



Commission des Episcopats de la Communauté Européenne
Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community
Kommission der Bischofskonferenzen der Europäischen Gemeinschaft

“Blessed are the peacemakers” Mt. 5: 9

Statement on the Iraq crisis

Spring Plenary Meeting

Brussels, 27-28 March 2003

1. At this moment of war, we the Bishops of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community, pray for peace and justice in Iraq and in the world. We recall and support the important statements made by the Holy Father and our own Bishops' Conferences, and express our concern above all for the people who are suffering as the result of longstanding injustice and now war. This is not a conflict between religions, and the name of God should never be invoked to justify the resort to war or the use of violence. We appeal to Christians, Jews and Muslims to work together in solidarity in order to bring an end to the current strife in the region and to promote harmonious relations in our own countries.
2. We welcome the commitment of the European Union to provide humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people. This commitment to the victims of war represents an important step towards a just order in the region. For the same reason, we also strongly urge the European Union, with its partners in the international community, to redouble their efforts to help find a lasting solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. It is in these ways that the European Union can, through common action, make a significant contribution to peace and justice at this time.

3. This situation reinforces our conviction that the world needs a system of global governance capable of promoting and sustaining peace and the common good, in which the United Nations must play the central role. We hope that the work of the European Convention will lead a more united Europe to assume its responsibilities in such a system. For this, we believe that good relations based on mutual respect between the European Union and the United States of America are essential.

Signed by the Bishops delegated to COMECE by the Bishops' Conferences of the Member States and Accession Countries of the European Union:

Bishop Josef Homeyer (Germany) – President;

Bishop Adrianus van Luyn (Netherlands) – Vice-President;

Archbishop Hippolyte Simon (France) – Vice-President;

Bishop John Crowley (England & Wales);

Bishop Teodoro De Faria (Portugal);

Bishop Jozef De Kesel (Belgium);

Bishop Joseph Duffy (Ireland);

Bishop Egon Kapellari (Austria);

Bishop William Kenney (Scandinavia);

Bishop Giuseppe Merisi (Italy);

Bishop John Mone (Scotland);

Archbishop Elias Yanes Álvarez (Spain);

Bishop Amédée Grab (Switzerland) – President of CCEE;

Bishop Václav Malý (Czech Republic);

Archbishop Henryk Muszynski (Poland);

Bishop Frantisek Rabek (Slovakia);

Bishop Antón Stres (Slovenia);

Bishop András Veres (Hungary).

Brussels

28 March 2003