body of the text. A draft version made reference to the Churches in a footnote in the context of a citation of an Economic and Social Affairs Committee description of civil society. Significant efforts were undertaken by the secretariat to elucidate the institutional specificity of the Church, its particular role in society, its distinctness from NGOs and other component elements of civil society. In the end after much and sustained effort in June and July, the final text included in the third chapter, in a section entitled “*Involving Civil Society*”, the following sentence: “*Churches and religious communities have a particular contribution to make*”.
- 2.2.2. In the domain of Social Affairs significant input was made on the part of the members of the Social Affairs Group through exchanges and discussions with EU officials and other involved with the shaping of EU policy. The documents produced by the group were submitted to the appropriate officials of the EU.
- 2.2.3. The report made to the COMECE Bishops, *Global Governance, Our responsibility to make globalisation an opportunity for all*, was sent to Commissioner P. Lamy, responsible for Trade Policy, to other members of the European Commission and to numerous EU civil servants. The report evoked positive reactions on the part of many and an extensive written reaction from Commissioner Lamy. It is noteworthy that this report is cited among the source material for Communications from the European Commission in February 2001 on aspects of globalisation.
- 2.2.4. In the area of Justice and Home Affairs (JAI) the Platform on Migration Policy engaged in debate and discussion with civil servants on draft policies in the domain of Justice and Home Affairs. As indicated in the relevant documentation for the member Bishops on the occasion of the November Plenary meeting, written submissions were made on a wide range of draft policy proposals. It may be recalled that Commissioner Vitorino referred to the significant work furnished by COMECE in this field, when he addressed the Plenary meeting in November 2001.

- 2.2.5. Meetings took place between members of the Working Group on Media policy, Commissioner Reding and members of her cabinet on a range of issues on which the Commission was preparing draft policy. As indicated above, written submissions were made in respect of policy issues in this field to the Commission and to Members of the European Parliament.
- 2.2.6. In the sphere of the Common Foreign and Security Policy there were numerous encounters between the secretariat and EU officials. Comments were submitted by the secretariat to the office of Mr. Solana, to the European Commission and to the European Parliament on 15 May regarding proposals for EU policy on Conflict Prevention. The consultation, *EU Policy in Central Africa*, was attended by Archbishop L. Monsengwo Pasinya along with representatives of the Apostolic Nunciato to the European Communities and of Church agencies. It was held at the COMECE secretariat on 7 November and allowed Church representatives to engage with civil servants from the EU institutions. The secretariat also facilitated and organised the presentation of a Pax Christi International report on the situation in the Middle East to the European Commission and the Council Policy Unit on 10 July.
- 2.2.7. In the area of Life Sciences, Biotechnology and Bio-Ethics the COMECE secretariat made input as follows: a presentation and submission to the European Parliament's Temporary Committee on Human Genetics and other New Technologies of Modern Medicine on 09-10 July. A submission was made by the secretariat on 23 November in respect of the Communication from the European Commission, *Towards a Strategic Vision of Life Sciences and Biotechnology: Consultation Document* (COM 2001, 454, 04.09.01). The secretariat was also represented at a number of public conferences dealing with policy in this sphere: the Conference of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union's Research Council: *Opening up European Research to the World*, 17-18 September; the Life Sciences and Biotechnology – *A Strategic Vision*, Commission Stakeholder Conference, 27-28 September; a Round Table organised by the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies on *Ethical Aspects of patenting inventions involving human cells*.
- 2.2.8. In the aftermath of the events of 11 September the secretariat was contacted by officials of the European Commission, by the EPP Group in the European Parliament and by NATO officials for input on matters relating to dialogue with Islam in general and also in relation to policy issues. Members of the secretariat were invited for discussion at NATO on 22.10; a meeting took place at the office of the Group of Political Advisers to the President of the European Commission on 23.10; a member of the secretariat attended and contributed to a planning meeting of the EPP Group on 06.11.
- 2.2.9. As indicated in this report the President met with officials of the European Union on the occasion of his visit to Brussels on 19 December. In a meeting with the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Mr. W. Kok on 9 April, Bishop A. van Luyn presented the recent initiatives taken by COMECE. He also had a meeting with the Dutch Secretary of State for European Affairs, drs. F. A. Benschop in which he outlined the current activities of COMECE, the three statements produced by the Spring Plenary meeting, the report on Global Governance as well as presenting COMECE's interest in the debate on the future of Europe. Bishop A. Nicora addressed a series of academic conferences on juridical issues in Italy and also the international



conference (viz. 4.6) in Cracow, Poland. In some Member States the COMECE Bishops engaged in discussions with Ministers on the basis of the secretariat's letter (August) on the future of Europe debate.

### **3. PROMOTING DEBATE BETWEEN CHURCH, OFFICIALS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND SOCIETY**

- 3.1. Throughout the year the secretariat continued its tradition of inviting officials of the EU institutions, Members of the European Parliament and persons engaged in the process of European integration to working breakfasts and lunches to discuss EU policy issues pertinent to COMECE's concerns.
- 3.2. As in previous years and at the request of the Group of the European Peoples' Party in the European Parliament, once a month the COMECE secretariat received a group of *stagiaires*/interns from the Christian Democratic movements in central and eastern European countries. During these meetings these future civil servants and politicians are briefed on COMECE's work and on the Church's engagement in the process of European construction.
- 3.3. Staff members maintained and developed contacts with think-tanks, political foundations and offices working on EU issues.
- 3.4. The series of evening lectures, discussions and receptions was continued. As a mark of respect and sympathy the evening lecture, *One Continent: With what Values* to be delivered by H. E. Cardinal Godfried Danneels on 12 September was postponed. Instead the secretariat prepared an ecumenical Prayer Service over which Cardinal Danneels presided in the nearby Chapelle de la Résurrection. This service was attended by a large number of EU officials. Afterwards the Cardinal met with many of them who came to the COMECE secretariat for the reception. The report to the COMECE Bishops, *Global Governance Our Responsibility to make globalisation an opportunity for all*, was launched in this series of evening events by Michel Camdessus and Michel Hansenne, both members of the Preparatory Group, on 24 October. The press was also invited to the latter event.

### **4. INFORMATION SERVICE, PUBLICATIONS, LECTURES**

- 4.1. The monthly review, *Europe-Infos*, produced in collaboration with the Jesuit Office OCIPE, was published in French, English, German, Spanish and Polish. An editorial board made up of members of the COMECE and OCIPE secretariats and of EU civil servants met monthly to plan the forthcoming issues. A special issue was devoted to Sustainable Development in May 2001. The review was distributed to all Bishops in the Member States of the European Union, in the candidate countries of central and eastern Europe, to the services of Bishop' Conferences and to subscribers.
- 4.2. The analyses and reports of the COMECE Working Groups were sent to the appropriate services of the Bishops conferences. Circular letters were sent to the Bishop members and to the secretariats of the Bishop' Conferences in regard to draft EU policy. The circular letter and discussion document on the future of Europe

debate sent to the Bishop' Conferences of the Member States and of the candidate countries in early August marked a further step in deepening the links between the Episcopal Conferences and COMECE in regard to a central issue of the EU agenda leading to the IGC of 2004.

- 4.3. The report to the Bishops of COMECE, commissioned as a follow-up to the Social Congress, *Europe's Responsibility for Global Development*, held in Brussels, 30 March- 1 April 2000, was prepared for publication. The published version contains a foreword by the President and Vice- Presidents, an Executive Summary and the report itself.
- 4.4. The proceedings of the second COMECE University, *Hyper\_Liens vers l'Europe: en quête de passerelles entre passé et présent, entre nation et communauté régionale*, held at the Villa Vigoni, Menaggio, Italy, were published and distributed to interested parties.
- 4.5. Articles were written by staff members for the monthly review. Staff members published articles in reviews. Lectures were given on the work of COMECE and on issues pertaining to EU policy by staff at conferences organised by Bishop' Conferences, universities and academic institutes both in the Member States and in the candidate countries.
- 4.6. On invitations and as their responsibilities permitted, staff members took part in and addressed congresses and seminars throughout Europe. A sample review of this aspect of the secretariat's work shows inter alia: the programme of events to launch the text, *Manifesto for A European Consciousness*, prepared by the Presidents of Semaines Sociales de France and the Central Committee of German Catholics, Brussels, 11-12 January; a seminar entitled, *Enhancing the Understanding between the Religious Communities and the Media in South-East Europe*, Thessaloniki, 10-13 January; a conference at the European Commission entitled, *New Markets –New Chances, EU Enlargement and the Polish Case*, Brussels, 25 January; at a programme and ceremony to mark the award of the Félix Houphouët Peace Prize to the Sant'Egidio Community, UNESCO, Paris, 01 February; at a study day on Common Foreign and Security Policy organised by the European Commission, Brussels, 5 February; at the UNIAPAC Churches and Business Dialogue, *New Rhythm in Life and Work*, Brussels, 9 February; at the seminar on the occasion of the visit of the national secretaries of the French Bishops' Conference to Brussels, 19-20 February; at study day on the occasion of the visit of the Committee of the Conference of Marist Provincials, Brussels, 21-22 February; to the seminar co-organised by the European Commission and the Nordic Ecumenical Council, *The European Union a New Arena for the Churches*, 21-24 February; at the colloquium, *Legal Position of Churches: Europe, United States, South Africa*, KUL, Leuven, 28 February - 01 March; a briefing for representatives of Churches and religious communities, organised by the Economic and Social Affairs Committee (ECOSOC), Brussels, 2 March; at a study day, *Die Eu –ihre Auswirkungen auf kirchliche Einrichtungen und ihre Arbeitsplätze*, at the Catholic University, Eichstätt, 5-6 March; at the meeting co-organised by COMECE and CCEE on the *Contribution of the Catholic Church to Reconciliation and Stability in South-East Europe*, 14-15 March; at a CSU organised lecture on *Daseinsvorsorge in Europa – Für eine ordnungspolitische Perspektive*, Brussels, 26 March; at the study session on *Archivi e*

*biblioteche ecclesiastiche dopo l'intesa tra il Ministero per i beni culturali e le attività culturali e la Conferenza Episcopale Italiana*, 2-3 April; at a study day on EU issues for French priests, *Chemins d'humanité*, Brussels, 23 April; at a colloquium, *Transatlantic Exchange on Religious Co-Existence in a Church – State Context*, Washington DC, 25-26 April; at the Joint Public Hearing, *Shaping the Strategy for a Sustainable EU – View from civil society and public authorities*, Brussels, 26 April; at a seminar, *Croyance Religieuses, Morales et Ethiques*, organised by the Commissariat Général de Plan, Paris 5 May; a study session with the members of the Dutch Bishops Conference, Utrecht, 8 May; international conference, organised by the Giovanni Agnelli Foundation and the University of Milan on *Rights and Religion in Post-Communist Europe*, Turin, 10-11 May; contributions to the programme for the visit to EU on the part of the Social Ethics Institute of the Faculty of Catholic Theology, (Vienna), in Brussels, 09-13 May; presentations on the work of COMECE and on particular EU policy matters to the Commission Episcopale de la Mission Universelle de la Conférence des Evêques de France (CEMU), Paris, 16 May; the second Caritas Europe Enlargement Conference, *The Third Sector and the Future of Care Provisions in the Candidate Countries*, Brussels, 14-17 May; at a Council of Europe Human Rights Education seminar, *Violence against Young Women in Europe*, Budapest 24-26 May; at a public workshop on the review of the Television Without Frontiers Directive, Brussels, 29-30 May; at a seminar, for clergy and laity of the diocese of Koszalin/Kolobrzeg, Koszalin, Poland, 7-8 June; at an ecumenical conference on the Arms Trade, 15-16 June, Göteborg, Sweden; at the Fifth Dialogue meeting between the EPP Group and the Orthodox Churches, 7-8 June; at the study seminar, *Idee per una Costituzione europea*, at the Faculty of Law at the LUMSA University, Rome, 16 June; at the OSCE seminar on *Freedom of Religion*, The Hague, 26 June; on the occasion of the visit of Church leaders to the EU institutions, Brussels, 2 July; presentation to a Hearing organised by the EP Temporary Committee on the Human Genome, 09-10 July; a presentation to members of the Association Voyages et Pèlerinages de Lugny, 26 July; a presentation to the German-Polish students' summer school, Berlin, 20 August; presentations to the Renovabis international Congress, *Europa wächst zusammen – aber wie? Kirche und europäische Integration*, Freising, 30 August-01 September; a contribution to the Ecumenical Youth Council meeting, Valbeek, Belgium, 27-28 August; address to a conference on *Europe and the Catholic Church*, Magdeburg, 01 September; contributions to the study day for staff members of the secretariat of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Brussels, 11 September; contribution to the Vladaton initiative seminar, *Changing the teaching culture about the Balkans*, Sofia, 8-11 September; a seminar on Life Long Learning, Brussels, 9-10 September; address to the international conference, *The Consciousness of the European Identity, The role of the Catholic Church in the Process of European Integration*, Cracow, 14-15 September; presentations to a group of priests from the diocese of Koszalin, Poland, Brussels, 09 October; contribution to a seminar, *Quelle bio-éthique pour l'Europe*, organised by Mme. Hrmange, Member of the European Parliament, Paris 18 October; contributions to a seminar, *Les rôles des institutions religieuses dans la construction européenne et dans les sociétés belges et hongroise – approches croisées*, UCL, Louvain-la Neuve, 08-09 November; contribution to the Caritas Europa Migratin Forum, Prague, 08-09 November; contributions to the symposium, *Legal Aspects of the relations between the EU of the future and the communities of faith and conviction*, organised by the initiative Soul for Europe, Brussels, 12-13 November; an exchange M. Ethem Kislali, elected

member of the Executive of Muslims in Belgium, Brussels, 09 November; attendance at the Semaines Sociales de France, *Biologie, médecine et société: que ferons-nous de l'homme*, 23-25 November; presence at the annual Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast at the European Parliament, Brussels, 28 November; observation at an afternoon event in the EP entitled, *The Role of Religion in International Policy Making*, Brussels, 28 November; participation in a seminar, *L'Eglise catholique en France et la loi 1901*, at the Institut Catholique, 30 November, Paris; presentations to a seminar for Orthodox academics from Moscow, St. Petersburg, L'viv, Minsk and Riga on *Die europäische Integration und die Kirchen in Osteuropa*, Brussels, 28 November – 02 December; presentations to seminar for Hochschule students from Bremen, Brussels, 05 December; presentation to representatives of the European Scouts, Brussels, 4 December; a seminar in the COMECE secretariat on the COMECE statement, *A Stable Monetary Union, Hope for a Europe of Solidarity* for the Celliers, Groupe Européen and others, Brussels, 5 December; presentation to the Asylpolitisches Forum, Mülheim an der Ruhr, 7-9 December; participation in a seminar, *Europe and Refugees, Freedom, Security, and Justice ?* organised by ECRE, 10 December; contribution seminar organised by the office of the Commissioner for Human Rights on *The Exercise of the right to Freedom of Religion in Church-State Relations*, Strasbourg, 10-11 December; representation of COMECE (Bishop A. Van Luyn) and participation in the meeting at the Secretariat of State, *Futuro dei Cristiani in Terra Santa*, Rome 13 December; participation in the Life Sciences Discussion Platform, *Stem Cells: Therapies for the Future ?* Brussels, 18-19 December; attendance at lecture by Cardinal Lehmann at the EKD office on the occasion of a reception organised by the EKD and the Katholisches Büro, (Berlin), Brussels, 18 December; participation in a seminar, *Das Staat-Kirche-Verhältnis in den Adalbertländern, Erfahrungen und Perspektiven*, Bischöfliche Akademie, Aachen, 19 December; participation in an inter-faith meeting, organised by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, entitled *The Peace of God in the World; Towards peaceful Co-Existence and Collaboration among the three Monotheistic Religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, where the President, Bishop Homeyer delivered an address, 19-20 December; discussion with Fr. J. Vermeulen, chaplain to Action Catholique des milieux Indépendents, Belgium, Brussels, 21 December.

## **5. THE TEACHING OF RELIGION IN THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS**

- 5.1. In matters pertaining to the content of the teaching of the Catholic faith in the nine European schools located in various Member States, COMECE is recognised by the *Conseil Supérieur* of European schools as the representative of the interests of the local Bishops.
- 5.2. Apart from the abiding challenge of finding suitable teachers for the various linguistic sections in these schools, the teaching of religion in the nine schools proceeded calmly and efficiently. Serious administrative difficulties were not encountered during the course of the year.
- 5.3. The Secretary General of COMECE monitored developments in respect of the teaching of religion in the European schools. Meetings were held with the COMECE adviser for the teaching of religion in the European schools at the secretariat on 11 January, 25 October, and 4 December.

- 5.4. A letter was sent in December to the Bishops who have care of a European School to appraise them of impending reforms in these schools and their possible consequences for the teaching of religion.
- 5.5 This sphere of COMECE's responsibility will require attention in 2002 and in the coming years in the perspective of EU enlargement. The probable increase in pupil numbers will have consequences for the European schools' budget. It will be necessary to ensure that the provisions for the teaching of religion in these schools are maintained.

## 6. ECUMENICAL CONTACTS AND COLLABORATION

- 6.1. Throughout the year contacts were maintained with the secretariat of the Commission for Church and Society (CSC) of the Conference of European Churches, with the Brussels office of the Orthodox Church, with the office of the Greek Orthodox Church, and with the office of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD).
- 6.2. In co-operation with the Commission for Church and Society of the Conference of European Churches, the COMECE secretariat assisted the relevant services of the EU institutions in preparing information visits for ecumenical groups of church leaders to Brussels.
- 6.3. In the series of visits to the Orthodox Churches, the President visited His Beatitude the Patriarch Maxim in Sofia, 14-16 February. After a meeting with the Bishop' Conference of Bulgaria and the Apostolic Nuncio, S.E. Archbishop A. Mennini, the President met with members of the theology faculty, with representatives of the Academy of Science of Bulgaria and with members of the Synod. He also met with the Great Mufti of Bulgaria, Selim Mumin Mehmed. At the end of his visit he met with the Head of Mission, Mr. J. Wunenburger and members of the staff. He was also received at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The President and his delegation proceeded to Istanbul for a visit to His All Holiness Bartholomaios, 17-18 February. At the Fener he continued his discussion with his All Holiness on the role of the Churches in Europe and relations with the Orthodox Churches. He also met with advisers to the Ecumenical Patriarch and included in his programme visits to the German-speaking parish and community in Istanbul.
- 6.4. Throughout the year staff members received ecumenical groups from the Member States and the candidate countries at the secretariat. As already indicated they took part in two seminars organised by the Vladaton initiative for south-east Europe on in Thessaloniki, 10-14 January and in Sofia 8-10 September. The secretariat was also represented in the programme of events to launch the *Charta Oecumenica*, in Strasbourg, 20-22 April. COMECE was represented at the ecumenical conference on the Arms Trade, 15-16 June in Göteborg.
- 6.5. The meeting of the Joint Committee between COMECE and the Commission for Church and Society of the CEC took place in Brussels on 5 February. The Voice President Bishop A. van Luyn, the Secretary General and Fr. P. Daly represented

COMECE. The agenda included a review of past and current co-operation on EU policy issues, a discussion of the *Charta Oecumenica*, EU governance, structured dialogue with the EU and other issues including sustainable development and a review of the European commission Work Programme for 2001.

- 6.6. COMECE participated in the Fifth Dialogue between the Orthodox Churches and the EPP Group in the European Parliament, Orthodox Academy, Chania, Crete, 07-08 June on the theme of *Fundamental and Human Rights and civil society, the Role of the Church and of the State*.
- 6.7. Staff members took part in ecumenical prayer breakfasts at the European Parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg. Assistance was given to European Parliament officials to prepare the Ecumenical Prayer Service for the deceased members of the EPP group during the November Plenary meeting. A member of the COMECE staff officiated with clergy of other Christian denominations at the service.
- 6.8. Numerous meetings of the initiative *Soul for Europe* were attended during the course of the year. These meetings dwelt for the main part on the future and viability of this initiative. In the second part of the year a seminar entitled, *Legal Aspects of the relation between the EU of the future and the communities of faith and conviction*, was prepared. It took place in the Borschette building of the European Commission on 12-13 November.

## **7. COLLABORATION WITH CCEE AND THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCES**

- 7.1. The Presidia of COMECE and CCEE met on 4-5 November in Mainz. Issues on the agenda were: exchange of information, the report to COMECE on Global Governance, the role of Episcopal Conferences in promoting reconciliation, stability and peace in the Balkans, areas of co-operation between the secretariats.
- 7.2. Regular contacts and exchange of information were maintained between the secretariats of COMECE and CCEE. The Secretary General attended the annual meeting of the General Secretaries of the Bishop' Conferences in Prague, 21-24 June. the Vice-President, Bishop A. van Luyn and the General Secretary of COMECE attended and contributed to the CCEE Plenary meeting in Strasbourg 18-19 April 2001.
- 7.3. The Secretary General of CCEE attended the Plenary meetings of COMECE and reported on the activities of CCEE.
- 7.4. As a member of the CCEE-KEK Joint Committee the Secretary General of COMECE attended its meeting in Porto, 26-28 January.
- 7.5. Several enquiries from the Bishops' Conferences regarding EU policy issues were dealt with. The secretariat played a vital role in keeping the services of Bishop' Conferences informed of developments in the negotiations on the draft Directive on non-discrimination in work and occupation in the final weeks of the negotiations in September and October 2000.

- 7.6. As a contribution to building up a sense of European identity among younger professional assistants and advisors in the secretariats of the Episcopal Conferences in the Member States and in the candidate countries, the COMECE secretariat organised a third summer university, *Globalisation, Challenges for the Church, Society and Government*, at the St. Jacobushaus, Goslar, Germany, 2-5 October. Some forty persons working in the services of the Bishop' Conferences took part. Presentations were made by Mr. T. Lukas, Minister of Education for the Republic of Estonia, Mr. M. Hildebrand, Corporate Strategies, Deutsche Telekom. On the basis of statements by Dr. K. Driever, Director of New Media, Weltbild Verlag GmbH, Augsburg, M. Hildebrand, and P. Hans Langendörfer, Secretary Germany Bishops' Conference a discussion was animated by Mr. R. Convery. The President of COMECE addressed the participants on the subject, *The European Union: an answer to globalisation – apolitical and socio-ethical necessity*. A further discussion took place on the basis of contributions by Dr. I. Lipowicz, Ambassador of Poland to Austria and by F. Villeroy de Galhau, Director General of taxation, Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry, France. Thereafter participants visited and had discussions with management at Volkswagen AG, Wolfsburg. A final address was delivered by Archbishop D. Martin on *The Catholic Church as the first global player – the open market for ideas, values and philosophies and the truth of faith*.
- 7.7. The Secretary General visited the secretariat of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington DC on 23 April. In the course of a one day programme he presented the work of COMECE, its recent initiative regarding Governance of the EU, the Church's interest and concerns regarding the debate on the future of Europe, and the preparation of the report on Global Governance. He received briefings on the policy work of the NCCB. He visited officials at the State Department, as arranged by its secretariat.

## **8. LOOKING FORWARD TO 2002**

- 8.1. COMECE and its secretariat will continue to monitor European Union policy-making on behalf of the Bishop' Conferences of the Member States and of the candidate countries.
- 8.2. The work of the Convention, which will begin on 28 February 2002, will be monitored by the secretariat. Briefing sessions will be organised by the secretariat for Church agencies after the meetings of the Convention. An "ad hoc" Working Group, chaired by Bishop A. Nicora, will be created to prepare a submission and resource appropriate input. The Episcopal Conferences of the Member States and the candidate countries will be kept abreast of the development of the work of the Convention.
- 8.3. A seminar in Brussels on Agricultural Policy and Rural Development for Bishops from candidate countries will be co-organised with the Commissioner Fischler's cabinet and DG Agriculture.
- 8.4. The secretariat will co-organise an academic session with the Catholic University, Lille, and Archbishop G. Defois, Lille, entitled: *Meeting its global responsibilities and its citizens' expectations, Challenges for a United Europe*, in March 2002.

- 8.5. A Social Congress will be co-organised with the Spanish Bishops' Conference and CELAM in Madrid on 13-14 May with a view to making input to the EU-Latin American summit.
- 8.6. A second encounter between COMECE Bishops and Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church will take place in Marienrode, Germany.
- 8.7. A fourth summer university, to be held in Slovenia, will be prepared.
- 8.8. With reference to developments in CFSP, a COMECE Electronic Network on Foreign and Security Policy will be launched.
- 8.9. In the context of ESDP, a seminar on the ethics of intervention will be held at the secretariat.
- 8.10. A meeting will be co-organised with CCEE for the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences of South – East Europe.
- 8.11. A special issue of *Europe-Infos* on the European Convention will be published in May 2002.
- 8.12. COMECE will be represented at the meeting of the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on the situation in the Middle East with the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of the Holy Land, 21-24 January 2002.
- 8.13. COMECE will be represented at the conference *Humanizing the Global Economy*, co-organised by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, CELAM and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in Washington, 28-30 January 2002.
- 8.14. The series of evening lectures will be continued.
- 8.15. The COMECE website will be launched.

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