

2014



ANNUAL REPORT 2014

COMMISSION OF THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCES
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY



COMECE ANNUAL REPORT 2014

1	Foreword	1
2	Standing Committee	2
3	COMECE Plenary Assemblies	2
3.1	Spring 2014	2
3.2	Autumn 2014	3
4	Commissions and Working Groups	4
4.1	Social Affairs Commission	4
4.2	Working group on Migration and Asylum	4
4.3	Bioethics Reflection Group	4
4.4	Legal Affairs Commission	5
4.5	Commission on the External Relations of the European Union – EXTERN	5
5	Initiatives & Events	6
5.1	Series of Conferences at the Chapel for Europe	6
5.2	COMECE European elections’ Statement	6
5.3	Colloquium in Mönchengladbach	7
5.4	Summer School in Seggau	8
5.5	Conference on Eco-Justice	9
5.6	Second Catholic Social days for Europe	10
5.7	Commemoration in Verdun on 11 November	10
5.8	Evening debate on Human trafficking	11
6	Dialogue with the EU	12
6.1	Summit meeting of religious leaders	12
6.2	Meeting with EU Presidencies	13
6.3	Dialogue Seminars	14
6.4	Events at the EU Parliament	15
7	List of activities	15
7.1	Consultations	15
7.2	Visitor groups	15
8	Communication and Information Policy	16
8.1	Europeinfos	16
8.2	Press releases	16
9	Finances	16
10	General information	17
10.1	Members	17
10.2	Secretariat	17



Fr Patrick H. Daly

Brussels, March 2015

Dear Readers,

We have spent the past three months bathing in the warm afterglow of Pope Francis' visit to Strasbourg. The speech the Pope delivered at the European Parliament was judged by most commentators to be a very good *status quaestionis* of the European project at a moment when a fresh chapter in its life opens following the May elections and the new political configuration of the three key EU institutions becomes clearer. It is important to note that the administrative architecture of the Jean Claude Juncker Commission also marks a new departure.

Pope Francis' address to the EP is as yet the only significant vade mecum to have emerged from any quarter in the on-going reflection on EU policy and the direction the Union might take into what remains an uncertain and challenging future. There is a significant vacuum in creative and positive thinking on major policy issues, and I feel that COMECE and its Secretariat deserve to reflect on how we can fill it.

The abiding legacy of the Strasbourg visit is a higher than usual level of palpable good will towards the Church within the EU institutions. The speech of 25 November is regularly referred to and cited by MEP's and other policy-makers, the media coverage has been good and press comment has been generally benign. The fact that political discourse over the past three months has flagged up the concept of human dignity and the primordial claims of the human person are, in my view, significant. Clearly, the truism first articulated by Harold Wilson (+1995) that a week is a long time in politics, is even more the case in our fast-changing times. We cannot afford to be blown off the course Pope Francis has set for us nor squander the credibility capital he has given us!

Not only did the Pope mention COMECE and highlight our willingness to contribute positively to the on-going reflection on European policies, he also put Catholic social teaching centre stage and pleaded for human dignity as the foundational value of any society that strives to be open, democratic, humane and just.

There has been a lot of public debate about Europe, her identity and her role in the wider world during 2014. This has been partly because of European elections in May but also because dramatic developments on EU's eastern borders and tragic escalation of conflict in the Middle East have obliged a number of Member States and the EU to reflect on what role it desires to play on the international stage. Wide-ranging negotiations of the TTIP have also raised significant questions about the trans-Atlantic relationship and have pricked Europe's conscience concerning its approach to the problems of the global South.

In the COMECE Bishops' pre-election statement we focused on the big issues that promised, regardless of the political colour of the new Parliament or the profile to the new generation of EU leaders, to be ear-marked as priorities: youth employment, humane treatment of migrants and asylum seekers, protection of the common weekly day of rest, and a more rigorous application of the principle of distributive justice across the Union.

We went into the autumn of 2014 with a new European Parliament, 58% of the MEPs being elected for the first time. The new president of the EU Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, confirmed in office in July, lost no time in forming his Commission, in drafting a quite different working methodology for his college and in elaborating a policy programme focused on specific grand-scale goals. It was good to see how neatly the COMECE election statement dovetailed with the ten-point policy objective paper of Mr Juncker.

In September we had the Second Social Days for Europe, organised jointly with CCEE, in Madrid. In a key-note address which Cardinal Marx delivered on Friday 19 September, he pleaded for fresh thinking on the idea of "the Social Europe" and he urgently called for Catholic lay people to make their voices heard on European policies and appealed to them to take a supportive stand on the Church's social doctrine in the political arena.

There are major issues in which COMECE has a vital interest on the horizon for EU policy makers in 2015. I will mention just two, both concern the world beyond Europe's borders: the Millennium Development Goals and Climate Change & Environment.

The changes within the EU institutions, the shifting balance of power on the international stage and the on-going concerns about the social fall-out of the economic crisis have all marked the twelve months gone by. It is our resolve to continue COMECE's positive and constructive contribution to the EU as it entrusts its fate to a new generation.

Fr Patrick H. Daly
General Secretary of COMECE

2 | STANDING COMMITTEE

The Standing Committee of COMECE consists of the President, Cardinal Reinhard Marx, and four Vice-Presidents: Mgr Jean Kockerols (Auxiliary Bishop of Brussels-Malines, Belgium), Mgr Gianni Ambrosio (Bishop of Piacenza-Bobbio, Italy), Mgr Virgil Bercea (Bishop of Oradea Mare, Romania) and Mgr Czeslaw Kozon (Bishop of Copenhagen, Scandinavia). 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 five occasions in 2014: on 22 January, 19 March, 10 September and 12 November in Brussels; on 13 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.



COMECE Vice-President Mgr Jean Kockerols

3 | COMECE PLENARY ASSEMBLIES

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

3.1 | Spring Plenary Assembly

19-20 March 2014

20 Bishops from all over Europe attended the 3 days closed meeting whose main theme was 'the EU seen from the outside'.

The lull in legislative activity during the elections and the resulting period of change and adjustment in the EU institutions offered an opportunity to take a look at the European Union from a fresh angle. The theme of the Spring Plenary was the EU seen from outside: from across the Atlantic in the USA, from the orient and then, through the experience of a senior EU official who implements the policies which shape the EU's relationship with the wider world. The COMECE Bishops were briefed by experts from the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Japanese Ambassador to the EU, as well as a senior official from the EEAS (European External Action service).

The Delegate Bishops were briefed by the members of the Secretariat on the activities and main points followed at the moment at the EU level.

They were also briefed on the situation in Ukraine, at a closed evening discussion with Bishop Borys Gudziak.

The COMECE Bishops also issued their Statement in the context of the European elections, which was presented by Cardinal Marx, the President of COMECE, at a Press Conference on Thursday 20 March. In this Statement, the Catholic Bishops reaffirmed their support for the European project. They encouraged all citizens of the European Union to go to the polling booths on the 22nd and 25th May, and to start engaging, during the run-up to the election, in constructive dialogue with their MEP's and those who were candidates for election. At the same time, COMECE invited the Bishops' conferences in the EU, to adopt this text, either by using it as an Election Statement as such or as an inspiration for their own election statements.

3.2 | Autumn Plenary Assembly

13-15 November 2014

A Free Trade Treaty is currently being negotiated between the United States and the European Union. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) remains controversial and raises a number of concerns. COMECE Bishops wished therefore to learn more about the economic and ethical aspects of the Draft Treaty and explore it in greater detail on the occasion of their Autumn Plenary Assembly held on 12 and 13 November 2014 in Brussels.

The EU Chief Negotiator for the TTIP, Mr Garcia Bercero informed COMECE Bishops at some length on the precise content of the negotiations as well as the next steps in the negotiations. The Belgian Economist, Pierre Defraigne, Executive Director of the Madariaga – College of Europe Foundation outlined his reservations concerning the Treaty and voiced doubts about its potential to promote economic growth and employment in the EU. Prof. Patrick O'Sullivan, Professor of Business Ethics at Grenoble, warned against the current economic indicators, which do not reflect actual human growth. The economic opportunities that such a treaty would bring to both sides of the Atlantic were recalled by Brian McFeeters, economic counsellor at the Mission of the United States to the EU. Finally, Father Joseph Komakoma, Secretary General of the SECAM, brought in the perspective from Africa and articulated the concerns of Africa's Bishops.

The Secretariat advisors enriched the perspective with presentations on specific technical aspects of greater relevance in the TTIP.

The COMECE Bishops believe that, beyond the strictly trade related issues, TTIP questions our identity, our European specificity and the way this identity can be affirmed and position itself in the world. TTIP holds up a mirror to the European Union and forces European citizens to define more clearly their position on the world stage and to adopt sustain-

able trade and monetary policies for the next decades that are expected to show low or non-existent economic growth.

The Church needs to speak out for the weakest and the poorest in Europe and in the world, as they will be most affected by this Free Trade Agreement. The Bishops of COMECE have decided to produce a position paper on the TTIP. This document will highlight the opportunities and formulate questions regarding the draft Agreement as yet unanswered. This document will be made public and addressed to MEPs, who will have to the final say on the Treaty.

The plenary began with a day of commemoration and recollection in Verdun on 11 November to mark the centenary of the First World War, at the end of which the Bishops published a Final Message addressed to all Europeans.



Spring Plenary Assembly



Autumn Plenary Assembly

4 | COMMISSIONS & WORKING GROUPS

In order to monitor the political processes of the European Union in all areas of interest to the Church and to interact with the EU institutions, the COMECE Secretariat set up a number of commissions, working groups and other bodies. These consist of specialists from the national Bishops' Conferences and other Church-related organisations 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 2014.

4.2 | Working Group on Migration and Asylum

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 19 February 2014

Mr Boyan Tanev (Centre for European Studies) presented the topic "Is the EU Freedom of movement at risk?", reminding the very successful implementation and appreciation of this right by EU citizens. Mr Tanev also explained the reality concerning the movement of citizens from EU Eastern countries towards Western ones, and the false alarms about their numbers. Mr Mathias Oel (Head of Asylum Unit, DG Home Affairs, European Commission) explained the "Current challenges in the area of EU-Asylum Policy", and the need for full implementation of the EU legislation. Ms Katarzyna Cuadrat-Grzybowska (Policy Adviser - Trafficking in Human Beings Unit, DG Home Affairs, European Commission) described in her presentation entitled "The fight against trafficking in human beings: the EU strategy" the work of her unit and the challenges that his crim-

inal practice brings to our societies. Finally, the usual exchange of views on national situations amongst the members of the Working Group took place in the meeting.

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 25 Reports and/or Opinions on subjects such as stem cell research, biotechnological patenting, organ donation, 'sexual and reproductive health', clinical trials or in vitro diagnostic medical devices.

Meeting of 10 March 2014

The meeting started, as usual, with a round-table of updating on bioethics issues at the EU Member States level. It was followed by a discussion of the main topic of the meeting: surrogate motherhood. The Comparative Study on the regime of surrogacy in EU Member States, commissioned by the European Parliament and published in 2013, was presented by the leader of the team of authors, Laurence Brunet. Gregor Puppinck, director of the European Centre of Law and Justice, was also invited to help the reflection on the ethical and legal tangles of the subject. In the sequence of the meeting, an Opinion has been drafted by the Group.

Meeting of 20 October 2014

After a round-table updating on bioethics issues in EU Member States, the Group discussed the main topic: synthetic biology, the new research field that aims at modifying or designing new genes or biological systems in order to perform



Refugees © UNHCR-L-Boldrini



E-Health © EU Commission



Transparency

useful functions, sometimes totally unknown in nature. Guest speakers were: Pere Puigdomènech Rosell, member of the European Group on Ethics (EGE), the advisory body to the European Commission in the field of Bioethics; and Patrick Heavey (University of Manchester). The former speaker presented a previous Opinion of the EGE on the matter, the latter helped the reflection on the topic from a Catholic perspective. The Group envisages the draft and publication of an Opinion on the subject.

4.4 | Legal Affairs Commission

The COMECE 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. Officials of the EU institutions are usually invited as external experts. The relevant meetings also contribute to maintaining an open, transparent and regular dialogue between Churches and the EU. Each meeting starts with a roundtable discussion allowing the members to present recent developments of importance for the Church in their respective countries.

Meeting of 18 February 2014

The members were briefed by a representative of the European Commission on the recent Joint Report on the application of the 'Racial Equality Directive' and of the 'Employment Equality Directive'. A particular focus was placed on discrimination on grounds of religion and on the implications of the relevant EU law and draft legislation for the Church.

Two officials from the European Parliament and the European Commission presented the review of the joint Transparency Register and highlighted the main new elements of interest. Discussions focused on the integration of Church-related organisations in the instrument.

Members were also updated, inter alia, on the on-going reflection on the VAT reform, on the discussions in the Council concerning the data protection reform and were briefed on the issue of surrogate motherhood.



Data protection

4.5 | Commission on the External Relations of the European Union (EXTERN)

Since 1 January 2014 COMECE has engaged in strategic partnership with the European conference of Justice and Peace Commissions (Justice & Peace Europe). This longstanding network has a much accurate experience in topics relating to international social justice and global peace. Therefore the partnership between COMECE and Justice & Peace Europe is focussed on the external relations of the European Union. The joint EXTERN Commission/Work Group was set up in 2014 and is asked to follow activities of the European Union on matters related (Human Rights in the World, Common Defence and Security Policy, Neighbourhood and Enlargement of the EU, Development and International Climate Policy, EU Trade Policy).

A first meeting was scheduled for January 2015. The Strategic partnership which includes also the animation of the network, will be evaluated after three years.

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 | Series of Conferences at the Chapel for Europe

« Europe, Politics and beyond » was 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 five Conferences drew an interested audience from the European Quarter. The series continued into 2014 with two Conferences.

7 January 2014

There is a wide consensus within Europe that the nuclear family is the basic building block of a healthy and prosperous society. A wide range of social change has challenged this view. In the light of the changing profile of the family in Europe, Breda O'Brien, columnist at The Irish Times, explored the constitutive elements of the family and its relationship to society at large on the occasion of a Conference entitled "The Family in the 21st Century".

18 February 2014

The Founding Fathers of Europe were idealists. Like many before them they dreamt of a society where peace, harmony and prosperity reigned. Both in the Old Testament and the New, the dream of an ideal society is a recurrent theme. For some it was Heaven, but Jesus believed the Kingdom of God had an earthly dimension. Father Henri Delhougne osb (Abbaye de Clervaux, Luxembourg) outlined the scriptural thinking on the ideal society on the occasion of a conference entitled "This world and beyond".



Breda O'Brien

5.2 | COMECE European elections' Statement

20 March 2014

Elections to the European Parliament take place on 22 – 25 May 2014. The outcome will shape the legislature of the EU for the next half-decade and will have major implications for those who lead the Union over the coming years.

It is essential that EU citizens participate in the democratic process through casting their vote on polling day. The stronger the turn-out, the stronger the new legislature.

The run-up to the election offers an opportunity for the whole of European society to debate the central socio-economic questions which will shape the Union in the years ahead.

We feel it is our duty, as the Bishops of COMECE, to offer guidance to the EU voter in forming his or her conscience, and we wish to do this by highlighting issues of importance, assessing them through the prism of Catholic social teaching.

Even if we speak, in the first instance, only to those EU citizens who are Catholic, we would hope that our counsel may also receive a favourable hearing from all men and women of good will who care about the success of the European project. We would hope that our voice be also heard by those seeking a mandate to serve in the European Parliament.

We begin by drawing attention to some general considerations:

1. It is the right and duty of every EU citizen to cast his or her vote. Many millions of young citizens will be voting for the first time, some still in education, others in the labour mar-



European Parliament Election night © EU Parliament

ket, but many, alas, unemployed. We urge our young people to make their voices heard by engaging in the political debate and, above all, by voting.

2. It is important that those aspiring to office or seeking to return to the European Parliament be aware of the collateral damage of the banking and economic crises which began in 2008. Pope Francis has drawn public attention to the plight of those already poor and vulnerable, the young and the disabled, not forgetting those pushed into poverty recently by the crisis. The numbers of “new poor” are growing at an alarming rate.

3. The Christian message is one of hope. It is our belief that the European project is inspired by a noble view of mankind. Individual citizens, communities and even nation-states must be capable of putting aside particular interest in pursuit of the common good. The papal exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* issued by Pope John Paul II in 2003 was one of hope, and it is with a firm belief in a better future that the Church approaches the European challenge.

4. Temperance is one of the natural virtues at the heart of Christian spirituality. A culture of restraint must shape the social-market economy and environment policy. We must learn to live with less, but by the same token see that those in real poverty get a fairer share.

There are specific areas of EU policy to which we might also direct the attention of our fellow-citizens:

1. It is important that the increasing moves towards unity within the EU do not sacrifice the subsidiarity principle, a basic pillar of the unique family of nation-states which constitutes the EU, nor compromise the long-standing traditions which prevail in so many of the Member States.

2. Another pillar of the Union but also a principle which is at the base of Catholic social teaching is solidarity. It should be seen to govern policy at every level across the EU, between nations, regions and population groups. We need to build a different Europe, with solidarity at its heart.

3. It is essential to recall that underpinning all areas of socio-economic policy is a vision of man rooted in profound respect for human dignity. Human life must be protected from the moment of conception to that of natural death. The family, as the basic building-block of society, must also enjoy the protection it needs.

4. Europe is a continent on the move and migration – internal and from outside – impacts on the life of the individual and of society. The EU has a common external border. The responsibility of reception and integration of migrants and asylum seekers needs to be shared proportionately by the Member States. It is vital that treatment of migrants at the point of entry be humane, that their human rights be scrupulously respected, and that subsequently every effort be made, including by the Churches, to secure successful integration into host societies within the EU.

5. We are stewards of creation and we must deepen our resolve to respect and attain CO2 emission targets, promote international understanding on climate change, commit ourselves to a greener approach and insist that sustainability be a fundamental element of any growth or development policy.

6. Religious freedom is a fundamental feature of a tolerant, open society. This freedom includes the right to manifest one's

belief in public. We welcome the EU guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion and belief, and we hope that the new European Parliament will intensify its work on this important matter.

7. We support all measures to protect the commonly shared weekly day of rest, which is Sunday.

8. Over the next five years demographic change will make a deeper impact on the life of the EU. We plead on behalf of our elderly citizens for the level and quality of care to which they are entitled, but would plead also for policies that create new opportunities for the young.

The European Union is at a turning point. The economic crisis, sparked by the banking collapse of 2008, and the burden of public debt have strained relationships between Member States, has challenged the foundational principle of solidarity across the Union, and has brought in its wake increasing poverty for a huge number of citizens as well as blighting the future prospects of many of our young. The situation is dramatic, for many even tragic.

We, Catholic Bishops, would plead that the European project not be put at risk nor abandoned under current duress. It is essential that all of us – politicians, candidates for office, all stake-holders – contribute constructively to fashioning Europe's future. We have too much to lose if the European project is derailed.

It is essential that all of us who are European citizens go to the polling booths on 22 – 25 May. We Bishops would urge that votes be cast in response to the promptings of an informed conscience.

5.3 | Conference 'Europe and the USA – free trade and joint responsibility'?

27-28 June 2014

For COMECE, the planned EU-USA trade talks and the values that underpin them have become an important matter. Against this background, the COMECE Secretariat assigned the theme of “Europe and the USA – free trade and joint responsibility” to this year's round of the socio-ethical talks that it holds annually with the Catholic Social Sciences Centre (KSZ).

Around 80 participants, including an American delegation made up of His Excellency Thomas Wenski, Archbishop of Miami, His Excellency Timothy Broglio, Archbishop to the US forces and based in Washington D.C. and four experts from US Catholic University faculties, met at the end of June in Mönchengladbach. Their task was to analyse the opportunities and risks of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership from both American and European perspectives.

Do we have shared values?

According to Prof. Philippe Nemo of France, Ancient Greece, the ancient Roman Empire, the Papal and democratic revolutions of the modern age and, last but not least, the Bible and its teachings of love for one's neighbour – all these have built up a



TTIP © Photo/Ralph Peters

foundation that is shared on both sides of the Atlantic, even if there are certain differences in interpretation.

The experienced US diplomat John Kornblum also referred to the need to ensure the effectiveness of joint values in relations between Europe and America, an area in which the Churches can play a particularly important role.

Opportunities and risks of the TTIP

When analysing the possible consequences of this trade agreement, particular emphasis was placed on its potential for producing a range of economic benefits, especially the creation of new trade outlets, increases in productivity leading to wage increases. The TTIP could also trigger a new economic dynamism, offering incentives to entrepreneurs and investors. Quite apart from the economic prospects, a free trade zone of this kind could also facilitate the exchange of ideas and some technology transfers.

On the other hand, the TTIP is not entirely risk-free. The liberalisation of the service sector (that employs the majority of the workforce) could easily undermine their protection. In addition to a range of controversial laws covering food safety, particular care is also needed, especially in financial and insurance regulations, to guard against the triggering of any more financial crises in future. There is also a risk that the intensification of trade could lead to large-sized corporations becoming even bigger, and that too might engender further inequality.

What ethical standards should be observed?

It is therefore essential to ensure that these negative consequences are avoided by basing the TTIP on sound values. German professor Dr Ursula Nothelle-Wildfeuer believes that an appropriate framework for this can be found in the principles of the social market economy, expressly recognised by the EU in the Treaty on the European Union (Article 3 (3)).

The basic principles of a social market economy, shaped by the Christian code of social ethics, would require that the economy can never be an end in itself, but must take a position that serves the common good. This means that there is no contradiction between the economy and morality, provided the former takes account of human dignity and does not allow human beings to become mere cogs in the production machine.

Nevertheless, when comparing the European and American points of view that emerged at the conference, it became quite clear that both sides see the planned TTIP as an opportunity



Students of the Seggau Summer School

for greater prosperity, all the while remaining aware of their shared responsibility to base this trade agreement on ethical standards that reflect our Western values as shaped by Christianity.

5.4 | Summer School in Seggau

1st-12 July 2014

It has now become a tradition for COMECE to run, together with the University of Graz and the Diocese of Graz-Seckau, a Summer School during the first two weeks in July for young people interested in international affairs. This year, as in previous years, around a hundred students and professors from 26 different countries and 50 universities came together once more at Seggau Castle, the former episcopal seat in the midst of the beautiful Styrian countryside, to spend two weeks examining questions of European and global importance at academic level. The main emphasis of this year's Summer School was "Transformation and Change: Europe and beyond".

In her speech of welcome, the Director of the Summer School, Prof. Roberta Maierhofer, had already warned the participants to prepare themselves for an experience of transformation and change during the ensuing days. What followed was an intensive academic programme consisting of lectures and seminars specialising in particular areas. Through exchanging views and ideas with renowned experts, the participants had opportunities to learn about different ways of experiencing change: from the world of media, to migration, religious conversions and economic developments, as well as ageing and demographic change.

The political transformation processes in Europe were examined from different perspectives in a panel discussion with high-ranking guests, including the Rev. Patrick Daly, COMECE General Secretary, who spoke about European integration from the viewpoint of the Church.

One important element of the Seggau Summer School that distinguishes it from normal courses and lectures at a university is the emphasis on interactivity. After every lecture and during each seminar, there was plenty of scope for discussion and intellectual exchange of views. The students were motivated to examine stimulating topics in a creative and interdisciplinary way and share their ideas with others. The teamwork and mutual cooperation among the students, and between students and the professors, also carried on beyond the official lecture

times during meals and excursions as well as during sports and other leisure activities.

For Michael Kuhn, COMECE Summer School coordinator, this is also precisely the reason why collaboration in this project is an important matter for the Church. As Dr. Egon Kapellari, Bishop of Graz, emphasised during the opening of GUSEGG 2014, it is necessary “to offer young people extensive education and training that not only imparts technical and economic skills but, rather, also knowledge that relates to the heritage of human sciences and the humanities so as to enable young people to make a substantial contribution to a vibrant and humane society through the development of humanist values and virtues.” A call that the Seggau Summer School fully endorses.

5.5 | Conference on Eco-Justice

9 September 2014

In the context of a discussion among experts on 9 September which was hosted by COMECE in Brussels, representatives of Christian youth organisations presented their projects for climate protection and for an environmentally responsible lifestyle. They also put forward demands and questions to representatives from the European Commission and Parliament. Two projects took centre stage. The first project, the youth climate conference Klar zur Wende was presented by German members of the Protestant Youth Association of the Lutheran Church in Northern Germany focussing on changing the way of life in society and in the church and seriously tackling climate change and its consequences. The second project concerned the engagement of young people in Italy for tackling climate issues and was presented by Iginio Zuanandrea, director of the organisation Turismo Giovanile e Sociale Eurogroup. In connection with leisure events, children and young people learn in a playful manner to take on responsibility for nature and creation.

Subsequent to these short presentations, a panel discussion on climate issues was launched between the following representatives: Margrete Auken (Member of the European Parliament), Roberta Di Lecce (Climate Change Attaché of the Permanent Representation of Italy), Yrjö Mäkelä (European Commission, DG Climate), Raphael Breyer (Federation of German Catholic

Youth), Pawel Pustelnik (Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe) and Peter Pavlovic (Conference of European Churches).

At the start, Roberta Di Lecce emphasized the huge challenges which the EU will have to face over the next years in the case of climate protection. To bring together all the EU Member States behind one political goal is quite a difficulty since the responsibility for climate action is still at national level and every country holds some other party more responsible than itself. Ms. Di Lecce also made the point that Europe will have to lead the way for other countries. As the most important tasks for the Italian Presidency of the European Council, she mentioned the revision of the EU Emissions Trading and the adoption of the guidelines for the EU climate policy from 2020 to 2030. Furthermore, the Presidency wants to strengthen the approach of the European climate policy of reducing carbon emissions in the transport sector.

In contrast, Margrete Auken revealed her disappointment about the less than ambitious climate policy of the EU. In her opinion there prevails a misplaced trust in God that at the end everything will be alright. That such an attitude is fairly negligent is shown by many empirical studies of climate experts such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Therefore she suggested that if we do not act immediately it will soon be too late.

This recommendation of Margrete Auken that action be taken was also shared by Yrjö Mäkelä but he did not accept that the European Commission be considered as idle. The goals of the European climate policy are ambitious and the EU is leading in tackling climate change and creating a greener economy. That such a tremendous conversion of society and economy cannot be achieved in the short term must be accepted, especially when democratic processes need to be respected.

Every single person can contribute to eco-justice and make a significant difference, Fr. Patrick Daly, General Secretary of COMECE, summarized the proceedings at the end of the evening. Christian responsibility for the integrity of creation must lead us all to a sensible and sustainable way of life for the sake of future generations.



Ecotourism



Youth © www.conseildela jeunesse.be



Fr Patrick H. Daly at the Catholic Social days for Europe



Cardinal Marx at the graveyard of Douaumont, Verdun © FKPH

5.6 | Second Catholic Social days for Europe

18-22 September 2014

The meeting, promoted by the two European Episcopal organisations, COMECE (Commission of the Episcopates of the European Community) and CCEE (Council of European Bishops' Conferences), in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Madrid, was organized in cooperation with the Spanish Bishops' Conference. About 200 participants delegated by the Bishops' Conferences in Europe or from association and ecclesial bodies from the continent, representing 31 countries, gathered around the theme «The Christian faith and the future of Europe.»

Prof. Javier Maria Prades opened the inaugural session with a lecture on the concept of the human person. There were three plenary sessions dedicated to three major themes. The first session, in which Cardinal Reinhard Marx, President of COMECE, was the keynote speaker, was entitled «Crisis or Change?». An attempt was made to describe the current state of play of the economic and social crisis in Europe and the various challenges that today confront the Europeans. The Cardinal also examined in detail the need to steer European integration towards a more social Europe, and had suggestions on how this should be done. Christians, insisted the Cardinal, are called more than ever to take part in this venture, driven by their faith and their rich experience in the social field.

Prof. Stefano Zamagni was the keynote speaker of the second session, dedicated to re-thinking economy and work. He warned about the fact that our national welfare policies are structured around the individual, when they should more take into account the needs of the family.

Finally, Breda O'Brien and Prof. Balázs Shanda were the two keynote speakers of the third session dedicated to «The human person and the family as the basis of society and human rights». Breda O'Brien, a journalist and mother, invited the assembly to develop a theology of marriage that is rooted more in the lived reality of the spouses. For his part, Prof. Shanda, speaking about human dignity as the foundation of human rights, described the attempts to change laws that affect this dignity. Whilst recognizing the importance for Christians to continue to serve the common good on the legislative level, he

concluded that it is nevertheless in the field of education that Christians will be able to raise awareness of the need to respect the dignity of every human being.

The sessions were enriched by stories of people engaged in the social field, with witnesses from the world of business, politics, the voluntary sector and church-based communities. An additional part of the meeting took the form of working groups devoted to topics such as: the future of young people in Europe, the phenomenon of migration, solidarity between generations, the culture of volunteerism, educational freedom, demographic crisis and family policies in Europe, and human life in a technological society.

Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, Vice-President of the CCEE, reminded participants that all these challenges can be faced by the Church. The condition is that Christians, moved by their faith, be prepared to move out of their comfort zones to encounter their brother or sister where they are.

Participants were encouraged in their work by a message from Pope Francis.

Finally, at the Vigil of Prayer for Europe organized on Saturday evening in the Cathedral of the Almudena, the people of Madrid were able to join the delegates to pray for peace in Europe, in the Middle East and for critical situations in the rest of the world. Special prayers were offered for the visit of Pope Francis to the European Parliament on 25 November. The youth orchestra and choir of Madrid WYD provided the music.

The meeting ended Sunday with a Mass presided by Cardinal Antonio María Rouco Varela, Apostolic Administrator of Madrid.

5.7 | Commemoration in Verdun on 11 November

11 November 2014

On the eve of their Autumn Plenary in Brussels (12-13 November 2014), COMECE Bishops together with representatives from CCEE, paid tribute to those who lost their lives on battle fields of the First World War and issued the following Statement:

Today bishops from across the continent of Europe visited Verdun as pilgrims to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. Two simple services of prayer were held at the Ossuaire de Douaumont and individual bishops laid votive lamps in the chapel of the Ossuaire where the bones of 130,000 unknown soldiers repose. In the Cathedral Notre-Dame in Verdun we celebrated Vespers for the Dead. Our visit marked for us a moment to take spiritual stock as we look back over a century when light and darkness have wrestled in Europe as at no other period in her long, eventful and often tragic past. We remember the fallen and are still numbed by recollection of the scale of the human loss the conflict engendered: almost 1 million soldiers died in the Battle of Verdun. What strikes us again is the sheer folly of war and the pity of it all. At the dawn of the 20th century the destinies of nations in Europe were intimately interlocked, World War I need not have happened. We intercede for all the victims of war and armed conflict, military and civilian, and we pray for peace in our world.

We recall with gratitude the achievements of the European project and the way the vision of the founding fathers of the European Union and those they inspired down the years have contributed to peace and understanding among nations who so often resorted to armed conflict in the past, and still do in our days, as a way of resolving their differences.

We pray for the dead and for the salvation of their souls out of profound faith in the resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and in the promise of life eternal for each and every one of us beyond the horizon of our earthly journey.

As bishops, from local churches all over Europe, we are conscious that we come from countries in our continent, some of which a century ago and all too frequently even more recently had made war on one another. We soberly recall how even churchmen stoked the fires of conflict and fuelled nationalist passion: it is a recollection tinged with regret and shame. But we also remember how stoically and persistently Pope Benedict XV advocated cessation of arms and promoted peace.

Our visit of pilgrimage to Verdun makes us, as bishops, more resolute in our commitment to assist Europe recover the gospel roots of its identity, to appreciate anew the values – many of them profoundly Christian – which bind her as a community,

and to promote a future for all Europe's citizens and for the wider world where peace and justice reign.

Inspired by the joy of the gospel message, our gathering closed in hope of a peaceful future for the whole of humanity.

5.8 Evening debate on Human trafficking

26 November 2014

On the eve of the Dialogue Seminar with the European Commission on the topic of Human trafficking, COMECE organised an evening debate: "Fighting against human trafficking: a joint effort". Main speakers were Sister Eugenia Bonetti MC, President of Slaves No More, European Citizen Prize 2013; Dr Aidan McQuade, the Director of Anti-Slavery International and Annie Morris, from the Counter Trafficking & Training Focal Point for the International Organisation for Migration.

Trafficking in human beings occurs under our very noses throughout the European Union. It is a criminal activity of huge complexity. Efforts made to address the matter of human trafficking to date have fallen short. The Catholic Church is an active partner in the fight against this distressing phenomenon. It is resolved to assist victims of trafficking as well as to work with public authorities and private actors to reduce and eventually outlaw this assault on human dignity. Sr. Eugenia diagnosed three main causes for the increasing growth of trafficking in human beings: poverty, corruption and ignorance. She founded the office against human trafficking run by the Italian Conference of religious women (USMI). Today 250 religious sisters from over 70 congregations work in more than 220 projects dealing with trafficking in human beings in Italy.

According to Eurostat, the number of victims in the EU is only around 30,000, whilst other international organisations such as ILO or IOM mention approximately 880,000 victims. José Luis Bazán, legal advisor for migration and asylum at COMECE, underlined the need to publish estimated figures, to avoid the high number of unreported cases of males and children who are victims of trafficking.



In the Chapel of Douaumont Ossuary, Verdun © FKPH



Sister Eugenia Bonetti, President of 'Slaves no more'

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 © EU Commission



Cardinal Marx at the EU Religious Leaders Summit © EU Commission

6.1 | Summit of religious leaders with the EU

10 June 2014

At the 10th Summit of religious leaders of various religions and denominations, Cardinal Reinhard Marx led the delegation of the Catholic Church, which comprised Jean-Pierre Grallet, Archbishop of Strasbourg and COMECE member, and Professor Margaret S. Archer, head of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. The hosts of this meeting at the European Commission headquarters in Brussels were the Presidents of the European Commission and the European Council, José Manuel Barroso and Herman Van Rompuy, and the Vice-President of the European Parliament László Surján.

In the light of the results of the European elections, the growing Euro-scepticism and the economic crisis, as well as the attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels a few days earlier, the participants discussed questions related to the future of Europe and its social dimension.

For Cardinal Marx, the EU can only regain the trust of the citizens if it brings concrete solutions to current problems and challenges, such as unemployment, climate change, migration, or the negotiations on the Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement (TTIP). «If the EU proposes concrete solutions, it will be better accepted,» said Cardinal Marx.

«Jean Monnet once said that a united Europe should be a contribution to a better world. The question of whether Europe is contributing to a better world has to be asked in all activities of the Union, including the free trade agreement [with the USA]. It offers the opportunity to contribute on the basis of shared Western values inspired by Christianity

to shaping international standards and global governance. «

As regards the TTIP, Cardinal Marx specifically commented: «Free trade always offers the opportunity for greater prosperity, and has therefore to be initially welcomed. But the market always also needs clear rules. The two transatlantic partners who together represent the Western world marked by Christianity, can promote such an agreement to bring clear, ethically-grounded standards to the global economy. Therefore, the Free Trade Agreement means for Europe and the U.S not only an opportunity but a special responsibility.

Among the ethical issues that lie behind the free trade agreement, there is above all the question of who benefits from the agreement: Does the proposed agreement answer the claim of serving the common good? Does this agreement only serve rich nations to shield themselves in order to preserve greater benefits for themselves at the expense of developing and emerging countries? Or will we manage it such that this free trade agreement also benefits the most vulnerable in the world? «

At the beginning of the meeting, the participants stopped for a minute's silence for the victims of the attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels on May 24 and issued a joint statement on Meriam Ibrahim the Sudanese Christian who has been condemned to death for 'apostasy'.

6.2 | Meeting with the EU Presidencies

6.2.1 Meeting with the Greek EU Presidency

10 January 2014

On 10 January 2014, three days after the official start of the Greek EU Presidency, the Greek Deputy Foreign Minister with specific responsibility for European Affairs, Dimitris KOURKoulas, received a delegation of senior Greek and European churchmen in Athens. Also in attendance were senior officials from the Foreign Ministry. The aim of this meeting, one in a long-standing series of high-level encounters between Church representatives and the in-coming presidencies of the EU, was to discuss the principal issues the Greek EU Presidency hoped to address in the first six months of 2014. Top of the agenda were the questions of social cohesion and migration in the EU.

Right at the beginning of the meeting, Minister Kourkoulas underlined how important he viewed the encounter. It was his view that the Churches could draw on their pastoral experience, with projects on the ground, and their wealth of social teaching to assist in working toward solutions to the challenges on which the Greek Presidency is keen to focus. Precisely for this reason, the minister pleaded with the Churches to keep in touch with the presidency team so that the day's meeting would have follow-up.

Social Cohesion in the EU

The Churches supported the Greek Presidency in its resolve to strengthen social cohesion in Europe and in developing the social dimension of the EU. The Church delegation voiced its concern about high levels of youth unemployment, particularly – although not exclusively – in the countries of southern Europe. Here there is a risk of the emergence of a lost generation, with little concrete hope of an improvement in their economic prospects or of social inclusion.

European Migration Policy

The Church delegation was particularly emphatic in the plea it made to the Greek Presidency to address the complex issue of migration into Europe and the social effects of freedom of movement within the EU. All were agreed that demographic trends within Europe made migration essential. Nonetheless, the EU lacks a comprehensive migration policy such as that in the USA or Australia.

6.2.2 Meeting with the Italian EU Presidency

18 December 2014

In the closing days of the Italian EU Presidency, Italy's Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni met with a joint delegation of the Commission of the Episcopates of the European Community (COMECE) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC) on 18 December in Rome. Delegates present at the meeting urged the presidency for concrete action on youth unemploy-

ment, migration, and freedom of religion and belief.

The minister opened with the employment dossier; the delegation highlighted the constellation of social problems associated with youth unemployment, including overall working conditions and quality of work. The delegates asserted that a shared weekly day of rest, among the other practical measures they recommended, would contribute to improving this situation.

Deep concern was expressed for the treatment of migrants arriving in Europe via the Mediterranean and for their overall wellbeing. Crucially, Minister Gentiloni agreed with the delegation's suggestion that search and rescue operations in this region must be an overall European responsibility.

Finally, on the matter of freedom of religion and belief, the minister's attention was drawn to difficulties encountered by minority churches in Italy, often composed largely of migrants. Minister Gentiloni assured the delegation that their concerns would be taken up in the priorities of the incoming Latvian Presidency in the first semester of 2015.

The meeting took place within the framework of Article 17 of the EU Treaty establishing an open, transparent and regular dialogue between churches and the EU.

6.3 | Dialogue Seminars

Dialogue seminar on Human trafficking

27 November 2014

An estimated 800,000 women, men, and children are victims of human trafficking within the EU today. Up to 60% of the victims originate from EU states. The EU and its member states urgently need to implement the legal framework already in place and to intensify cooperation with civil society and church organisations that work with victims at the grassroots level. This was one of the main messages of the Dialogue Seminar organised by COMECE and the Church and Society Commission of CEC in cooperation with CCME in dialogue with the EU Commission on 27 November.

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery, a criminal activity, and a lucrative global enterprise. An estimated 16% of victims are children, and they can be sold for up to €40,000. In addition to sexual exploitation, forced labour and domestic workers, human trafficking is also taking new forms such as for reproductive purposes, including surrogacy and illegal adoption.

Dialogue participants repeatedly called for more reliable and comprehensive data, including accurate estimated figures to better inform policy and faith-based responses. They also brought extensive advocacy and policy experience to the dialogue, and heard direct accounts of human trafficking in Europe.

Victims of human trafficking need more protection and assistance through the broader implementation of existing legislation. Victims of human trafficking should not be punished for acts committed while being trafficked. Ongoing financial support of civil society and church organisations will contribute to achieving these aims.

In the legal field, the EU has already adopted a series of directives and instruments. However, these instruments need updating to cover new forms of trafficking and to assure further implementation at the national level.

In response to the complexity and seriousness of these issues, COMECE and CEC/CCME undertook to provide the EU Commission with a compilation of their proposals and recommendations to fight human trafficking. A letter presenting those recommendations was addressed by the General Secretaries of COMECE and CEC to the Commissioner for Migration Mr Dimitris Avramopoulos.

6.4 | Events at the European Parliament

COMECE Reception at the European Parliament on the occasion of the visit of Pope Francis

30 November 2014

On the occasion of Pope Francis' visit to the European Parliament the President of the Commission of the Episcopates of the European Community (COMECE), Reinhard Cardinal Marx, gave a Press Conference to comment on the speech. In the Evening, he organised a reception for MEPs and Commissioners. The reception was held under the high patronage of Mr Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, and in the presence of Vice-President Antonio Tajani in charge of the dialogue with religions

Cardinal Marx also issued a Statement, in which he explained: *"Today's visit to the European Parliament was the first encounter between the Pope and Europe as a whole. In his speech to the European Parliament, Pope Francis underlined the significance of European integration and the need to carry the project forward. The very fact that he visited the European Parliament before he visited individual Member States was an indication of how much value the Pope attached to the European Union. His speech was «a message of hope and encouragement», and not just for the MEP's alone but for all European citizens.*

At the heart of this papal message was the challenge to Europe not just to look back at its history with dewy-eyed nostalgia but to position itself with courage as it faces its future. It must not be self-congratulatory nor defensive, it must come up with new and imaginative ideas which it can share with the entire world. One can see the Pope's speech as a social encyclical for Europe.

At the heart of the Pope's message was the belief that the human being must be at the centre of the European project: «and not just as citizen nor merely as an economic subject ... but as men and women as persons endowed with transcendental dignity.» The central role of the human person in the project of European integration puts rights and values rather than economics at its heart. Against this background, the Pope encouraged the MEP's «to work together in constructing a Europe focused on the economy but focused on the holiness of the human person, on his/her inalienable rights.»

With these considerations in mind, Pope Francis provided va-

luable ideas as to concrete political challenges for the EU. His tone was very positive right from the outset when he emphasized the gifts Europe already possessed as a resource for its future development. He highlighted the family as the building block and guarantee for Europe's future, while also emphasising education and science as essential ingredients for holistic human development. The Pope went on to praise the EU for its commitment to the ecology, and reminded his listeners that we do not possess the earth, we only take care of it. He encouraged European politicians to engage in international negotiations, which he admitted were complex, and to carry forward its commitment to the environment.

The Pope attached singular importance to work. In his speech he returned to this theme and emphasised the value of human work. It is not just a question of creating employment, but of dignified work. He pleaded for a certain flexibility in the labour market and emphasised how important it was to provide work that offered the prospect of stability. With his visit to Lampedusa in mind, Pope Francis put his finger on the wound of European migration policy. He did not just warn his listeners that the Mediterranean had become one big graveyard, but he challenged the Europeans to display solidarity in the area of tackling the migration problem and take concrete policy steps to address the issue.

I am particularly grateful to the Holy Father for flagging up the positive contribution of the COMECE and its resolve to be a contributor into the future. He also valued the dialogue between the religious communities and the European institutions, copper-fastened as it is in the primary law of the Union through the Lisbon Treaty, thus enabling the Church to continue in the dialogue process. The bishops of COMECE wish to work with the dialogue possibilities opened up by the EU institutions and, encouraged by the Pope's words, wish to continue into the future. I am every so grateful to the Pope for his words of hope and encouragement. The Pope concluded by making clear that, in his view, Europe can be a precious point of reference for all humanity."



Pope Francis and President Martin Schulz © EU Parliament

7 | LIST OF ACTIVITIES 2014

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, through the Delegate Bishops, the Bishops' Conferences of the EU Member States to participate in the Consultations on issues which are of interest to Churches and Church-related organisations. In 2014, the COMECE Secretariat took part in following consultations:

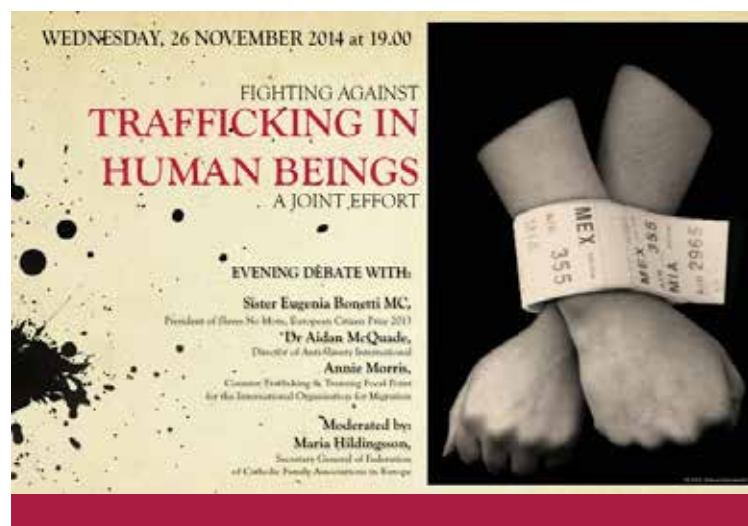
- Contribution of the Christian group on Migration and Asylum to the consultation « **Debate on the future of Home Affairs policies: An open and safe Europe – what next?** »
20/01 European Commission
- Contribution of the secretariat of COMECE to the consultation on « **Transparency Register Guidelines: stakeholder consultation** »
03/12 European Commission

- FIACAT NGO for defence of human rights and for the abolition of torture and of death penalty 04/06
- Volunteer Pastoral Ministers of the Diocese of Tournai (BE) 17/06
- Delegation from the US Bishops' Conference (USC-CB) 25-27/06
- Catholic University of Cologne (DE) 04/07
- Seminarians of the diocese of Belley-Ars (FR) 01/09
- Brothers of St. John of God 08/10
- Students Lycée Saint Jean Hulst (Versailles) (FR) 22/10
- Students in Journalism IFP München (DE) 10/11
- Justice & Peace Germany Delegation (DE) 13/11
- Confederazione Nazionale delle Misericordie (IT) 19/11
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland 19/11
- Polish Seminarians 03-04/12
- Lumen Vitae 09/12

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 2014:

- Sternsingern 07/01
- Kolpingjugend of the diocese of Paderborn (DE) 03/02
- Faculty of Canon Law of Paris 06/02
- Parish assistants of the diocese of Liege (BE) 20/02
- Interns of the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales at the Westminster Parliament (UK) 03-05/03
- Churches of Finland 04/03
- Association of Belgian Pastoral Council 06/03
- Aid to the Church in Need Ukrainian Delegation 17/03
- Colloquium of European Parishes 28/03
- International Movement of Apostolate in the Independent Social Milieus (MIAMSI) 04/04
- Mission Catholique ouvrière & Action Catholique ouvrière (FR) 09/05



8 | COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION POLICY

8.1 | 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

8.2 | Press releases

In 2014, COMECE issued 15 press releases, on the following issues:

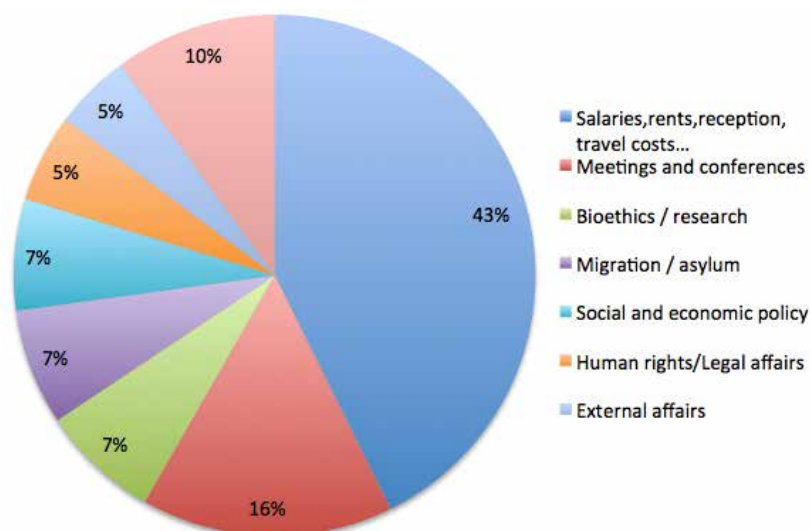
- Report on the meeting with the Greek Presidency, 13/01
- COMECE General Secretary visits Caritas Greece, 13/01
- Election of Cardinal Marx as President of the German Bishops' Conference, 13/03
- COMECE Bishops' Statement to the EU elections, 20/03
- Cardinal Marx Statement to the 10th anniversary of EU enlargement, 01/05
- Cardinal Marx on the outcome of the European elections, 27/05
- Cardinal Marx congratulates M. Van Rompuy on being awarded the Charlemagne Prize, 29/05
- COMECE Secretariat regrets EU Commission's decision on the 'One of Us' citizens' initiative, 05/06
- COMECE Statement on the outcome of the EU-religious leaders annual meeting, 10/06



- COMECE-CEEE Statement on the Catholic social days for Europe, 22/09
- COMECE Bishops message in Verdun, 11/11
- COMECE Autumn Plenary final press statement, 13/11
- Cardinal Marx statement on the visit of Pope Francis to the EU Parliament, 25/11
- COMECE-CEC Statement on the outcome of the Dialogue Seminar on Human trafficking, 27/11
- COMECE-CEC Statement on the outcome of the meeting with the Italian EU Presidency, 19/12

9 | FINANCES

2014 Expenses related to work areas



Total expenditure:
1 180 000 €

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 2014

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. 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)

H.E. Mgr. Ferenc Cserháti

Auxiliary Bishop Esztergom-
Budapest (Hungary)

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 Nikólaos Fóscolos

Archbishop of Athens (Greece)

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. Jean-Claude Hollerich

Archbishop of the Grand
Duchy of Luxembourg

H.E. Mgr. Jean-Pierre Grallet
Archbishop of Strasbourg (France)

H.E. Mgr Peter Stumpf

Bishop of Murska Sobota
(Slovenia)

H.Em. Cardinal Josip Bozanic

Archbishop of Zagreb (Croatia)

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

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. 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)

10.2 | COMECE Secretariat

Fr Patrick H. Daly

General Secretary

Drs. Michael Kuhn

Assistant General Secretary

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

Anna Echtermann

Legal advisor for Institutional and Social Affairs

Alessandro Calcagno

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

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

Marek Misak

Advisor for External Relations;
Justice and Peace Europe

Johanna Touzel

Spokesperson & Press officer

Maud Oger

Assistant to the General Secretary
from 1st September 2014

Irmina Nockiewicz

Secretary
Interim Assistant to the General Secretary
from November 2013 until August 2014

Aimery de Vêrac

Administration & Finances

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

Jan Kapaon Poland

Gabriel Raum Germany

Adriána Vandenbossche Slovakia

Dorian Winter Germany

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, Leen Den Blauwen, for the work
she has accomplished as Assistant to the
General Secretary.*



www.comece.eu

19, Square de Meeûs, B-1050 Brussels
Tel. + 32 (2) 235 05 10 - Fax + 32 (2) 230 33 34
comece@comece.eu