

# 2013



## ANNUAL REPORT 2013

COMMISSION OF THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCES  
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY



# COMECE ANNUAL REPORT 2013

<b>1</b>	<b>Foreword</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Standing Committee</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>COMECE Plenary Assemblies</b>	<b>2</b>
3.1	Extraordinary 2013	3
3.2	Autumn 2013	3
<b>4</b>	<b>Working Groups</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1	Social Affairs Commission	5
4.2	Working group on Migration	5
4.3	Bioethics Reflection Group	5
4.4	Legal Affairs Commission	6
<b>5</b>	<b>Initiatives &amp; Events</b>	<b>7</b>
5.1	The Week for Hope	7
5.2	International Summer School Seggau	7
5.3	Colloquium in Mönchengladbach	8
5.4	Visit of the Belgian Bishops' Conference	8
5.5	Visit of the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference	8
5.6	Series of Conferences at the Chapel for Europe	9
<b>6</b>	<b>Dialogue with the EU</b>	<b>10</b>
6.1	Summit meeting of religious leaders	10
6.2	Presidency meeting	11
6.3	Dialogue Seminars	11
6.4	Seminars at the EU Parliament	13
6.5	Other Dialogue Opportunities	14
<b>7</b>	<b>List of activities</b>	<b>15</b>
7.1	Consultations	15
7.2	Visitor groups	15
<b>8</b>	<b>Communication and Information Policy</b>	<b>16</b>
8.1	Publications	16
8.2	Europeinfos	17
8.3	Press releases	17
<b>9</b>	<b>Finances</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>General information</b>	<b>18</b>
10.1	Members	18
10.2	Secretariat	19



Reinhard Cardinal Marx

*Brussels, February 2014***Dear Readers,**

Events in Rome impinged on the life of COMECE more than is usually the case during 2013. Our Spring plenary assembly had to be cancelled on account of a surprise conclave. A new pope was elected on the very day our Plenary was set to open! Right from the outset, Pope Francis, the first non-European pope in over one thousand five hundred years, started setting a fresh and challenging agenda. Not only did we have to re-arrange our schedule, but we will also have to look at COMECE's own mission and fine-tune the voice with which we speak to the European institutions and the EU citizens in order to translate the new vision of Pope Francis into a message which speaks to and challenges those who are fashioning the European Union of tomorrow.

Our new pope has set to awaken the Christian conscience to a number of central socio-political issues, he has given them a human face, and provided a sense of fresh urgency to the on-going search for solutions to what we are still calling a "crisis". The questions of poverty, social inclusion, migration and youth unemployment are central matters of preoccupation within the EU.

Pope Francis received the Standing Committee of COMECE, together with our new General Secretary at the close of our Extraordinary Plenary in Rome last May. As President, I spoke of the current crisis and of the main areas in which collateral damage of the banking-economic turn-down was affecting society. I also shared with the Holy Father my conviction, from personal contacts and from what I had read in the press, that politicians and those working at every level in the EU were looking to the Church for guidance and, most important, were open to receiving it. The leadership from our new pope on these matters could make a huge difference. My fellow bishops spoke of particular areas of EU policy that were of concern to them, while our General Secretary reported to the pope on the current COMECE work programme.

Questions have been asked during these past few years, since the crisis began, concerning the voice of Christian concern in the European debate. Perhaps we have been a little timid or reluctant to take

too strong a line on coming up with "solutions". Individual bishops, we know, have spoken up; bishops' conferences have addressed some of the urgent EU policy issues as they have affected their own countries; and we, as COMECE, have taken a strong position on a number of EU-related questions in the very recent past. But the question we still face is: what are the Churches doing? What are the Churches saying in these challenging times?

As this Annual Report shows, COMECE is active in many domains, a lot of work by the Church to enable debate within the European forum and to accompany the architects of the Europe of tomorrow is being done, sometimes quietly and unobtrusively. It may be low-key but it is my conviction that it makes a positive difference. The COMECE Secretariat continues to present the Church's case for a more just, fair and inclusive Europe which respects the fundamental principles of Catholic social teaching in many different contexts and to a variety of audiences both in Brussels and beyond.

There is a growing conviction within the EU that the traditional solutions are not working in the present crisis. Growth figures welcomed by leading financial journals and newspapers such as The FT and The Economist as indicators of economic recovery are no longer reflective of the real economic situation in most Member States. The fact is that neither statesmen, politicians nor civil servants really know how to move out of the crisis.

There is little creative thinking which takes account of the ethical principles which need to be at the basis of a free, democratic, prosperous society which is open and just. We must reflect on whether this is an area where COMECE can be pro-active and where the Church can fulfil its mission of service to the European project.

**+ Reinhard Cardinal Marx**  
**Archbishop of Munich and Freising**  
**President of COMECE**



## 2 | STANDING COMMITTEE

### 2.1 | Report on the meetings

The Standing Committee of COMECE consists of the President, Cardinal Marx, and three Vice-Presidents: Mgr Jean Kockerols (Auxiliary Bishop of Brussels-Malines, Belgium), Mgr Gianni Ambrosio (Bishop of Piacenza-Bobbio, Italy) and Mgr Virgil Bercea (Bishop of Oradea Mare, Romania). Mgr Jean Kockerols is designated by the Standing Committee as First Vice-President, with the task of chairing meetings of the Assembly and of the Standing Committee, when the President is legitimately impeded. The Standing Committee of COMECE met on four occasions in 2013: on 23 January, 11 September, 13 November in Brussels; on 21 and 23 May in Rome. The Apostolic Nuncio to the European Communities Mgr Alain Lepeaupin was invited to attend these meetings according to the statutes.

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 Standing Committee prepared the material for submission to the Assembly for examination, took care of the implementation phase of the Assembly's decisions, gave its approval of the administrative system and agreed the proper balance between operating expenses and available resources.

### 2.2 | Pope Francis receives COMECE in private audience

**23 May 2013**

His Holiness Pope Francis received in a private audience the Standing Committee of COMECE. The delegation was led by its President, Reinhard Cardinal Marx. During their half an hour together the Pope, the bishops and their General Secretary discussed the current economic crisis in Europe, its social impact and the challenge to the Church to transmit a message of hope to the citizens of Europe. The Holy Father showed a profound appreciation of the Christian roots of Europe and asked the bishops to convey a message of encouragement to all who work to further the European project. He emphasised how essential it was to bear witness to God, especially in the current European situation. Pope Francis assured the COMECE Bishops of his interest in and support for their mission.



Pope Francis and Cardinal Marx

### 2.3 | Portrait of the New COMECE General Secretary

**1st February 2013**

Father Patrick H. Daly was appointed as the new General Secretary of COMECE by the Bishops of COMECE on 23 November 2012, on the occasion of their Autumn Plenary. Fr Daly commenced his work at COMECE on Friday 1 February. On his first working day, he stated:

*“Together with the team here at the Secretariat, I look forward to serving the Bishops of COMECE, the national conferences they represent, and in co-operation with the wide range of Catholic agencies and religious orders with an antennae here in Brussels, and together with our ecumenical partners, to articulating the Catholic voice and to facilitating the Christian contribution to the realization of the European project. It is my hope that my long years living in continental Europe, my rich and varied pastoral experience as a diocesan priest in the UK, my previous involvement in the work and mission of COMECE will enable me to serve the Church in Europe and the European project itself in an open, positive and constructive way in the years ahead.”*

Patrick Daly was born in Dublin in May 1951, and grew up in Sligo. He received his secondary education from the Jesuits, studied at University College Dublin (UCD) and, thanks to a generous postgraduate scholarship from the Belgian (Flemish) Ministry of Culture, attained a PhD in Medieval History at Louvain. Between 1981 and 1987 he worked as an interpreter on the staff of the European Commission. After four years as a student for the Birmingham Diocese at the Beda College, Rome, he was ordained priest by the late Archbishop Maurice Couve de Murville on 5 April 1991. Archbishop Maurice represented the English & Welsh bishops on COMECE in the 1990's and, from 1992, involved Fr Daly in this side of his work, both by allowing him to accompany him to COMECE plenary meetings in Brussels and by involving him in the work of the European Affairs Committee of the English & Welsh Bishops' Conference in London.

After two years as a curate, from 1993 until 2013, Fr Daly was a full-time parish priest, first at St. Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, and since 1999 at St. Peter & St. Paul, Wolverhampton.



Fr Patrick H. Daly

# 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.



Cardinal Marx

## 3.1 | Extraordinary Spring Plenary Assembly

### 22 May in Rome

The Plenary Assembly was held in unusual circumstances because the scheduled Plenary had to be deferred on account of the conclave following the retirement of Pope Benedict XVI which elected Pope Francis. The new General Secretary was welcomed to this, his first Plenary. The meeting lasted but one day.

Cardinal Reinhard Marx, President of COMECE, gave a wide-ranging address on the current state of Europe, highlighting the plight of the young and their employment prospects, the social fall-out of the economic crisis and the dangers of rising nationalism in many parts of the EU. The Cardinal paid tribute to the contribution Pope Benedict XVI had made to Europe, especially in the way he had highlighted Christian values. He welcomed too the openness displayed by the new pope and how Pope Francis had created a high level of expectation at the outset of his pontificate. The Cardinal drew attention to how important it was for the EU to consider its role in the area of international relations.

The new General Secretary presented a brief report on his first few months in post, emphasising how well established a place and respected a role COMECE had in Brussels.

The Apostolic Nuncio to the EU, Mgr. Alain Lebeaupin, making his address to the Plenary, pleaded for closer co-operation between the member bishops' conferences and COMECE, but stressed too how important it was for them to raise the issue of Europe at national level. The meeting closed with a brief report from the bishops present on the situation in their respective countries.



Mgr Alain Lebeaupin and Mgr Jean Kockerols

## 3.2 | Autumn Plenary Assembly

### 13-15 November

The COMECE Bishops studied the contemporary phenomenon of migration and asylum in the EU at their Autumn Plenary meeting from 13 to 15 November in Brussels.

### A humane approach to migration

An important distinction must be kept in mind between regular and irregular migration. The bishops feel that the legal provisions, which must in all cases be respected, need greater flexibility and a sensitivity to human needs.

A European Commission official from DG Home briefed the bishops on the current legal framework within which the issue of migration and asylum is addressed. Even though there are legal instruments which in theory apply across the board, there is a disparity between Member States in the way they are put into effect. Countries which border on the Mediterranean feel they carry too much of the burden. The bishops received a letter from their brother bishops in Malta asking for solidarity with their country. Solidarity between all EU Member States is essential.

Should peaceful circumstances or social and economic conditions in their countries of origin permit it, most people who at present opt to migrate would prefer to stay and make lives for themselves and their families at home. Greater outside assistance to countries of origin might entice would-be migrants to stay in their native land. The bishops were of the view that coordinated assistance to countries of origin and support to countries of transit are needed to stem a migratory flow. Therefore a more coherent EU migration policy, coordinated with other policies of the Union (such as trade, cooperation aid and foreign affairs), is necessary.

COMECE insists on a more humane approach to migration and asylum and would hope to contribute from 2014 to the reshaping of the future home affairs policy of the EU.





Autumn Plenary Assembly

The bishops were briefed on the practical experience of the Community of Madrid concerning the integration of migrants. Regional and local authorities are key actors in integrating migrants. Parishes can also play a crucial role in welcoming and integrating migrants.

#### **Human trafficking is a scandal**

It is reckoned that in the EU at the present time there are an estimated 880,000 victims of human trafficking. Many are engaged in forced labour, in the sex industry or are victims of organ trafficking. Modern slavery, a spin-off of unregulated migration, is hugely lucrative.

The bishops listened to a moving testimony of a trafficked woman from the Sophie Hayes Foundation, and they also heard of the successful fight against crime and the rescue and rehabilitation programme which resulted from the partnership operated by the trafficking unit of Scotland Yard and the Catholic Bishops Conference of England & Wales. It was felt that this model of good practice and hands-on partnership, which is functioning so successfully in the UK, could be shared with Catholic bishops and their agencies, and espe-



Mgr Jourdan and one of Speakers to the Plenary Assembly

cially with groups of women religious, in other Member States of the EU.

#### **A Church that is hospitable**

COMECE Bishops are worried about xenophobia directed against migrants in some parts of Europe. This is a legitimate concern. The bishops emphasise however that migrants present an opportunity for our societies and parishes in terms of the talents, cultures and skills that they contribute. It is essential in their view that parish communities throughout Europe welcome migrants and do all they can to make them feel at home.

## 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 Mgr Gianni Ambrosio, Vice-President 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.

The Social Affairs Commission did not meet in 2013.

### 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 Migration field, often in dialogue with representatives of the EU institutions.

#### Meeting of the 27 February

The meeting started with a briefing by a representative from the EU External Action service on the global issues of Migration and EU Foreign Policy in the Middle East and North Africa. It was followed by a presentation on current Initiatives of the EU in the field of Migration and Integration, by a representative of the DG Home Affairs (EU Commission). Finally, the participants discussed the current situation on the Common European Asylum System with a Member of the EU Parliament, as well as the EURODAC system for the comparison of fingerprints of third-country nationals or stateless applicants.

### 4.3 | Bioethics Reflection Group

The Group is composed of experts from a number of EU Member States chosen to provide a multi-disciplinary exchange of views. Expertise ranges from theology and philosophy to law and medicine. Its meetings are also able to count on expert guest speakers who are invited to provide the Group with more specific knowledge, depending on the main topic in question. Since it was established in 1996, the Group has issued 24 Reports and/or Opinions on subjects such as stem cell research, biotechnological patenting, organ donation, 'sexual and reproductive health', clinical trials and in vitro diagnostic medical devices.

#### Meeting of 28 February-1 March

The first day was devoted to hearing two specialists on gender

theory: Aurica Nutt (Theologian – Gender Studies, University of Munster) and Fr. Bruno Saintôt SJ (Département d'éthique biomédicale, Centre Sèvres, Paris). On the second day the Group studied the European Commission's Proposals for Regulations on Medical devices and in vitro Diagnostic Medical Devices, with a view to publishing an Opinion. Guest speakers were: Elitsa Mincheva (European Commission, DG Health) and Agustín Losada Pescador (Doctor in Law, Complutense University of Madrid). The Opinion was published on 6 September 2013.



José Ramos Ascensão, COMECE, meeting Pope Francis





Legal Affairs

#### Meeting of 21 October

After a round-table updating on bioethics issues in EU Member States, the Group discussed the main topic: gender theory. Guest speakers were: Mgr. Tony Anatrella (Psychoanalyst, expert in Social Psychiatics) and Grégor Puppink, (Director General of the European Centre for Law and Justice - ECLJ). An Opinion on the topic is now being drafted, with the assistance of Fr. Bruno Saintôt.

## 4.4 | Legal Affairs Commission

**The Legal Affairs Commission is a forum for discussion and exchange of information on legal and political matters pertaining inter alia to the institutional setting of the European Union, fundamental rights issues and equal treatment, dialogue between the EU and Churches, employment law and civil justice. It is composed of legal experts delegated by the Bishops' Conferences of EU Member States. Currently it consists of 14 members meeting three times a year at the COMECE offices in Brussels. Officials of the European institutions are usually invited as external experts. These meetings also contribute to maintaining an open, transparent and regular dialogue between Churches and the EU. Each meeting starts with a round-table discussion allowing the members to present recent developments of importance for the Church in their respective countries.**

#### Meeting of 19 February

The members of the Commission were briefed by an official of the EU Commission about the European Court of Human Rights' decision *Eweida and Others v. The United Kingdom* relating to freedom of religion in the workplace. The decision was assessed as sound. During the discussion, the following elements emerged: the difference between public authorities and private employers as to the fulfilment of duties; the need to deepen the reflection on freedom of religion; a reasonable accommodation on religious grounds was considered as a solution to be explored.

An official from the European Trade Unions organisation ETUC was then invited to present the negative outcome of negotiations on the Working Time Directive. On Sunday protection, the speaker stated that the ETUC could become more



Plenary of the EU Parliament © europarl.europa.eu

active in the future. Members were updated on the Common European Asylum System and reflected on the topics, themes and work of the Legal Affairs Commission.

#### Meeting of 25 June

An official from the European Commission was invited to present the EU Ombudsman Decision on the application of Article 17(3) TFEU and the relevant guidelines being prepared by the Commission. Other points that were addressed were the state of play on data protection reform and the proposed simplification of acceptance of public documents in the EU.

#### Meeting of 29 October

The project of a 'rule of law mechanism' under discussion by the Commission was presented by an EU official to the members. Possible innovations of this new mechanism include formal notices for rule of law crises and easier conditions for the Article 7 TEU mechanism. An official from the Italian Permanent Representation to the EU presented the Commission's state aid decision on fiscal benefits for non-commercial entities in Italy. EU rules were explained to the members and linked with parts of the decision (e.g. impact on local actors and on non-profit entities). Members were also updated on the LIBE Committee vote on data protection reform.



## 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 | Week for Hope

#### 24-27 June

The Week for Hope was a festival organised by COMECE to honour the tenth anniversary of *Ecclesia in Europa*. Precisely ten years ago, on 28 June 2003 the late Pope John Paul II published *Ecclesia in Europa*, an apostolic letter to the people of Europe. The Pope insisted that the Church in Europe must be a Church for Europe. The Week for Hope was intended to give fresh hope at a very difficult time, when the founding vision has been eclipsed by the dramatic side-effects of the economic crisis and by the rising spectres of nationalism, populism and xenophobia.

The Week for Hope opened on Monday 24 June and closed four days later on the evening of Thursday 27 June. The festival put the spotlight on a selection of saints, the blessed and men and women of heroic virtue who, either in their teaching or by the example of their lives, bear witness to the virtues and incarnate the values which are at the heart of the European dream.

The programme of the Week for Hope consisted of four prayer breakfasts at the Chapel for Europe. In the spotlight on successive mornings were Blessed Jerzy Popieluszko, Blessed Hildegard Burjan, Christian de Cherge (prior of the Trappist community and who, along with fellow monks, was murdered in Algeria), and St. Pedro Poveda, a Spanish pioneer of the lay apostolate.

In the middle of the day, this time at the COMECE Secretariat offices, there was a series of four lunch debates, jointly owned

by a number of NGO friends (CIDSE, El Kalima, UNIAPAC, Don Bosco International etc) which again focused on saints or Christians renowned for their great virtue. Their lives were studied as a key to understanding issues which are high on the current EU policy agenda: education of the young, business ethics, sustainability and freedom of movement, whether of citizens or migrants. The figures looked at included two cardinals (John Henry Newman and Joseph Cardijn), a nun (Hildegard of Bingen) and two preachers (Bernadine of Siena and Willibrord).

At the Dominican church, ten minutes' walk from the Berlaymont and Charlemagne buildings, two evening discussions were on the programme. The recently beatified Sicilian priest, don Pino Puglisi, who stood up to the Mafia and paid with his life, prompted a reflection on the phenomenon of organised crime and what measures the EU is taking to combat it. The Blessed Karl Leisner, a German seminarian who was raised to the priesthood in a clandestine ordination conferred in Dachau by the French archbishop, Gabriel Piguët, focused on a spiritual ingredient – namely, reconciliation – without which the construction of the new Europe would have been impossible.

The Week for Hope closed with a Mass for Europe, with the Apostolic Nuncio to the EU, Monsignor Alain Lebeaupin, as main celebrant in the Eglise de Notre-Dame du Sablon, on the evening of 27 June.



Week for Hope, morning prayer



Week for Hope, Lunch debate

## 5.2 | Summer School in Seggau

30 June-13 July

COMECE co-organised the 8th International Summer School in Austria, designed for internationally oriented students who wish to deepen their understanding of current European affairs.

For a number of years COMECE has co-organised and co-sponsored a summer university together with the University of Graz and the Diocese of Graz/Seckau in the southern Austrian province of Carinthia. The summer university, held in the episcopal domain of Seggau, with its imposing castle and former farm buildings, now a multi-purpose diocesan resource centre, gathers a hundred or so students and professors from universities and third-level institutions in Europe and further afield. This year the majority of the students were from the eastern part of Europe, with a large contingent from the Balkans.

The 2013 summer university focused on the question of European identity. It set out the commonly accepted components of this identity (printed in a variety of sizes and colours on a signature post card) under the magnifying glass of analytic scrutiny. Professors and guest lecturers explored models of democratic government (Canada and its federal structures received particular attention), parliamentary traditions, patterns of temporary population movement, long-term migration and integration. And the questions they kept putting to the students and which they asked of themselves and one another: who am I? If I define myself as European, what does that imply for me – and for the Europe of tomorrow?

## 5.3 | Colloquium in Mönchengladbach: What holds Europe together ?

14 – 15 June 2013

For several years the COMECE Secretariat has been involved, together with the *Katholische Sozialwissenschaftliche Zentralstelle*, in the organisation of the *Mönchengladbacher Gespräche*. (Discussion session in Mönchengladbach). From 14 -

15 June about one hundred experts in the Social Teaching of the Church gathered in the mayor's hall of Mönchengladbach to debate the theme "What holds Europe together?"

The main speakers on the first day of the event were H.E. Archbishop Gabriel Perisset, the apostolic nuncio in Berlin, Professor Remy Brague who teaches in Berlin and Paris. Prof. Ursula Nothelle-Wildfeuer, Prof. Dr. Martin Schlag and Dr. Mykhyllo Melnyk responded to the two keynote speeches. The second day opened with a Mass in the crypt of the Basilica in Mönchengladbach. The main speakers of the day were H.E. Marek Prawda, Permanent Representative of Poland to the European Union and Mr Henning Stein from the Bertelsmann Foundation. Prof. Dr. Stanislaw Fel from Lublin and Dr. Stephen Bartulica from Zagreb added their comments to the main speeches. In his concluding remarks Rev. Patrick Daly, General Secretary of COMECE stressed that the Christian heritage continues to be an important link between European nations.

## 5.4 | Visit of Belgian Bishops' Conference

10 October

Led by the Archbishops of Mechelen-Brussels, Mgr. Andre-Joseph Leonard, the entire Bishops' Conference of Belgium, paid a visit to the COMECE Secretariat on 10 October. The bishops were joined at lunch by His Eminence, Reinhard Cardinal Marx, President of COMECE. The formal part of the visit took up most of the afternoon. The bishops were welcomed by the General Secretary who stressed how crucial the links were between COMECE, based in Brussels, and the Belgian Bishops' Conference, and mentioned his own personal links with the Church in Belgium, which he valued greatly. Colleagues from the Secretariat introduced the bishops to the workings of the EU institutions, to the specific mission of COMECE and to the major policy areas currently being worked on by the Secretariat team. The afternoon closed with an informal meeting between the Secretariat team and the visiting bishops. At the close of their meeting the Belgian bishops associated themselves with a press release issued by Cardinal Marx on EU migration policy in the light of recent events in Lampedusa.



Summerschool in Seggau



Visit of the Belgian Bishops' Conference





Visit of the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference

## 5.5 | Visit of Lithuanian Bishops' Conference

### 3 December

On the occasion of the Lithuanian EU Presidency, a delegation of Lithuanian Catholic Bishops visited the EU institutions at the invitation of COMECE.

Led by Mgr Rimantas Norvila, the Lithuanian delegate to COMECE, the six bishops came from 1 to 4 December on a fact-finding mission, eager to become familiar with the EU and its institutions. They were briefed by several Catholic NGOs. They had meetings with a number of MEPs, especially those from Lithuania, and were received by the Vice-President of the European Parliament, Mr Laszlo Surjan. They had an exchange of views at the EU Commission, with the Bureau of Policy Advisers. Finally, they met a representative from the European External Action Service (EEAS) and with the Permanent Representative of Lithuania.

Following their exchanges with the representatives of the main European institutions, they made the following statement:

*"In view of the upcoming EU elections in May 2014, we wish to express our gratitude to all that has been achieved in the last 60 years by the European integration project.*

*We are in favour of a European project, which is founded on principles of the dignity of the human person, the joint promotion of the common good, global solidarity, development of peoples and the promotion of peace, as reflected in Pacem in Terris, the encyclical Letter of Pope John XXIII which was published 50 years ago. A return to these principles would provide a proper foundation to a stronger Europe.*

*We would recall global solidarity, combined with a respect for the subsidiarity principle, as being crucial cornerstones of a community of nations which live in peace and promote the prosperity of its peoples. A Christian understanding of the family is, in our view, essential to this vision. For this reason, we have launched a Year of the Family in Lithuania.*

*We welcome the outcome of the recent Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius where considerable progress was made. However, we are concerned about the situation in Ukraine. Our prayers are with those who have gathered in the streets of Kiev and with the political leaders of both sides in Ukraine, that a peaceful and democratic solution will be found."*



Talk at the Chapel for Europe

## 5.6 | Series of Conferences at the Chapel for Europe

« Europe, Politics and beyond » is a series of Conferences in view of the European elections that was launched by the Secretariat of COMECE and the Team of the Chapel in 2013-2014. Each of the 5 Conferences drew an interested audience from the European Quarter.

### 1st October

"The Common Good" by Fr. Patrick Riordan SJ. A fundamental aim of the European project has been the pursuit of and protection of the common good. Nation states have willingly and knowingly sacrificed some of their sovereignty with a view to attaining the greater good of the whole European family. The discussion as to what constitutes the common good remains at the heart of the European political discourse. Father Patrick Riordan explored the Catholic thinking on this concept, as relevant today as it was seventy years ago.

### 11 November

In the context of the Autumn Plenary Assembly of COMECE, the second conference was dedicated to "The Migrant Experience". Europe is a continent on the move. Internal migration and migration from outside, not least in pursuit of political asylum, has impacted on the lives of all communities within all Member States and communities of the EU. The migrant is our neighbour. In order for them to feel at home within the European family we need to understand the EU from their perspective. Cecilia Taylor Camara, Senior Policy Adviser on Migration, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales, shared her experience as a migrant from Sierra Leone who had to struggle for integration in the UK.

### 3 December

The third conference was dedicated to the topic of "Security in Europe". The end of the Cold War and the threat of terrorism have radically changed European thinking on the issue of defence and security. As European integration progresses and the international balance of power changes, fresh thinking may be necessary on security issues. Archbishop Gintaras Grusas, former Military Ordinary in Lithuania, addressed these issues and explored the peace dimension of the European project. The talk given by a bishop who displayed a wide knowledge of military strategy and a pastoral experience of life for soldiers on the ground, especially in challenging terrain, was able to make his audience sensitive to the post-Cold War defence concerns from both sides of the Atlantic. The talk was particularly valuable given that defence and security were on the agenda of the EU Council a few days later.

The series continued into 2014.

## 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.



Religious leaders-EU Summit

### 6.1 | Summit of religious leaders with the EU

30 May

This year's annual EU high-level meeting of religious leaders took place on 30 May at the Commission's headquarters in Brussels, under the motto 'Putting citizens at the heart of Europe in times of change'. The meeting was hosted by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, and co-chaired by Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, and László Surján, Vice-President of the European Parliament.

The European Commission maintains an open, transparent and regular dialogue with Churches and religious communities in accordance with the Lisbon Treaty, which enshrined this dialogue into primary law (Article 17 TFEU). The high-point of this dialogue, which is also carried out at other levels, is the annual high-level meeting with senior religious leaders.

Against the background of the European Year for Citizenship 2013, participants exchanged views on, among other matters, the question of how to bring Europe closer to its citizens and how to intensify the dialogue with citizens and civil society organisations.

The Catholic Church was represented at this high level meeting by Archbishop Manuel Clemente, the Patriarch of Lisbon, Mgr Jean Kockerols, Auxiliary Bishop of Brussels and COMECE Vice-President and by Mgr Youssef Soueif, Archbishop of the Maronites and COMECE delegate of Cyprus. During the meeting, they offered their own reflections on European citizenship. Their views can best be summed up as follows:



EU Religious Leaders Summit

The contemporary notion of citizenship within the European family of nations is complex and draws on the many traditions we encounter within the EU. One of the foundational traditions is Christian and that heritage has profoundly influenced our idea of citizenship, not least in terms of the values we find at the heart of this concept.

The most important characteristic is that, in a Christian understanding of citizenship, rights must be balanced by duties, our entitlements must be paired with our civic responsibilities. In fact, the Christian should think first of duties and responsibilities and should strive to create a society which is inclusive, open and particularly sensitive to those whose full rights are not being respected or who, although living among us, enjoy none of the privileges of citizenship we take so much for granted. This challenge to the Christian conscience is even more urgent in the present time of socio-economic crisis, as is the need to inject the notion of citizenship with its proper spiritual dimension; essential if Europe is to find its "soul".

Catholics ought to consider 'active' citizenship in their neighbourhood and their countries but also in Europe, not just as a question of 'pure' political involvement but also as 'activeness', for example in charitable, volunteering institutions. This is a very important aspect of an active, 'healthy' and responsible European citizenship. The network of Catholic organisations can also play an important role in meeting this goal.

Twenty senior representatives from the Christian, Muslim and Jewish religions and from the Hindu community from all over Europe also participated in this meeting.



## 6.2 | Meeting with the Irish EU Presidency

### 8 March

A delegation of Church representatives from across Ireland and Europe met with Enda Kenny the Taoiseach (the Irish Prime Minister) in Government Buildings. The meeting carried on the tradition of regular encounters between Churches and EU Presidencies.

In a cordial and open meeting, the delegation, representing the broad spectrum of Christian traditions in Ireland, raised a number of issues for consideration by the Irish EU Presidency including the social and economic crisis in Europe and development aid policy. The group was pleased with the sensitivity to their concerns shown by the Taoiseach and the other members of his delegation.

The meeting was organised by the Irish Council of Churches on behalf of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and COMECE.

### Social Crisis in Europe

The delegation highlighted the social consequences of the severe economic crisis in the European Union and stated that those consequences were evident in the parishes of all of the Churches and were a key concern for Churches at local, regional and national levels. The Irish Churches were particularly concerned about the impact of austerity on present and future generations and on the most vulnerable in society.

While acknowledging that employment and the creation of jobs in Europe was one of the main requirements in order to overcome the crisis, the Churches highlighted the increased numbers of working poor. They urged that a common weekly day of rest, which they described as being a clear and visible sign for the reconciliation of personal, family and professional life, be included in the revision of the working time directive.

They also called for greater participation of civil society, social partners and social actors in shaping the National Reform Programmes, the National Social Reports and the Country Specific Recommendations.

### Development Aid Policy

The delegation stressed that development aid continues to transform lives and highlighted the importance of EU Member States in recommitting to meeting overseas development aid targets by 2015. However, the Churches spoke of the need to use aid to work towards a situation where countries no longer need aid. In order to reach that point, revenue authorities in developing countries need to be able to collect the appropriate amount of tax from multinational companies operating in their jurisdiction. Strengthening the capacity of revenue authorities in these countries is important, but tackling the accounting rules and financial regulations that enable this to happen is crucial, the group stated.



Meeting with the Irish EU Presidency

## 6.3 | Dialogue Seminars

### 6.3.1 Dialogue seminar on Citizenship

#### 20 June 2013

In the context of the European Year of Citizens 2013, the European Commission has sought the views of the Churches on the theme of Citizenship in the framework of the Dialogue Seminar on 20 June.

From the perspective of the European Commission, Ms Chiara Adamo (DG Justice) presented the concept and elements of EU citizenship as well as the EU Citizenship Report 2013. Subsequently, Ms Sophie Beernaerts (DG Communication) focused in particular on the 'Europe for citizens' programme.

'Why is EU Citizenship so unpopular?' wondered the COMECE Bishop for England & Wales, William Kenney. In his speech, he stressed the failure, on several political levels, to fulfil three key principles of Christian social philosophy. Solidarity: national politicians are cutting social benefits without explanation. Subsidiarity: when decisions are taken at a level which people feel is not appropriate, they lose control at that level of decision-making. Finally, human dignity: we have lost the sense that every person is equal in dignity, be it a poor fellow citizen or a migrant, and is our brother and sister.

So what are the ingredients of citizenship from a Christian point of view?

It starts with a sense of memory and attachment to one's roots. The Orthodox Archbishop of Wrocław and Szczecin Jeremiasz, President of the Polish Ecumenical Council, emphasised the importance of one's homeland, not only in the sense of relationship to a geographical place but also to a very deep spiritual dimension. For Orthodox theology that means responsibility for divinisation (*theosis*). In this sense, the close relationship to a specific place on this earth enables people to be responsible citizens in the community of the nations.

The Protestant representative, Dr Peter Schreiner, President of the InterEuropean Commission on Church and School said: “Dialogue is a value in itself that needs continuation. It is worthwhile exchanging views and arguments but there is no need to agree on everything. Also a change of perspectives is needed from “us first” to “we together” to carry on for the sake of all people in Europe in joint activities including education.”

Citizenship seems to have three dimensions: belonging, being, becoming and this last element refers to a community of destiny. Europeans belong to a fairly recent political structure which is still being developed. ‘We Christians are the architects, foot soldiers, engineers of an ambitious project which is still to be completed’ summed up Fr Daly, General Secretary of COMECE.

All these ingredients have to be bound together by two elements: a sense of rationality, since we are all interconnected (in fact and not just in feeling) and in commitment to each other. Our European citizenship emerges from this reality. However it is also grounded in the emotion and commitment to love your neighbour.

Yet, many women and men in Europe do not feel included in this citizenship, because of their vulnerability (the poor, the elderly, the disabled and the prisoners) and the ongoing EU action programmes do not always reach them. Churches and their organisations are key players in this field, by bringing together such groups and allowing them to express their concerns and needs. (For example, what Caritas Europa brings about by gathering people from vulnerable groups together in focus groups in various Member States). This leads them to the full acknowledgement of their dignity as European citizens.

But EU Citizenship does not replace national citizenship: it is complementary. Many difficulties remain among Member States in recognising the right to vote for EU Citizens who are residing in another Member State. In fact, often national governments seem to be reluctant to foster this sense of belonging to a European community: for example, the opposition of some governments to any reference to EU symbols (a European flag and anthem) in the Lisbon Treaty and to the

inclusion of the word ‘belonging’ itself in the ‘Europe for citizens’ programme.

In the context of the upcoming EU elections, Church representatives are convinced that, if citizens in Europe are given something to believe in, they will vote. This also brings up the question of the key importance of the will of the citizens in the further development and the future of the European project.

## 6.3.2 Dialogue Seminar on Climate change

21 October

In the context of the IPCC’s 5th Assessment report, and in advance of the Warsaw Climate Change Conference, a one-day seminar was held entitled “Environmental protection and climate change as a challenge for policies – the role of ethics, lifestyles, solidarity and global justice”. Organised jointly by the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and by COMECE, in collaboration with the Bureau of European Policy Advisors (BEPA), this ‘dialogue seminar’ involved expert contributors—confessional and non-confessional—participating in an open forum.

Considering the scientific evidence presented in the IPCC’s latest report, Prof. Goosse from the Catholic University of Louvain (LLN) highlighted the irrefutability of the anthropic factor in causing climate change. This indisputability was the foundation for the day’s discussion, with the disparity between simply acknowledging this fact and acting on this fact being repeatedly addressed.

As climate change is global, it is also an issue that faith-based development organisations tackle. As Janna Schönfeld of APRODEV (an association of 17 major development and humanitarian aid organisations in Europe,) affirmed: “The EU is the second biggest historical emitter of CO2 after the US. At the same time, it is one of the richest regions of the world. The EU clearly has a moral responsibility to act.” This sentiment was echoed by Bernd Nilles of CIDSE (an international



Dialogue Seminar on Climate Change



Dialogue Seminar on Citizenship: Katharina von Schnurbein, BEPA





Dialogue Seminar on Climate Change: Prof. Hugues Goosse

alliance of 16 Catholic development agencies from Europe and North America), who stated that : “Continued exploitation of fossil fuel, growth based economies and a lack of commitment to finance mitigation and adaptation put vulnerable communities at risk.” Mgr. Theotonius Gomes, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Dhaka, Bangladesh, in his video-message reaffirmed that “it is the poor who suffer because of climate injustice and climate change. We must take away from that suffering, rather than add to it.” While the resources exist to feed, clothe and house everyone, these benefits are not distributed equally—a fact which is exacerbated by geo-political borders. Solutions to the challenges we are facing as proposed by developed countries are by now far from satisfactory. Prof. Dr. Hans Diefenbacher of the University of Heidelberg highlighted the gap between the illusion of short-term economic benefits and long-term sustainable measures needed for curing continual climate degradation in a fair and equitable manner.

Martin Scheele, from the European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, emphasised the importance of increasing resource efficiency and addressing not only the production chain but also consumer behaviour (consumer awareness and the issue of ‘choice’). Acknowledging one’s own responsibility, embracing the paradigm shift towards the ‘notion of enough’ and undertaking a lifestyle change is at the crux of addressing the anthropic factor. The role of the Church in achieving this was underscored and reiterated. If the Church is to realise its potential as a driving force in changing patterns of consumption, it must first put its own house in order; even if examples of best practice demonstrate that the Church is already proactive in this respect.

Finally, the call for bold, ambitious and binding targets up to 2050 and beyond was acknowledged by Dr. Artur Runge-Metzger, Chief Climate Negotiator and Director of International & Climate Strategy at the European Commission’s DG for Climate Action who said that whatever the financial cost of increasing targets on Climate Action, it was a small price to pay for future citizens—those born and those not-yet-born.

Concluding the seminar, the representatives of Churches expressed their readiness to make significant contributions towards mitigating the effects of climate change, from the COP (Conference of the Parties) in November 2013 in Warsaw to



Dialogue Seminar on Climate Change: Michael Kuhn (COMECE Secretariat)

subsequent conferences in Peru (2014), in Paris (2015) and beyond.

While considering technical solutions, it is however of critical importance that the spiritual aspect of stewardship is not neglected. Both Fr. José Ignacio Garcia SJ (JESC) and Rev. Henrik Grape of the Church of Sweden emphasised the spiritual dimension of being good stewards of creation. Fr. Garcia spoke of legitimate fears for the future but reminded participants that fear can lead to paralysis. He reflected that “fear can be cast out by love, by sincere love”; and as Rev. Grape stated, “love for our planet, the creation that we are living in and we are dependent upon, forces us to act.”

## 6.4 | Seminars with the European Parliament

### Youth Conference

#### 4 September

The COMECE Secretariat, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Don Bosco International and Rete Juventutis represented by the European Office for Catholic Youth and Adult Education organized on 4 September 2013 the Conference “Creating new opportunities for young people – what is needed now” at the European Parliament in Brussels. The Conference was hosted by the MEP Patrizia Toia (S&D, IT) and MEP Thomas Mann (EPP, DE). About 350 young people from all over Europe participated in the conference and discussed with high-level representatives of the European Parliament and Commission the pressing questions on the current employment crisis in Europe and also possible political and practical solutions from a Christian perspective.

The first panel discussion was concerned with employment policy matters and was introduced in a keynote speech by Mgr Juan José Omella, Bishop of Calahorra y La Calzada-Logroño, in which he outlined the causes of the current high level of unemployment affecting young people in Spain. Due to the large number of jobless young people and the corresponding

concern about the future of a whole generation, the issue of coping with youth unemployment formed a natural focus for the debate. Young Europeans have high hopes where the measures recently announced at EU level, especially the Youth Guarantee and the Alliance for Apprenticeships, are concerned. Sarah Prenger, Coordinator of the network of European Young Christian Workers (European YCW), extended the debate to include the impact on individuals of the current employment crisis in Europe. She described the enormous pressure young people are already under during their academic or vocational training, and discussed the effects of the increase in atypical working conditions (fixed-term contracts, interim agency work, etc.) on the individual's career and home life planning. In this regard, the increasing pressure to demonstrate flexibility and mobility, both nationally and within Europe, represents a major challenge.

In the field of non-formal teaching with and for young people, Churches and their organisations stand out for making an important contribution in the contexts of youth ministry, youth social work, youth association work and the teaching in many Catholic schools that not only train young people but provide assistance to them in many areas. In the second round of discussions, the central question was how young people could be helped and supported in shaping their lives. This related above all to the role of non-formal education which offers young people space outside the formal education system to test and develop themselves. "This form of education as a 'process of self-determined emancipation' is the basis for the citizens' participation in and contribution to our society and our Europe!", said Lisi Maier from the Federation of German Catholic Youth (BDKJ). With regard to increasing mobility, Lothar Harles from the Federation of Catholic Social Educational Centres in Germany (AKSB) emphasised the enormous significance of international youth work for the acquisition of intercultural skills. Father Giovanni D'Andrea SDB reported from his many years of experience of working with young people, and emphasised the need to become actively involved, especially on the part of young people who have dropped out of the system.

The conference highlighted the role that education and training

can play in coping with the crisis in Europe; and the extent of their importance in the personal development of the individual. Many of the officially proposed education and training initiatives to open up vocational prospects could make an effective contribution to overcoming the economic crisis in Europe. At the same time, however, initiatives such as youth work which encourage non-formal education can make a decisive contribution of their own. Not only do they provide support for the social consequences of the crisis but also, in the long-term, they guarantee the stability of society and democracy while helping young people to develop independent personalities and become active citizens.

## 6.5 | Other Dialogue opportunities

### Meeting with EU Ambassadors to the Holy See

18 October

On Friday 18 October Father Patrick H. Daly, General Secretary, in response to an invitation from Nigel Baker, UK Ambassador to the Holy See, addressed a meeting of EU Ambassadors accredited to the Holy See at the Polish Embassy, Via dei Delfini, Rome. He spoke about the mission of COMECE and about how the Church attempted to be of service to the European project. He briefed the ambassadors on the principal issues on the COMECE agenda and on the arenas in which it was active in Brussels. He emphasised the complimentary missions of the Holy See and COMECE in Brussels and how cordial the cooperation between the COMECE Secretariat and the Nunciature to the EU institutions was. The ambassadors were particularly interested in relations between the Church and the European Parliament and how they functioned in practice.



Youth Conference, European Parliament



Youth Conference, European Parliament



# 7 | LIST OF ACTIVITIES 2013

## 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 2013, COMECE took part in following consultations:

- Contribution to the public consultation on the **"Review of existing legislation on VAT reduced rates"** (Directive TAXUD/C1) *03/01 European Commission*
- Contribution to the public consultation on **"Assises de la justice: shaping justice policies in Europe for the years to come"** *19/12 European Commission*

## 7.2 | Visitor Groups

The COMECE Secretariat receives every year a number of delegations and visitor groups from the different EU Member 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 2013:

- Meeting Legal Advisers of the ARD Liaison Office, Germany *15/04*
- Delegation of Oeuvre d'Orient from Ethiopia *26/04*
- Group from Institut zur Förderung publizistischen Nachwuchses (ifp) Munich, Germany *17/05*
- Group of European People's Party interns *28/05*
- Delegation from the World Youth Alliance *28/05*
- Group of EKD interns *29/05*
- Group from Caritas Europe *11/06*
- Parish Group from Val-d'Oise, France *17/06*
- Group of Katholischen Hochschule Studenten, Germany *21/06*
- Group from Caritas Europe *20-21/08*
- H.E. Mgr Carlo Roberto Maria Redaelli, Bishop of Gorizia with group of priests from Italy *03/09*
- Meeting of the Spokespersons of the Belgian dioceses *03/09*
- Rete Juventutis Conference, Germany *04/09*
- Delegation from Renovabis, Germany *25/09*
- Legal advisers and fiscalists Lombardy Ambrosianum, Italy *25/09*
- Visit of the Belgian Bishops' Conference *10/10*
- Visit of the Group from Rete Juventutis and their Conference, Germany ? *15-16/10*
- Group of Caritas Kindergarten Directors, Germany *23/10*
- Group of Jesuits from Germany *31/10*
- Group of Katholische Erwachsenenbildung Bildungswerke Wiesbaden-Untertaunus und Rheingau, Germany *4/11*
- Delegation from Lampedusa: H.E. Mgr Francesco Montenegro, Archbishop of Agrigento and H.E. Mgr Michele Russo, Archbishop of Doba, Chad *7/11*
- Delegation from Germany: Mgr Robert Zollitsch, Pre-late Karl Jüsten and Gabriela Schneider *25/11*
- Visit of the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference *1-4/12*
- Group from Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum, Italy *4/12*
- Delegation from ZdK Zentral Komitee der deutschen Katholiken, Germany *5/12*
- CEBCEW Parliamentary Interns, UK *09-11/01*
- Group of secondary school students from Foligno, Italy *9/01*
- German Bishops' Conference Europe Working Group, Germany *23-24/01*
- Group of European People's Party interns *30/01*
- Delegation with the new inspector for Religious Education at the European Schools *05/02*
- Group of seminarians from Strasbourg, France *28/02*
- Kolping group, Germany *5-6/03*
- Visitor Group of Croatian interns to the EU Parliament *21/04*
- Group of Alumni & Students of the University of Düsseldorf, Germany *09/04*
- Group of the association of catholic student organisations in Germany *11/04*

# 8 | COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION POLICY

## 8.1 | Publications

-17 May

**Ethical assessment of clinical trials on medicinal products: Respect and protection of vulnerable persons and populations**

On 17 July 2012, the EU Commission published a proposal for a 'Regulation on clinical trials on medicinal products for human use' which aims at relaunching clinical research within the EU while at the same time ensuring the highest level of protection to participants as well as the reliability of the acquired data. The COMECE Reflection Group on Bioethics has monitored the issue from the launch of the public consultation by the European Commission and published its Opinion on this proposal for a Regulation. The COMECE experts underline some principles which should be duly implemented in the Regulation currently under discussion:

### Volunteering

The appreciation of the value of voluntary participation in research projects for the good of the community: granting financial incentives to any person agreeing to take part in some medical research therefore raises a key ethical issue.

### Protecting those particularly vulnerable

A key ethical consideration for research carried out on human subjects is that of respecting and protecting particularly vulnerable people and populations who could be unduly used as easily-exploitable objects for experiments.

### Benefits for the population concerned

Clinical research with a disadvantaged or vulnerable population or community is justified only if it responds to its health needs and priorities and if it is likely that such a population or community will benefit from the results of the research.

### Security of the participants to tests

The subject of the research may agree to become involved in a research protocol that does not fully respond to the individual's own interests but will do so for the good of others, in the «medical interest of the community» and consequently for the «common good», insofar as the patient's physical or psychological integrity is not endangered.

### Benefits to the person incapable of consent

Trial medicinal products may not be given to persons who are not capable of giving their consent except in cases where the same results cannot be obtained by resorting to persons capable of giving their consent and if the foreseeable benefits/predictable risks ratio is to their advantage.

### Ethics of testing in emergency situations

As for clinical trials in emergency situations, the only acceptable research is specific research on individuals placed in such a situation that one may have good grounds for anticipating a

direct benefit with regard to their condition and that would present a minimal risk and only impose a minimal burden. It is also important to give a sufficiently precise definition of the terms "minimal risk" and "minimal burden".

-8 September

**Opinion on the Regulation of Medical Devices and of *In Vitro* Diagnostic Medical Devices in particular**

The European Union promoted the revision of the legislative framework that governs medical devices and *in vitro* diagnostic medical devices. As these devices are designed to help the treatment of persons and to improve their health, the COMECE Secretariat welcomed the aims of this revision: developing the independence and quality of the assessment of such devices before they are put on sale, improving their clinical assessment for as long as they are being used, and strengthening measures governing market monitoring and vigilance. The COMECE Bioethics Reflection Group published its current Opinion which stresses some key points of concern:

- IVDMDs should be recognised as inseparable from genetic counselling by a medical doctor which allows for informed consent;
- Risks of tests related to polygenic diseases can justify the refusal of their certification and the restriction of their advertising to medical circles;
- Member States should be fully recognised as entitled to restrict in some cases the marketing of devices;
- The psychological and social dimensions of safety should be taken into consideration;
- Predictive tests for genetic diseases should neither be carried out for the purposes of selection of human beings nor be conducted on minors or temporally incapable adults;
- The applicability of national law on ethical issues and the relevance of the Convention of Oviedo should be explicitly recognised;
- The Principle of Subsidiarity in regard to the protection of the human embryo must be fully respected;
- The criterion for classification of an IVDMD as a Class D should be consistently applied;
- Additional requirements are needed for certification of certain devices such as devices that would make use of human embryonic stem cells.



## 8.2 | Europeinfos

Europeinfos, a monthly review edited by COMECE and the Jesuit European Social Centre (JESC), 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. [www.europe-infos.eu](http://www.europe-infos.eu)

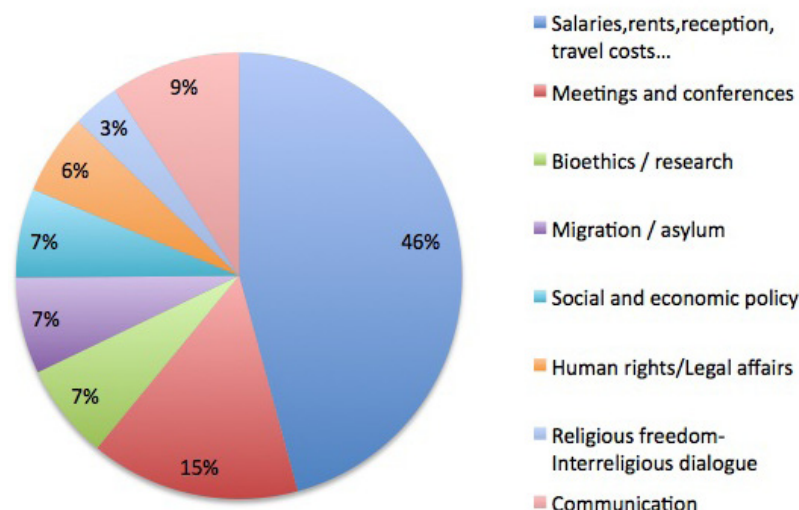
## 8.3 | Press releases

In 2013, COMECE issued 24 press releases, on the following issues:

- "French-German reconciliation gave a positive dynamic to Europe", 24/01
- New COMECE General Secretary Patrick Daly starts work, 01/02
- "We want to remain inspired by the significant theology of Pope Benedict XVI for the future of our Church.", 14/02
- Europe Needs a Social Dimension – Church Leaders Tell Irish EU Presidency, 08/03
- COMECE welcomes the election of Pope Francis, 13/03
- "Cyprus and its people are in our prayers", 29/03
- Tribute to former COMECE General Secretary, 19/04
- Re-reading the Schuman Declaration 08/05
- Clinical trials on medicinal products for human use in the EU: A sound ethical framework is essential, 17/05
- Pope Francis receives COMECE in private audience, 23/05
- Towards active involvement: the spiritual dimension of European citizenship, 30/05
- The Week for Hope starts in Brussels on 24 June, 12/06
- European Citizenship: we need a sense of belonging to a community, 21/06
- Religious Freedom Guidelines: a welcome step forward, 25/06
- "It is time to capture again the spirit of Robert Schuman", 04/09
- Medical Devices: Not safe enough, 04/09
- Youth Policies, Education and Unemployment. The young claim: 'we are the solution!', 05/09

# 9 | FINANCES

## 2013 Expenses related to work areas



- Lampedusa: «This is not the Europe we want», 10/10
- Churches on Climate Change: a matter of Solidarity and Global Justice, 21/10
- Do not be misled: abortion is not an EU competence, 22/10
- 'Migration and Integration in the EU', COMECE Plenary Assembly 13-15 November in Brussels, 08/11
- Report of H.E. Reinhard Cardinal Marx, President of COMECE, 13/11
- A humane approach to migration, 15/11
- Horizon 2020 : The EU should not fund research on human embryonic stem cells, 21/11
- Europe: a roadmap to Peace 03/12

## Total expenditure:

1 150 000 €

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

# 10 | GENERAL INFORMATION

## 10.1 | Members list for the end of the year 2013

### H.Em. Cardinal Reinhard Marx

Archbishop of Munich-Freising  
(Germany) President of COMECE

### H.E. Mgr. Jean Kockerols

Auxiliary Bishop of Brussels  
(Belgium)  
Vice-President of COMECE

### H.E. Mgr. Gianni Ambrosio

Bishop of Piacenza-Bobbio (Italy)  
Vice-President of COMECE

### H.E. Mgr. Virgil Bercea

Bishop of Oradea Mare/Gran  
Varadino (Romania)  
Vice-President of COMECE

### H.E. Mgr. Czeslaw Kozon

Bishop of Copenhagen  
(Scandinavia)  
Vice-President of COMECE

### H.E. Mgr Charles Scicluna

Auxiliary Bishop of Malta

### H.E. Mgr. William Kenney

Auxiliary Bishop of Birmin-  
gham (England and Wales)

### H.E. Mgr. Christo Proykov

Apostolic Exarch of Sofia (Bulgaria)

### H.E. Mgr Philippe Jourdan

Bishop of Tallinn (Estonia)

### H.E. Mgr. Ferenc Cserhádi

Auxiliary Bishop Esztergom-  
Budapest (Hungary)

### H.E. Mgr Youssef Soueif

Archbishop of the Maronites  
(Cyprus)

### H.E. Mgr. Jozef Halko

Auxiliary Bishop of Bratislava  
(Slovakia)

### H.E. Mgr Janusz Stepnowski

Bishop of Lomza (Poland)

### H.E. Mgr Nikólaos Fóscolos

Archbishop of Athens (Greece)

### H.E. Mgr. Jean-Pierre Grallet

Archbishop of Strasburg  
(France)

### H.E. Mgr Peter Stumpf

Bishop of Murska Sobota  
(Slovenia)

### H.Em. Cardinal Josip Bozanic

Archbishop of Zagreb (Croatia)

### H.E. Mgr. Jean-Claude Hollerich

Archbishop of the Grand  
Duchy of Luxemburg

### H.E. Mgr Jan Vokal

Bishop of Hradec Králové  
(Czech Republic)

### H.E. Mgr. António Augusto dos Santos Marto

Bishop of Leiria - Fatima  
(Portugal)

### Associated member:

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

### H.E. Mgr Adolfo Gonzalez Montes

Bishop of Almeria (Spain)

### H.E. Mgr. Zbignevs Stankevics

Archbishop Metropolitan of  
Riga (Latvia)

### H.E. Mgr Hugh Gilbert OSB

Bishop of Aberdeen (Scotland)

### H.E. Mgr Noël Treanor

Bishop of Down & Connor (Ireland)

### H.E. Mgr. Egon Kapellari

Bishop of Graz-Seckau (Austria)

### H.E. Mgr. Rimantas Norvila

Bishop of Vilnius (Lithuania)

### H.E. Mgr Theodorus Hoogenboom

Auxiliary Bishop of Utrecht  
(Netherlands)

*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 2013:*

*H.E Mgr Christian Kratz (France), H.E. Mgr. Mario Grech (Malta), H.E. Mgr. Jan Baxant (Czech Republic ),  
H.E Mgr. Peter A. Moran(Scotland), H.E Mgr. Marjan Turnšek (Slovenia)*





## 10.2 | COMECE Secretariat

**Fr Patrick H. Daly**  
General Secretary  
(from 01/02/2013)

**Drs. Michael Kuhn**  
Secretary General ad interim  
(until 01/02/2013)  
Assistant General Secretary  
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  
(until 30/09/2013)

**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 Health, Research and  
Bioethics

**Johanna Touzel**  
Spokesperson & Press officer

**Leen Den Blauwen**  
Assistant to the General Secretary

**Irmina Nockiewicz**  
Junior Secretary

**Aimery de Vêrac**  
Administration & Finances

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

<b>Guido As</b>	<i>The Netherlands</i>
<b>Francesco Masina</b>	<i>Italy</i>
<b>Jean Jacomet</b>	<i>France</i>
<b>Marek Misak</b>	<i>Slovakia</i>

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

**The COMECE Bishops and the Secretariat wish to thank the former Secretariat member, Mgr Joe Vella Gauci, for the work he has accomplished as Advisor for International Relations and Intercultural/Interreligious Dialogue within the Secretariat of COMECE.**



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