

# The Evolution of the European Union and the Responsibility of Catholics



Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community

# THE EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CATHOLICS

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*Notice to the reader*

*The following text was written in response to a request made by the Bishops of the COMECE. It was written by a group of theologians and philosophers from several European countries, under the supervision of Monsignor Hippolyte Simon, Archbishop of Clermont (France) and vice-president of the COMECE. This text therefore clearly does not have the status of official church texts. It is not to be confused with authoritative texts such as, for example, the Ecclesia in Europa post-synodal exhortation, or texts published by an Episcopal conference.*

*This text has no ambition other than to invite its readers to reflect on the development of the European Union, specifically in the years 2004 and 2005, during which time the Union grew to twenty-five Member States. It was first published in June 2003 with the provisional title "Let us open our hearts". It was then debated and enriched with amendments proposed by various groups of readers. Then, finally, it was altered to take into account the conclusions of the theological Congress organised in April 2004 at Santiago de Compostela by the COMECE.*

*It is first and foremost addressed to citizens who identify themselves as Catholics, but it can also serve as a basis for dialogue with all of the Christians of the Union. It constitutes an invitation to them to gauge their responsibility in the process of the development of the European Union. It also targets all those who might want to know what Catholics might think about their responsibility in the evolution of European integration. As such this text is open to all.*

*It is a text with a pedagogical purpose which merits study and debate in groups or by teams, be they at the heart of a parish, a movement or a university. Readers should not applaud or condemn it in its current state. Rather, readers should use it as a starting point, like a catalyst or an aid to their own work, so that they might reach a personal understanding about their own commitment to the service of an evolving Europe.*

*This text is translated from the original French version.*

## Preface

Will the Christian heritage of our continent continue to permeate European construction? Can a theological reflection on key moments in recent European history throw light on this question? What moral obligations arise from the Christian heritage for Catholics in the European Union, indeed for dialogue among themselves, and also with other European citizens and with the institutions of the European Union? What is the impact of the political unification of Europe?

This document addresses these questions. Its publication by the bishop members of COMECE comes at a crucial moment for the Catholic Church, as well as for the European Union. However, this is not the only reason for this text, entitled “The Evolution of the European Union and the Responsibility of Catholics”, a text, which is in itself, something of a new departure.

This document does not dwell on a specific aspect of European politics to which the bishops of COMECE wish to respond, such as has been the case on other occasions. Nor does it focus upon an interpretation or an evaluation of the evolution of the European Union from an doctrinal perspective. It is more an effort from a particularly Christian perspective to offer an understanding of the European construction which has marked decisively and enduringly the political evolution of our continent for more than five decades. In this, I believe, resides the singular importance of this text.

In the course of the past few years, such a first step towards a theological reading of the political process with its lasting consequences for Europe and the whole world appears to us to be more and more necessary and demanding.

The pleasure and satisfaction that I derived from reading this text leads me to express my gratitude. Firstly I thank Mgr. Hippolyte Simon, Archbishop of Clermont (France) and vice-president of COMECE. With support from a group of theologians, he was the driving force behind the preparation of this document, also in its earlier version entitled “Let us open our hearts” that was submitted to a wide consultation. In this regard, I equally wish to thank all the groups and all the people who assisted the writing of this new document through their contributions and their commentaries during this consultation.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to cordially invite all of the Catholics of Europe, all the Christians of other Churches and all interested persons, to join us on this path as we take this step. I am intimately convinced that reading, meditating and discussing this text is a way of serving Europe.

*Mgr. Josef Homeyer,  
President of COMECE and  
Bishop emeritus of Hildesheim, Germany.*

## Introduction

**1.** The accession to the European Union on 1 May 2004 of ten new Member States, eight of which had recently been liberated from the former Soviet Empire, is an historic event with consequences which may still remain largely unpredictable. However, we can already consider this date as being one of those millenary milestones, as stated by Popes Paul VI and John Paul II<sup>1</sup>, which punctuates the march of the peoples towards unity.

This was an historic event. It marked the end of the division of Europe into two antagonistic camps. For those who remember the anxieties of the Cold War, it seems like a promise of better times to come. For the first time since the war of 1914-18, it opens – at least we hope – all the peoples of Europe to the first real prospect of a lasting peace in their part of the world.

**2.** In view of the importance and scope of such an event, one would have expected that an explosion of enthusiasm would have been evident in all the countries concerned. Instead, we are amazed at the relative moderation of the public reaction that greeted these new accessions. It is true that popular enthusiasm had already been expressed at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. It is also true that the peoples directly concerned had shown their desire to integrate with the European Union by decisively voting during the preceding referenda.

Despite this, in view of the importance of this event and of all the promises it represents, we continue to feel that the actors and con-

<sup>1</sup> Message of Pope Paul VI to the Council of Europe, 26 January 1977 and John Paul II's Angelus Messages for Sunday, 31 October 1999 and Sunday, 27 January 2002.

temporary witnesses of these accessions have not yet become fully aware of all that it involves and represents.

3. This relative moderation can be explained: as it was a peaceful and non-violent event, it is fairly normal for the actors who experience it not to perceive its full importance. Peace is like health. It is a blessing that is perceived only when it is lacking. The rest of the time one hardly thinks of it. No doubt the majority of the citizens of the European Union do not realise the privileges we enjoy. We are in fact the first generation that has not known war on the soil of Western Europe. This privilege is priceless! All citizens of the Union should be invited to step back and stand aloof from their everyday worries in order to try and take stock of everything they owe to the European construction.

4. To deepen the analysis, we can make a second observation. We can in fact perceive a difference in the vocabularies generally used to describe this event.

The fifteen countries already integrated readily speak of the **enlargement of the European Union**. The new members, for their part, speak instead of the **reunification of Europe**. This difference in vocabulary is vital and requires all of our attention, because it is much more significant than it might appear.

For the fifteen countries which were already members of the European Union before 1 May 2004, the accession of ten new States does not in itself constitute a very great upheaval. It forms part of the existing situation. As long as the tragedies that marked the 20th century are forgotten – and contented people easily forget – the enlargement of the European Union seems self-evident. After all, it may seem to us fairly obvious that cities like Warsaw, Prague, Vilnius or Budapest are European cities just like London, Berlin, Paris, Madrid

or Rome. It is therefore normal that they should in turn become tourist destinations.

Conversely, **the new members**, and especially those that were recently liberated from Soviet totalitarianism, are more likely to speak of European Reunification. In this way, these eight States wish to signify that they are merely taking their place again among European nations. They are aware, and this remains engraved in their flesh, that they were separated from the other European nations, brutally and arbitrarily by the Second World War and the Yalta agreements in 1945. Indeed, and in spite of the promises made by Stalin to proceed with democratic elections in all countries freed from Nazism, as of 1945 these eight countries found themselves prisoners behind what became known as the “Iron Curtain”. For these countries, the 1 May 2004 therefore marks the end of a tragedy and an injustice. This date is not just a moment in the development of an organic process: it truly heralds a rupture in their history and the dawn of a new era.

5. *There is a precision that needs to be made here which is pertinent to the whole text: in reducing to just two groups the differences in perceptions of, and reactions to, the same event, we are well aware of simplifying things in the extreme. It is obvious, for instance, that Malta and Cyprus did not react to this event of the 1 May 2004 as did the other new Member States. Their history, even over the duration of the last fifty years, has very little in common with that of the other eight countries. In the same way, we know that among the fifteen countries that were already integrated, there are also big differences, both insofar as their history and sensibilities are concerned. We leave it then to each reader, or each group of readers, in accordance with their respective cultures and national histories, to ensure that they bring their own understanding to our text and arguments.*

*Taking account of all possible nuances, we consider that it is possible to*

*introduce an important observation in respect of these two salient approaches vis-a-vis the historic event of 1 May 2004 which we have highlighted.*

6. Far from being purely anecdotal, this difference in vocabulary is profoundly revealing. It is in fact a sign that the same event does not entirely mean the same thing to both groups. This indicates a responsibility of all the citizens of the European Union: if we wish to avoid misunderstandings which would be ruinous in the future, we should, without fail, take the time and resources to understand one another mutually. We will not be able to build a common future if we are unable to find a common memory capable of integrating our fragmented memories. In effect the first source of misunderstandings between two peoples, or two groups of people, lies in the manner in which each interprets its own history and the history of its relations with the other. It should thus be recognised that these two histories, especially between neighbouring peoples who have known past mutual conflicts, are the inverse reflection of the other. For instance where there is a victory for one people, is a defeat for the other. If there is a wish for mutual understanding, there must therefore begin to exist a mutual agreement on this crucial point.

Knowledge of the culture and of the history of the other Member States of the Union is therefore a vital duty for all citizens and each nation which make up this Union. Failing this, it will be impossible to arrive at a truly common consciousness and at a genuine European citizenship. In order to avoid lack of understanding, all citizens of the Union must forthwith examine their memory. It is for all of us a priority duty. It is especially a priority task for all educators. The younger generations must be given the possibility of understanding the history of their origins if we want them to avoid the confrontations and tragedies of the past.

7. The difference in perception which we noted in regard to the event of the 1 May 2004 appears to us, to be profoundly revealing.

We see that the recent history of the peoples that have latterly become members, constitutes in a way - if we may adopt this photographic expression - the "negative" of that of the peoples which are already integrated. To cite but one example, it is clear that the year 1945 cannot mean the same thing to both. While in Western Europe this year is synonymous with liberation and marks the end of Nazism, it is synonymous with abandonment and tyranny for the peoples of Central Europe.

This simple reminder of what certain new member states experienced is a pressing invitation to look beyond superficial facts and to connect anew with the long history of Europe. We then discover that we all have a point in common: on both sides we are inheritors of a tragic history. For Europe's memory is a wounded memory and we will not be able to build our common future without taking stock of all of these wounds.

Whereas with the notion of the enlargement of the Union there is the risk that we will overlook the past and that we will focus on the problems of the present, (in particular on present economic difficulties,) the notion of the reunification of Europe invites us to view all of these events in a more profound and thoughtful manner. From 2004, we must go back to the events of the years 1989-91, which saw the disappearance of the Iron Curtain and the ruin of Soviet totalitarianism. Logically, we will then be taken back to the years 1945-50, and then to the years of the Second World War.

During this process of reflection, we will discover that these two recent histories, as divergent as they might seem to have been for the past sixty years, in actual fact take root in the common history of

Europe. Above all, we will discover that the conditions which enabled the reunification of Europe are in reality very close to those which permitted the birth of the European Union. In both cases we find a spiritual choice in favour of forgiveness and a determination to overcome violence through dialogue and solidarity. In both of these occurrences, we see a commitment from civil society and from the lifeblood of several nations intent on living in democracy and in peace. It would thus appear that these two victories, different in their chronology and in their methods, are perhaps more similar than they might initially appear. Consequently, it is on this basis that all the countries of the Union can now rediscover themselves and contemplate their common future.

8. In re-reading what enabled the birth of the Union, as well as its present development, we shall discover that the Union, before being a large market and an institutional construction, was at first the result of a political act in the noblest sense of the term. It is based on the desire for mutual forgiveness, reconciliation and peace. In this sense, the creation of the European Union is a spiritual act. And this act is basically common to all of the peoples, whether they became members previously or recently. All of the peoples of Europe, including those who did not participate in the armed conflict between 1939 and 1945, had to suffer in one way or another the barbarity and consequences of Nazism.

This is why it is possible, in this specific sense, to talk about the enlargement of the European Union. As their willingness to join the process initiated in 1950, all the Member States, old and new, subscribe to the process as laid out in the foundation agreement. It is this foundation act which must be revisited and understood in its specificity. Only by recognising the eminently spiritual character of this initial can reconciliation between the peoples of the Union be lasting.

9. From this point on, we can outline a few subjects which can be reflected on by all Catholics who are now citizens of the European Union. As the European Union, at its current stage of development, is based on the confluence of two historic movements charged with great spiritual significance, we are invited to recall the spiritual, moral and cultural conditions that have made possible its creation, birth and progressive integration.

In the text, “*Let us open our hearts*”, which we published in June 2003 we have already invited people to re-read the Declaration of Robert Schuman of 9 May 1950 as a spiritual act<sup>2</sup>, for its potential is still being realised today. This part of the text has been enriched by proposed amendments from groups and readers who sent us their reactions. We now propose this amended and enriched text here in Part 1.

10. On the basis of the suggestions of our readers and in accordance with the ideas set out above, we invite our readers also to reconsider the turning point of the years 1989-91 as regards its spiritual meaning and scope. As has been indicated to us by Pope John Paul II himself in his encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, it is necessary to become more clearly acquainted with the conditions which are, above all, spiritual and moral and which made it possible to exit from Soviet totalitarianism as discussed in Part 2.

11. After this Christian interpretation of the two moments without which the European Union could not have become what it is today, we shall be able to project ourselves towards the future. In fact we have to ask ourselves what it means for the European Union to be the privileged heir to the Christian tradition because the EU is not just the result of two events and the contexts which we have recalled. The Union is the product of a long historical process. Under what

<sup>2</sup> The text of the Schuman Declaration is to be found in the Annex.



conditions can we speak of a Europe that is “Christian”, not only in its origins and its roots, but also in its plans and goals? In other words, how can Catholics as citizens of the European Union show themselves to be genuine Disciples of Christ and seek to put into practice the Sermon on the Mount? This will be the subject of the third part of our text.

**12.** The Christian tradition does not only belong to the past. It cannot be summed up in a patrimony of historical experiences and of political and social wisdom. It continues to nourish the commitment of citizens who explicitly see themselves as believers in Christ. All those who see themselves as disciples of Jesus of Nazareth are to engage themselves in a personal spiritual experience and to put all their talents at the service of their brothers in humanity. (3rd part A.)

The primary mission of the Church, and thus of the particular Churches which are the dioceses, is not to undertake a defined political project. However, while pursuing their primary goal, which is to bring the Gospel to all creatures, the particular Churches make an indirect but very significant contribution to life in the countries where they are developing. With this in mind, it is interesting to note how, in thousands of ways, the Catholic communities in Europe contribute to the cultural and spiritual vitality of the Union, while respecting the various competences of each of the institutions. They also contribute, in a very significant manner, by engaging in a fraternal ecumenical dialogue with the other Christian communities.

Together, all the Christian churches and communities are called upon to establish a respectful dialogue with all religious communities present in Europe. (3rd part B.)

Finally, the Christian tradition has a wealth of social doctrine and experience which can be useful for society as a whole. We should

note and examine the points of convergence between the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church and the current direction of the European Union? It is, of course, not a matter of wishing for the confessionalisation of institutions nor to regard political institutions as sacred, but of measuring how the Social Doctrine of the Church can assist both discernment and commitment on the part of the citizens of the EU. We come to these conclusions on the basis of the Church's experiences over two millennia. They can nourish the commitment of citizens who see themselves as inheritors of a European history marked by Christianity, but who do not explicitly have faith in Christ. (3rd part C.)

**13.** In offering this research, we are inviting all Catholics to meditate on the invitation of Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Europa*. In paragraph 111, he writes: “*Saying ‘Europe’ must be equivalent to saying ‘openness’.*”

This call to openness is indeed an effort to which all the citizens of Europe are called, particularly Catholics. Today, this opening of the heart is a question for the consciences of all Catholics in Europe.

## Part One:

### Re-reading the Declaration of Robert Schuman: a contribution to a Christian discernment of the European Union.

#### 14. The process of integration via the EU: reviewing the process thus far

Now that the European Union has taken an historic step forward and given that it is searching for its future direction, it is important to recall some major steps, particularly the starting impulse. This point of departure remains important for all countries of the Union. It is not important whether they were amongst the founders or whether they joined later: by becoming members they entered into a shared history and a common project.

On 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, made a proposal to the Federal Republic of Germany and to other interested European states: the formation of a community to serve the cause of peace. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) came into being in 1951, and from this initiative over time grew the EU. This impulse continued to develop through the legal amendments and institutional improvements which followed. In this way the Community of Six was born. There then followed successive memberships, through a succession of procedures, both of enlargement and of deepening:

**1957:** The Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community (EEC)

**1957:** The European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)

- 1962:** The introduction of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- 1967:** The preceding institutions merge into the Commission and the Council
- 1968:** The customs union
- 1973:** The accession of Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom
- 1979:** The first direct elections to the European Parliament
- 1981:** The accession of Greece
- 1986:** The membership of Spain and Portugal
- 1986:** The Single European Act
- 1990:** The membership of East Germany
- 1995:** The membership of Austria, Finland and Sweden
- 1992/1997:** The Treaty on European Union
- 1999:** The introduction of the Euro as the single currency
- 2000:** The Treaty of Nice and the adoption of the Charter of Fundamental Rights
- 2004:** The membership of ten new Member States and the signature of the Constitutional Treaty

#### 15. The Robert Schuman Declaration

Even if, after placing it in its historical context the proposal made by Robert Schuman, drawing on the ideas of Jean Monnet, appears like an option tailored to the particular needs of France at the time, it also opened a courageous path intended for the future of the whole of Europe. In effect, it permitted the integration of national interests into a wider entity. In response to this initial

proposal, other political leaders, including Konrad Adenauer, Joseph Bech, Alcide de Gasperi and Paul-Henri Spaak, adopted a similar attitude and responded positively. In the face of the dramatic situations experienced by their nations, they chose a method which permitted bypassing nationalism.

#### 16. Essential principles which determined the founding of the European Union

According to Robert Schuman's declaration, the intuition which gave birth to the process of European integration rested on a series of conclusions drawn from European history:

*"Peace in Europe depends on the ability to surmount the inherited conflicts of many centuries, and to find new ways of co-operating in the wake of this reconciliation."*

*"The way towards peace would only be possible at the price of a co-operation which could never be forced but which depended on the voluntary participation of every one engaged in it."*

*"European unity would not be attained in one day or the next, but would be the result of a long historical process."*

*"European unity would be constructed with patience, not in the abstract, but through a certain number of clearly defined measures, both by solidarity in action and by continual sharing of responsibility."*

#### 17. Reconciliation, peace, liberty and solidarity: the "prophetic" scope of a political declaration

Inspired by these conclusions, Schuman proposed an act of great spiritual dimension in his declaration of 9 May 1950, because it was essentially an appeal for mutual forgiveness<sup>3</sup>. In effect, in spite of all the institutional considerations, he expressed a desire both for reconciliation with Germany, a country until then consid-

ered an enemy of France, and for a very specific vision of European unity. Setting in train such a process of European integration had to respond to an immense desire for peace in Europe. This desire was really very great after the violence and terror endured during the Second World War. In its opening sentences, the Schuman declaration defined *peace as the objective* of the proposed project. Then the declaration sought to respect the desire for liberty and self-determination of the people and citizens. This desire had grown under the occupation and repression imposed by the dictators of the 20th century. Also the authors of this document chose *liberty as a basic principle* for relations between countries which united to form a community.

Finally, it endeavoured to react to the great hope of gathering the fruits of solidarity in reconstruction, after the experience of shared poverty. In order to facilitate solidarity in the sharing of material goods, the Schuman declaration foresaw *a method of solidarity in the sharing of power*. It broke away from a form of politics which sought to achieve the maximum advantage in the short term from victory. These are, in our view, the reasons why the Schuman Declaration had the richness of a spiritual gesture. We can be inspired by it anew, as citizens and believers. An attentive study of this text can without doubt provide us with an important orientation for our current moral choices and political involvement.

#### 18. World peace as an objective

*"World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it. The contribution which an organised and living Europe can bring to civilisation is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations."* These are the opening words of Robert Schuman's declaration.

At the end of the Second World War, the task assigned to an integrated Europe was to devise a method capable of resolving disagree-

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 6:14-15, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

ments, and thus to eliminate forever recourse to armed conflict. This goal has not changed while the number of member states has grown significantly, and so it is not a type of economic or national egoism that has driven the process of integration, but rather the will to reject barbarism. For if Europe at last knew peace, she would be able to make her contribution to the peace of the world. The Schuman initiative sought in the first place to prevent Europe, first and foremost France and Germany, from falling again into the rivalries of the past. The new Coal and Steel Community contributed decisively to the creation of a consolidated peace in Western Europe, whilst simultaneously promoting the development of the economy and of democracy.

Including security and defence policy in the constitutional treaty<sup>4</sup>, should not be perceived as a contradiction, but as a necessary consequence. We live in a world where misunderstandings and injustice continue to engender hatred and where hatred regularly explodes into violence. The struggle against terrorism only reinforces the urgency of this policy of integration.

The prime objective of European integration is peace, but a peace that is not reserved solely for Europe, but for the world. For Christians, the promise of an universal peace is part of the irreversible dynamism of the reconciliation realised by Christ.<sup>5</sup> This promise gives them life and supports their efforts for peace in the world.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Art. I-40. These current efforts echo the proposed European Defence Community, which failed miserably during the 1950s.

<sup>5</sup> Letter to the Ephesians, 2: 14-17: "*For he is our peace, the one who turned both groups into one and who destroyed the middle wall of partition, the hostility, in his flesh, when he nullified the law of commandments in decrees. He did this to create in himself one new man out of two, thus making peace, and to reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by which the hostility has been killed. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.*"

## 19. The principle of free accession: self-determination and the free engagement of the contracting parties

Realising the objective of peace, at least internally, has become possible because of the desire to respect the freedom and self-determination of the contracting parties, in view of a freely chosen co-operation. Respect for the free engagement in the project can therefore be considered as a basic principle of European integration. The Schuman Declaration speaks of "*a community of production open to all those who wish to participate.*"

Contrary to the imperialist enterprises which wanted to impose on Europe the supremacy of a single nation, lasting peace could not be based on anything other than an assembly freely ratified by all the parties concerned. The treaties of the European Union are based on a concept of freedom which asks the contracting parties to decide on their engagement in a durable process, and not on a freedom derived from the possibility of doing as one wants at any moment. The Treaties of Rome do not contain exit clauses. And even if a future European constitution should provide for one<sup>6</sup>, it will be necessary to follow a very specific procedure including a negotiated agreement between the Union and the state in question, so that the Member State may be able to withdraw from the Union.

The principle of free accession also illustrates the historical limits of the route chosen for integration. The impetus for the foundation of what later became the EU was given at a moment when weapons had fallen silent. This project was not concerned with the immediate regulation of an armed conflict. It was stimulated by a threat which had disappeared. The contribution that Europe could bring to global peace by choosing voluntary integration could in no way become an "automatic" process. Equally, the process chosen for European integration, limited to Western Europe during the period of the Cold War, was unable to hinder the utilisation of military

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Art. I-60.

force to quell the upheavals of the East Germans, the Hungarians, the Czechoslovakians and the Poles. European powerlessness was manifested just as clearly during the conflict in the Balkans. This crisis showed that the EU did not have the capacity to use force to assist threatened populations. These weak points open our eyes to the fragility that remains.

In spite of everything, the principle of European integration is freedom. This freedom exists with a view to a firm and lasting commitment to a community composed of diverse states and peoples. But this freedom to choose is not ephemeral, for it even transforms the identity of the states and peoples involved. For Christians, the freedom which constitutes their faith is not ephemeral either. It realises itself as a commitment to solidarity.<sup>7</sup>

## 20. The method of solidarity and sharing sovereignty

The impulse for the foundation of Europe was given with the aim of instituting “*a real solidarity*.” Solidarity here means the achievement of a real unity, in respect for the common good, based on the equality of partners. Moreover, the Catholic Church finds the source of solidarity as regards this unity at the very heart of her faith.<sup>8</sup> Solidarity must therefore not be thought of as a unilateral condescension on the part of the rich towards the poor.

In the particular context of its time, the Schuman Declaration spoke of a solidarity:

<sup>7</sup> Letter to the Galatians, 5: 13-14: “*For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity to indulge your flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law can be summed up in a single commandment, namely, ‘You must love your neighbour as yourself.’*”

<sup>8</sup> Vatican II, Constitution “*Gaudium et Spes*”, no. 24: “*Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, ‘that all may be one. . . as we are one’ (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God’s sons in truth and charity.*”

- which was not limited by national frontiers, and which indicated to the European states a possible way of overcoming national blockages;
- which should have consequences for improving the living conditions of workers in all the states concerned;
- which should extend beyond the individual contracting parties and which should take into account the duty of solidarity of Europe towards other peoples.

The historical novelty resided in the creation of common institutions, particularly the High Authority, which was later transformed and became the European Commission, as well as in the controlling power conferred on the European Court of Justice. These institutions make it possible to concretely go beyond national powers, in a manner both new and nonetheless real, while at the same time guaranteeing a minimum level of participation for the smallest and weakest states.

These institutions do not rely in the first place on force, but on solidarity which recognises an equal right of existence for the small as much as for the large nations.

Solidarity is the method of European integration. It presumes that the big states do not insist on the application of a pure and simple proportionality in the distribution of seats and votes in the institutions, while the smaller states undertake not to block the decision-making process and not to paralyse the Union.

## 21. Free accession and solidarity: a conflicting relationship

When the EU receives numerous Member States, the limits of solidarity as its basic method are displayed when a single country can effectively prevent all the other states from acting. This situation creates a strained relationship: since no nation should be obliged

to act contrary to its will (the principle of free accession), it must nevertheless remain possible to attain the common objective (peace in Europe). The changes currently taking place in the EU will inevitably lead to a re-negotiation of the minimum level of participation. This explains the difficulty the intergovernmental conference had in finding an agreement on the system of voting in the Council of Ministers when it negotiated the Constitutional Treaty at the end of 2003 and during the first half of 2004.

The same contradiction is found in respect of the economy. Since the collapse of the Soviet system, the market economy has emerged as the principal solution to resolve the problem of the allocation of limited resources. But very often this increases the inequalities between the social strata, and leaves individuals in difficulty, if not in destitution. The market economy therefore needs minimum regulation to ensure its good functioning. On the one hand, this should guarantee competition and avoid monopolies. On the other hand, it should maintain social cohesion and protect the most needy families and individuals. The question is raised of how to find a balance between freedom of enterprise, which has shown its effectiveness in the production of wealth, and common regulations capable of ensuring the common good and solidarity between all citizens.

## **22. The method of solidarity is applicable to the global society and to future generations**

Solidarity as a method can be applied to relations between contracting states involved in the process of European integration. However, it should be noted that, from the beginning of European integration, Robert Schuman's declaration not only advocated reducing inequalities between the living standards of industrial workers in the different countries concerned but also enunciated the obligations of Europe towards the African continent. This reference to links between Europe and Africa was mainly the result of a colonial

situation, now thankfully behind us. Europe still retains a particular responsibility towards Africa.

However, account must also be taken of solidarity towards future generations as well as the contribution of the EU to the sustainable development of the whole of humanity. In this respect, one particular aspect of this solidarity by the EU with the rest of the world must be stressed: given their common religious roots and culture, and given the decisive engagement of America in the last century, the European Union and the United States of America should work together to build more solidarity in the world. It is a necessity incumbent on these two regions of the world, given the level of development they have reached. Furthermore the end of the Cold War enables the European Union to establish anew historic links with its neighbouring countries and in accordance with their specificity. However, in saying this, we must not lose sight of the fact that this commitment to build together greater justice and solidarity in the world is, from a Christian point of view, rooted in a more profound hope.

## **23. How to deploy a conviction rooted in faith in political and historical reality?**

The hope that is ours as Christians rests on the profound conviction that our paths, both as individuals and as communities, opens up to us a future resting in the hands of God. This confidence, however, cannot be confused with a naive vision that imagines the future in terms of linear progress. Christians profess the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the heart of their hope in the Kingdom. The will to place oneself at the service of others is not stalled by uncertainties about the success of our efforts at relieving more of the world's suffering. This perspective, for us Christians, shares in the experience of the Cross, in the following of Jesus Christ<sup>9</sup>. It is He whom we revere as the redeemer of all humanity.

<sup>9</sup> Luke 6:40, "A disciple is not above his teacher, but every one when is fully taught will be like

The Cross of the Risen Lord is for His disciples, the source of a hope which cannot be checked by either human culpability or by human failure. Today we regard the Cross not as a triumphalist sign of a supposedly glorious history of Christendom in Europe, but rather as the symbol which invites us to read the signs of the present time, and to seize the challenges of action and engagement.

*“Charity and its works will remain”*<sup>10</sup>. It is the light of this profound spiritual truth which enables us to discern the “prophetic” scope of the initiative that has given birth to the process of European integration. Peace as the aim, freedom as the principle, and solidarity as the method, constitute this truth, and concretely translate into the register of history. In fact, after fifty years of experience, we are able to say that peace has been established in the EU, that freedom is respected, and that we have progressed in solidarity.

For many Catholics, European integration has crystallised their hopes for world peace, for democracy, and for international justice. And they actively engage in these aims. Nonetheless, other Catholics have remained or become sceptical about the reality of European integration, because we are still far from the initial promises. It is possible that they do not see how solidarity can transcend the nation.

In fact, until the end of the Cold War, Robert Schuman’s declaration and the project which it inspired have remained the special concern of political elites in Europe. Citizens did not really begin to feel concerned until after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

#### 24. Another point of view on a shared history

The foregoing remarks have to be nuanced. History is not only the business of States. It is in fact important to note how the

diverse parties that comprise western civil society felt affected by the dramatic events that punctuated the years of the Cold War, between 1945 and 1989. Even if governments showed their incapacity for action, diverse sections of western public opinion reacted each time one of the peoples of Central Europe was subjected to aggression by *he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, ‘If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’*”

*his teacher,”* or Mark 8:43, “*And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, ‘If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’*”

<sup>10</sup> Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* no. 39

## Part Two

### Another History of Europe

**25.** At the time that the process of integration was unfolding in Western Europe, the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe were experiencing an altogether different history. The Munich Accords signed by Germany, Italy, Great Britain and France in 1938, followed by the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact in 1939 meant that, in effect, Czechoslovakia was left occupied by the Third Reich while Poland was attacked by the Soviets and Germany together. Towards the end of the war, at the summits in Tehran, Yalta and Potsdam, the representatives of the USA, Great Britain and the USSR, sanctioned the split of the post-war world into two spheres of influence, thus placing Central Europe under the “protectorate” of the Soviet Union. But Stalin did not respect either the letter or the spirit of these accords, since he did not allow free elections to take place as he had promised inside “his” sphere.

**26.** The peoples of Central Europe did not easily accept the communist system which was imposed upon them by force. Berlin 1953, Budapest 1956, Poznan 1956, Prague 1968, Warsaw 1968, Gdansk and Gdynia 1970, Radom and Ursus 1976, Gdansk, Szczecin, Jastrzebie 1980, the opposition during martial law in Poland between 1981-1983 – especially the coal mine Wujek, - these were the principle “centres of resistance” against communism. The protestations of entire populations, the creation of a democratic opposition in East Germany, in Hungary, in Poland and in Czechoslovakia, the inefficiency of the communist economic system as well as a number of circumstances on the international scene, meant that the whole system came crashing down. As seen from the outside, this conclu-

sion was facilitated by developments following the Helsinki Accords in 1975.

Even if we can make here only glancing reference to all of these events, it is nonetheless very important to keep them in mind if we want to attain a real common consciousness between all the peoples of what is presently the European Union. The teaching of history – and of all of history, with its many complexities – constitutes a definitive precursor to any European citizenry.

**27.** The events of the decisive year of 1989 were the object of theological interpretation in the encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, which we owe to one of the participants of these events, Pope John Paul II. His analysis can be summarised in three chapters: the rejection of violence and lies, the experience of a concrete solidarity, and the understanding of religion as a message of liberty.

#### A

#### *The rejection of violence and lies*

**28.** We read in the encyclical (CA 23) that “*Apparently, the European order that resulted from the Second World War and that was enshrined by the Yalta Accords could only be upset by another war.*” It is possible that our memories have already expunged any consciousness of danger and despair that was brought forth by the Cold War. And this could, at any moment, erupt into a burning war. And yet, this system founded on violence and the outright rejection of human rights unravelled before us, almost without a shot fired. (One must not forget, meanwhile, the conflicts in the Balkans or in Chechnya which began after the collapse of communism, but are not isolated from it). People apparently powerless found a weapon which proved to be more powerful and effective than all military capability. Such is the reason that the events of 1989 carry in them



a universal message and one which is very much pertinent when faced with the temptation to employ terror when trying to resolve conflicts.

The essence of the new method aimed at transforming the world: the alternative to war and revolution was the rejection of violence and the choosing of moral intransigence when one had to stand up for human dignity and give testimony to truth. The totalitarian system was condemned from within by its intrinsic contradictions; the peoples freed themselves peacefully largely thanks to “*the non-violent action of men who, having always refused to cede to the influence of force, were able to find in each case the most effective way to testify for the truth*” (CA 23). Such testimony sometimes resulted in martyrdom. One need merely cite the example of Father Jerzy Popieluszko and the motto of his life: “*Do not allow yourself to be defeated by evil, defeat evil with good.*” (Rm 12,21)

The method of action which was adopted originated in the principle that every man, and even his adversary, has a conscience. This means that man is only capable of staying on the side of evil so long as he is able to justify it to himself as a form of good that he must defend. “*This disarmed the adversary* – concluded the Pope – *since violence always needs to legitimise itself through lies and to give itself the appearance, even if falsely, of defending a right or of responding to a threat from others.*” (CA 23) This method therefore proved itself effective since these men were able to find a narrow pathway that rose above the choice between the revolt against servitude and the obligation to love one’s enemy, “*between cowardice that bows to evil and violence that only aggravates it while thinking it is combating it.*” (CA 25) As such, they were able to find the opening that led to the conscience of their adversaries even as these, at first, did not feel bound by any moral principles.

## B

### *The experience of solidarity*

29. In an era during which the communist powers tended to atomise society and when the official ideology preached the inevitability of the clash of the classes, the word “solidarity” began to make ground in Poland. Civil society, till then split and divided, reconstituted its fabric and its sentiment of community around the person of Pope John Paul II. His first pilgrimage to Poland and his *prayer “calling the Holy Spirit to come forth and to renew the face of Polish lands”* gave birth to the worker-driven creation of the independent and autonomous union called “Solidarnosc”. It was to become the first worker revolt “*behind the Iron Curtain*” for which a clear call was made for religious inspiration. As it was, it was important that a legal organisation, independent of the State authorities, finally saw the day for the first time in the Soviet bloc. But it is also important that it was this idea of “Solidarity” that formed the backbone of this union of ten million members.

It received its baptism of fire during the years of the civil oppression. Did this national movement really have as its foundations the feeling of community, which is stronger than all those things which can humanely separate us? The thoughts of the Pope on solidarity were invaluable both as set out in the encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and advocated in his successive pilgrimages. In Gdansk, in the birth-place of “Solidarnosc”, on 12 June 1987, John Paul II repeated: “*Let each one carry the burden of the other’ – this concise phrase of the Apostle is the inspiration of social solidarity and of that between all men. Solidarity signifies: one and the other, and if there is a burden, well then it must be taken on together, within the community. So: never one against the other. Never them against us.*” Here appears the consciousness of an obligation that must be undertaken and that cannot be simply rejected to facilitate escape.

A second element also appears in this idea. It is the feeling of the community to which we belong; a community which ensures that in these travails or this misfortune, the human person does not feel alone. Another person always accompanies me and helps me to carry the burden. We could ask ourselves: why would somebody, of his own volition, take on a burden which is not his own? He could very well not do it, pass by or even look and then walk on as in the parable of the Levite and the priest who walked by the injured man; and nobody would have the right to blame him.

If we realise that we must act differently, this is the sign that there exists in the human heart, a compassion which is capable of transcending all frontiers. In this regard, it is significant that Jesus gives us as an example the Samaritan, one who comes from elsewhere. For this reason, our thoughts, profoundly marked by Christianity is simultaneously invited to transcend all borders. In this respect the attitude of Mother Theresa is, to us, clear enough and if her “lightning” beatification does not warrant any justification, it is because we have so often heard the parable of the Good Samaritan during our childhood.

Why did the Samaritan stop? The man convulsing on the ground was neither a member of his family, nor of his people, nor of his religious community. Everything separated him from that half-dead man. It was the misery of that man that stopped the Samaritan, a state of misery past which he could not walk indifferently. His actions do not have any univocal rational explanation. He, someone from the outside and who is utterly a stranger, nonetheless feels compassion when seeing the suffering of others. If we check in the text of the Evangelist for the difference in the reaction of the priest and Levite to the reaction of this “stranger” we will find some very simple words that Saint Luke added to the description of this incident. “*But a Samaritan, (...) came near him, saw him and was struck*

*with pity.*” (Luke 10:33). It was what was missing in the servants of God who were returning from the Temple. And so it is from this emotion and compassion when faced with the misery of the human condition, that solidarity spontaneously is born.

## C

### *Religion – a message of liberty*

**30.** Christian inspiration played a considerable role in the course of the events in Europe in 1989. In the debate that is ongoing today about the public role of religion, it is often presented as a source of potential threat to social peace and to the freedom of men. The experience of Central Europe can offer an alternative view point.

Religion has played an entirely different role in the lives of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe when compared to what it has played on the western side of the continent. In Western Europe, there were rigorous attempts to apply the principle that there should only be one (religious) confession in each State. On the contrary, in Transylvania and Poland, and well before the Reformation, there existed a highly developed religious pluralism. It was one of the manifestations of cultural pluralism. In the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, almost every single ethnic group that inhabited the Polish-Lithuanian territory practised its own religion: the Poles and a segment of the Lithuanians were Catholics, the Russians were Orthodox, the Germans were Lutherans and Calvinists, The Armenians were Monophysites, the Jews adhered to Judaism and the Tartars adhered to Islam. In an era during which religious persecution was the order of the day in Western Europe, here reigned, almost everywhere, freedom of religion; a freedom which was legally guaranteed. This freedom was assured by, amongst other things, the Act of the Warsaw Confederation which was adopted on the 28 January 1573. This Act gave the nobility the right to the free choice of religion and at

the same time it forbade the State authorities to exercise religious discrimination when awarding functions, land or leases.

The reasons behind this attitude were numerous. If we look at a map of Medieval Europe we will note that the borders that separated the Christian world from the pagan world passed through two States: Spain and Poland. On the Iberian peninsula Catholicism served the cause of uniting the country against the Moors, whereas in Poland, which struggled in what it perceived to be a mortal fight against the Teutonic Order of Knights, the people benefited equally from the help of the partly heathen Lithuanian people as well as from the Tartars. Tolerance thus became a rational imperative. In such a context, The Academy of Cracow formulated, one hundred years before the school of Salamanca, the elements pertaining to the theory on the rights of nations which was presented at the Council of Constance in 1417 by the rector of the Academy, Paulus Vladimiri. The essence of this tradition was very well expressed by Jan Zamojski, hetman and Chancellor of the Republic of Poland, when he addressed the Protestants with the following words: *"I would sacrifice my hand to see you all converted but I would also use my other hand to help to defend you if you were to be persecuted for your religion."*

The tradition of a benevolent attitude toward religion can also be found later on. For many nations deprived of their own State, religion was an important part of their collective identity. For these nations, the churches were a place of refuge and were a guarantor of their freedom. *"Here, in Jasna Gora, (...) we were always in some way free"*, said John Paul II in 1983. His words expressed the feelings of many people, independently of their vision of the world and of their personal attitude toward religion.

During the years of opposition against the communist system, in certain countries in the region, there was a coming-together between the Church and the workers' movement and it was a move-

ment born of a reaction of an ethical character. *"In the crisis of Marxism there is a spontaneous resurgence of the workers' consciousness which demands justice and the recognition of the dignity of labour; as per the doctrine of the Church."* (CA 26). In addition to an interest in the social teachings of the Church, the act of turning to the Church was the result of the spiritual emptiness provoked by the official atheism imposed by the political authorities. Atheism was also the source of a considerable crisis in the realm of culture and was also the cause of a feeling of having been left behind, and of having lost track of the meaning of life, that was felt by many a person, especially the young. It is the reason why the struggle for the defence of labour was spontaneously linked to the struggle for culture and national rights. Whereas *"at the centre of every culture, as can be read in Centesimus Annus, is an attitude that man has evolved in the face of the biggest of all mysteries, the mystery of God. In fact, the cultures of the diverse nations of the world are in as many ways confronted with this question about personal existence: when this is eliminated, the culture and moral tenets of nations fall apart"*. (CA 24).

## D

### *"For Hungary and for Europe"*

**31.** In November 1956, even before artillery had fired on his office, the Director of the Hungarian press agency sent around the world a distressed telex about the Soviet offensive that was beginning that day in Budapest. The wire ended with these words: *"We are dying for Hungary and for Europe"*. These words expressed the conviction that the defence of national culture in this part of the world is inseparably linked to the struggle for the European system of values. And as Christian inspiration was for many opposition militants the basis of these values and the definitive motive to undertake the sacrifices necessary for their defence, these words enshrined the understanding that one had to sacrifice oneself equally for the Church and for Europe.

This little-known episode from the Hungarian uprising in Budapest should suffice in helping us to understand how the peoples who have just joined the European Union, already felt that they were an integral part of Europe well before being able to join the Community which was then being constituted in the West.

**32.** Starting from this simple indication, it is possible to foresee the importance that this invitation harbours for all the current citizens of the Union and to re-read their history. Indeed, in proceeding from two separate perceptions, apparently very different of the same event, we have arrived at the discovery of a common root in the long history of Europe.

Needless to say, we are well aware that having focused our attention on only two moments in time, the recent history of Europe could never be reduced to just these. We have favoured them because of their founding influence on the Union in its current configuration. We have also focused on them because they are particularly revealing as to the duty incumbent on all Member States. Indeed, the onus is on them to ensure that all their citizens appreciate these moments, one and all. Since the enlargement to twenty-five, the inaugural act that was the Schumann Declaration now belongs to all of the Member States. And, reciprocally, the democratic resistance to Soviet totalitarianism is now a part of the common heritage of the European Union, just as is the resistance to Nazi barbarism.

Just as we declared in paragraph number 5, we can only invite each group of readers to embark on this re-reading in accordance with their own situation.

Once we put ourselves back into this perspective we discover that, beyond our actual differences, we all belong to the same Europe and that we all share the same history.

The proximity of the difficult and painful events experienced in Europe in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century calls on us to recognise that our common history is first and foremost an experience of fragility. Nothing is given once and for all: not peace, nor freedom, nor solidarity, nor tolerance, nor democracy, nor even faith. If it is to last, a permanent and recurring effort is required. The realisation that what so many generations acquired with so much difficulty might be lost, should help to ensure that we do not, on the one hand, look to our own culture nonchalantly or, on the other hand, indulge in triumphalism.

*Such a consciousness of our common fragility would be particularly necessary to proceed in the re-reading of our European history. For centuries, Europe has been divided between rival nationalities. Wars raged, one after the other. Retrospectively, looking back from where we are now, these wars will seem to have clearly been more and more like civil wars. It will therefore take a considerable amount of humility by each people in order to arrive at this explicit recognition. One will therefore need to undertake a double re-reading of history: the re-reading of history for each individual nation and the re-reading of history for that nation in Europe.*

In this searching for the common history of all the Member States of the European Union, there is a common root that will quickly become evident to all: the rooting in the history of Christianity both in its history of development and its dissension.

For us citizens who today recognise ourselves as Catholics, any re-reading of our history will necessarily also have an ecumenical dimension. We should proceed for our own sakes to what Pope John Paul II calls “*the purification of memory*”. We know that we cannot come and present our offerings to the altar with a clear conscience so long as we know that one of our brothers has something against

us.<sup>11</sup> It is therefore here that we first can, as Catholics, contribute to the future of the European Union: working peacefully toward a mutual understanding of a history which is full of conflict and yet common to us all.

In this context, the enlargement of Europe will not appear to have been a one-way gift on behalf of the older members. Instead of merely reflecting firstly and only on the economic efforts which remain to be made to enable the new members to join the standard of living of the older members, we should see ourselves engaged in reciprocal exchanges of a cultural and spiritual nature.

Amongst these exchanges, the second contribution that we can make is to reflect and to make ours the call by Pope John Paul II to consider our debt towards the countries recently freed from the Soviet system. In the encyclical *Centesimus Annus* he writes: “*Assistance from other countries, of Europe specifically, that shared the same history and shares the responsibility, equates to a debt of justice. But it also responds to the interests and general welfare of Europe, since Europe could not live in peace if the various conflicts that arise as a consequence of the past are made worse by a general situation of economic disorder, spiritual dissatisfaction and despair.*”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 5:23 “*When you present your offering at the altar, if you then remember that your brother has something against you then leave your offering, before the altar; and go first and reconcile yourself with your brother; then come back and present your offering.*”

<sup>12</sup> *Centesimus Annus* N°28. For certain European countries it is, in a sense, a veritable post-war period that begins. The radical restructuring of economies which were until then collectivised, creates problems and presupposes sacrifices that can be compared to those that Western countries were forced to confront after the Second World War. It is right that in current difficulties those countries till recently communist should be supported by an effort of solidarity by other nations: they must be, of course, the first to work toward their own development, but they must be given a reasonable chance to undertake this task and this cannot be undertaken without assistance from other countries. Moreover, the present situation, marked by difficulties and penury, is the consequence of an historic process in which the previously communist countries were often the victims and for which they were not responsible; thus they find themselves in this situation, not because of free

choice or errors committed, but because tragic historical events, forcibly imposed on them, prevented them from pursuing their civil and economic development.

Assistance from other countries, particularly from European countries, which shared the same history and bear its responsibilities, is in fact a repayment of a debt of justice. But it responds also to the interests and general welfare of Europe, since Europe could not live in peace if the various conflicts that arise as a consequence of the past are made worse by a general situation of economic disorder, spiritual dissatisfaction and despair.

## Part Three

### How can Catholics contribute to the building of Europe?

**33.** Today, following the adhesion of ten new Member States, the project that is the European Union must be concretely reinvigorated in line with the spirit that presided at its inception in 1950 and that allowed for the experience of the year 1989. On the basis of a reflection on these two key moments in the construction of Europe, the following question must be asked: what is the purpose of the Union today? The task of formulating this re-definition does not fall only on a few shoulders. It concerns all the people and all the institutions and organisations of all our various countries. We must, at all costs, overcome the divisions that may have been established between the elites and the whole European citizenry. How to awaken the enthusiasm of our diverse peoples for the cause of Europe and the idea of fraternity between us all? - such is the great challenge that we must meet today.

These matters concern all European citizens. Catholics do not have any “miracle” solutions to propose to help meet such challenges. But they do know themselves to be the inheritors of an ancient tradition<sup>13</sup> and one which particularly marked the European continent<sup>14</sup>. As such, European Catholics, conscious of being full citizens, know also that they have the responsibility of keeping this tradition alive, which expresses itself in several different ways. They must answer, along with

<sup>13</sup> It is not without significance for us that it was Paul the Apostle who heard the call to “go to Macedonia” cf. Acts 16:9 “Then, during the night, Paul had a vision: a Macedonian was there, standing and addressing him this prayer: Go to Macedonia, come to our rescue!”

<sup>14</sup> cf. the speech given by Pope John-Paul II to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1988.

all other citizens, the same questions as everyone else. But they can try to do so in an original way and in drawing on their own spiritual resources. The fact that the European Union is spiritually and culturally, for an important part of its history, the inheritor of Christianity does not confer any privilege on those citizens who consider themselves Christian. But this does not take away any right they may have to participate in the construction of the future of Europe. Drawing equally from the long memory of the Church and from its present experiences, we would now like to propose several viewpoints for an earnest engagement by Catholics in European society.

We will try to do it in three steps:

=> first in seeing how the spiritual experience of believers can provide the foundation for a engagement by conscientious European citizens;

=> then in outlining several of the original contributions that the Catholic communities might bring to the vitality of the European Union;

=> and finally, in proposing some majors lines of the Christian tradition which might also orientate the future of Europe.

#### A.

#### *An ethic for the lives of Christians: the Beatitudes as a fundamental charter*

**34.** The assessment of history which we have made in the course of the two previous sections of this text has indicated that the European Union rests on a spiritual base principally comprised of forgiveness, reconciliation, and personal and collective commitment to non-violence.

These are attitudes that do not presuppose a personal commitment to the Christian faith. Reciprocally, and only to our regret, we Christians have not always lived up to our own expectations even though we have identified ourselves as having a belief in Christ. But we should not allow ourselves to be completely cowed by our own shortcomings. We should also recognise that our commitment as citizens is enhanced by virtue of the enriching quality of a living spiritual experience. The will to sustain a concrete commitment in service to those around us, requires strong convictions on our part. Such convictions can only be formed by a constitutive spiritual experience and by a solid education of conscience.

In becoming disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, we have not joined a political party or an association with a cultural goal. We have become His disciples because we have recognised in Him the Messiah awaited by Israel, the Saviour announced by John the Baptist and the Lord crucified and resurrected as announced to all nations by the Apostles. Christian faith as such calls one to an experience of conversion. We follow in the steps of Christ so that we may pass, with Him and through Him, from death into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Yet the fact of living by following Christ and with the dynamism of the Holy Spirit that he gave to us, does not mean that we are a stateless people. We remain constitutionally citizens of our respective countries or of the countries which have welcomed us. The Christian identity, which is of the sacramental order, is at the same time only a civil identity and as such these are not in contradiction with one another. We do not dream of forming a Christian State within the State. We want to live as conscientious citizens just as we are called upon by Paul the Apostle<sup>15</sup>. But this does not mean that we will be overly complacent citizens: we know the laws of man to be in the service of justice.

<sup>15</sup> Romans 13:5 "So too must we submit not only out of fear of punishment but also out of conscience"

In other words, far from the Christian faith inviting us to scorn the realities of ordinary life, it actually commands us to invest ourselves in it as honestly and profoundly as possible. All of Christ's disciples are invited to place themselves in the service of their brothers and sisters in humanity and to direct all their skills to the service of the common good of the community where they live<sup>16</sup>. To this effect the parable of the Good Samaritan<sup>17</sup> as well as that of the last judgement are unambiguous: it is in placing ourselves in the service of a suffering humanity that we shall prove that we are truly of Christ<sup>18</sup>.

35. At the very heart of our faith experience, we find an invitation to dialogue with others. This dialogue is not an invitation external to our commitment to faith. It is an intrinsic part of faith, because we discover that we are all part of the same humanity created by God and saved by the irrevocable gift of the return of the Son. For our Christian conscience, there cannot be any contradiction a priori between our faith-based commitment, our will to live in a fraternal dialogue with those who do not share our religious convictions and our concern to contribute to the good of all humanity.

If we want to be consistent with all that we proclaim, we must therefore live out the attitudes and the acts that will reflect the teachings of Christ in our daily lives. We are fully aware, as Paul the Apostle tells us, of carrying a treasure in worthless pottery<sup>19</sup>. Our weakness and our inconsistencies should not serve as excuses for not continuing to carry this message.

For us Christians, the heart of this can be found in the Sermon on the Mount<sup>20</sup>. It is there that Jesus spelled out the Beatitudes. It is a text that clearly sets out what must be the primary concerns of Chris-

<sup>16</sup> cf. the Parable of Talents. Matthew 25:15 ff

<sup>17</sup> Luke 10:25-37

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 25:31-46

<sup>19</sup> II Corinthians 4:7

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 5:1 & Luke 6:20

tians. The Beatitudes are the base and horizon of Christians. It is when they try to live from this base and beneath this horizon that Christians bring the best contribution to the construction of Europe and the world.

Blessed are the poor in spirit!  
 Blessed are the gentle!  
 Blessed are those who mourn!  
 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for uprightness!  
 Blessed are the merciful!  
 Blessed are the pure in heart!  
 Blessed are the peacemakers!  
 Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightness!

Such statements can surely not serve as a basis for a political agenda. But happy are those people whose leaders, magistrates and activists allow themselves to be inspired by these proclamations and who would make the Beatitudes their life charter!

### *B.*

#### *A communion of particular Churches*

**36.** At the same time as we became disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, we became members of a community: the Catholic Church. This community has a long and rich tradition in Europe. It is rich in every type of holiness, known and anonymous, that God has caused in it over the centuries. It suffers from all the denials that it has also made in the course of this long history. But no more than any one of us can, the Church let itself be crushed by the weight of those faults committed by its members. It thrives on the dynamism of the Holy Spirit which has guided it and it does not have the right to renounce it in proclaiming the message of the Risen One.

It is not the primary mission of the Church to participate, as such, in the advancement of a political model. Its primary mission is to evangelise, which is to say that it must propose faith and announce the Good News to all men. Our thoughts here therefore, do not aim to analyse the directly pastoral options of the Church. But at the same time as it conducts its primary mission, the Church brings with it a significant contribution to the unity of all humankind. (Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium* Cf. No.1)

This is why the involvement of Catholics in the process of the development of the European Union is not limited to the personal commitment of those citizens who identify themselves as Catholics. This commitment is realised in a multitude of ways, through laity movements, and meetings of Catholic organisations, and services offered by the Churches and the diocese.

We will outline only the framework of all the myriad contributions brought forth in European society through the networks of dioceses. One need only mention the schools, libraries, universities, chaplaincies and youth movements to perceive all the roles that the Church will play in the education of the Union's future citizens. Similarly, the network of curative and charitable works greatly contributes to the daily lives of our fellow citizens. In promoting the intertwining of these diverse entities and instances, the Church is contributing to the formation of a common consciousness between all its members. It is therefore contributing to the emergence of a European culture and citizenship.

But we must go still further. The Church does not contribute to the vitality of European society only through its educational, cultural, humanitarian and charitable services and works. It also contributes through its sacramental activities. In inviting all Europeans who so wish to have a formative spiritual experience and by permitting them



to have a living contact with the Gospel and by organising close knit communities such as parishes and religious organisations and congregations, the Church contributes to the quality of the social fabric and to the formation of free and responsible citizens.

One can take this analysis yet further: Christian communities, by their mere existence, have moulded and continue to mark daily life of European society. It offers to all those who would so wish, a style of life which tends to a balance between action and contemplation, and between the duration of commitment and prayer. It also provides for the whole of society a rhythm to which society can breathe, by insisting on the importance of Sunday. With its liturgical calendar, the church seeks to avoid the determinism of simply submitting to the rhythm of the climatic seasons. In such a way, by identifying the stages of our lives with that of the life of one person, Jesus Christ, it helps to give universal reference points to the whole of humanity.

Finally, the sacraments which mark the major stages of life in terms of our encounter with Christ, give to the various stages of our life a linear orientation that can provide us with hope and help us to escape the cyclical repetition of time.

**37.** By their ordination the bishops, successors of the Apostles are integrated in the college of bishops and are kept in communion by the ministry of the successor of Peter. They must therefore exercise concern for the whole Church and not simply for the particular Church, the diocese of which they are in charge. To exercise their ministry for Europe, the Catholic bishops created an organ of communion on the 24 March 1971 in Rome: the Council of the Episcopal Conferences of Europe (CCEE) which has a permanent secretariat in Saint Gall in Switzerland. The Presidents of the 34 Episcopal Conferences come together at each plenary assembly to deal with the pastoral questions common to them all.

There is therefore a difference between the number of conferences involved in the CCEE and those represented in the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE). The CCEE corresponds to the member countries of the Council of Europe, the seat of which is in Strasbourg, whereas the COMECE brings together the bishops which are delegated by the Episcopal conferences in those countries which are members of the European Union. But the recommendations set out by Pope John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in Europa* in June 2003, are addressed to all the Episcopal conferences of Europe. Together, they are to seek paths towards an ever deeper communion. It is worth noting that the title of the papal exhortation itself is addressed, not to a plurality of particular churches but to "*The Church (which is) in Europe*". It is the task therefore of all these particular churches to enable all of the Catholics in Europe, to develop a consciousness of belonging to the unique Church of Christ.

From this point of view, all Catholics in Europe need to discover how to give account together of the Hope which is theirs<sup>21</sup>. They need therefore to consider the evolution of European society so that their bearing witness may be accessible in contemporary culture. Pedagogically, there will be a kind of correspondence between the efforts of the Catholics in Europe to better understand the unity of the Church and to the awareness which they will assume of belonging to a continent on the way towards political and cultural unification.

### **38. The ecumenical commitment of the Churches**

It is impossible to protest against the heritage of Christianity in Europe without recognising at the same time that this heritage is comprised of dramatic instances: those which are tied to the

<sup>21</sup> cf. 1 Peter 3:15 "*On the contrary, sanctify in your hearts the Lord Christ, always ready to defend against whosoever asks you about the reason of the hope that is in you.*"

division of the Christian Churches. Indeed, the history of Europe is tied as much to the division East and West as it is to the divisions and fratricidal wars of the Reformation.

The effort that we must undertake with a view to the “*purification of memory*” concerns first and foremost the religious history of our continent.

Reciprocally, any progress toward a better mutual understanding between Christians will allow for a better understanding between the countries that now make up the European Union. We may recall the commitments made by the Christian churches in Europe during the ecumenical encounters at Bâle in 1989, and Graz in 1997. On the 22 April 2001 in Strasbourg, these same Churches solemnly signed the Ecumenical Charter. At the moment, they are preparing a further ecumenical encounter which will take place in 2007 in Sibiu, Romania.

While keeping a watchful eye that religions are not instrumentalised by political leaders, any opportunity for ecumenical dialogue can contribute to a better integration of the Member States of the Union, as well as those who are still candidates for membership. This is particularly true in the Balkans.

### **39. A dialogue to be promoted**

In the same way, all Catholics – both as individuals and as members of the Church – must promote opportunities for dialogue with members of other religions and with those citizens that keep themselves outside any religious conviction or communion.

Even if we can appreciate that it is far easier to set down guidelines than to act on them, we do not want to oppose the dynamism of evangelisation or the unselfish service of the community, as long as

one or the other takes place amid mutual respect and within the framework of freedom of religion guaranteed by the State.

On this final point, we must remember that the attitude and doctrine of the Catholic Church have changed over the centuries. In different countries, the history and sensibility of Catholics can be very different. This difference can only reinforce the need which we all must share to re-read our respective national histories, as well as our common European history.

Today, we can rejoice that the Declaration on Religious Freedom of Vatican Council II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, clearly affirmed that the Catholic Church fully recognises the right of all persons to a genuine freedom of religion. Such an affirmation allows us to claim our rights under the Charter of Human Rights which was adopted by the European Union under the Treaty of Nice in 2000 and which was integrated into the European Constitution, which is currently undergoing ratification.

In this way, the Catholics of Europe are ever more at liberty to propose to all their fellow citizens an impartial dialogue on all matters that pertain to the common good of the Union. If we are capable of recognising and taking responsibility for the dark patches of our history, we can put forward the wisdom which has been acquired over twenty centuries of experience and which is condensed and called the *Social Doctrine* of the Church.

### **C.**

#### **40. The social teaching of the Church as a possible inspiration for the construction of Europe**

It is, of course, impossible here to review every article of the *Social Doctrine* of the Catholic Church. We shall limit ourselves to setting out three of them which we believe to be fundamental from

the perspective of the development of the European Union:

=> the link to geography and culture, or unity in diversity

=> the inherent distinction between political institutions and religious communities

=> the difference in the relationship to history

**41. Diversity and Unity: Catholics and the Catholic Church in Europe are affected in numerous and different ways by European integration**

The twenty five States that presently compose the EU, correspond to twenty one national Bishops' Conferences, plus the Archdiocese of Luxembourg. The frontiers of states and the borders of ecclesiastical institutions do not overlap exactly: for example, the Irish Bishops' Conference includes the bishops of the Republic of Ireland and those of Northern Ireland; in Great Britain there are two bishops' conferences: that of England and Wales, and that of Scotland; the Nordic Bishops' Conference comprises the bishops of the three Scandinavian Member States of the EU as well as Iceland and Norway. With the accession of ten new Member States, a further eight new Bishops' Conferences now form part of the territory of the EU. It suffices to look at the map of the EU to measure the diversity of the situation of Catholics, both in terms of their history and in their current situation.

As Catholic Christians, we are affected in numerous and different ways by the process of integration:

as citizens of the States of Western Europe which have been members of the EU for some time, and as citizens of the States of Central and Eastern Europe which recently joined the EU;

as members of nations characterised by a Catholic majority, and as members of nations in which Catholics represent a minority;

as representatives of generations which, since the Second World War, have lived in parliamentary democracies with legal protection of civil laws and human rights, and as representatives of generations which, since the end of the War, have lived and practised their Catholic faith under authoritarian or totalitarian regimes;

as members of societies who are to be counted amongst the rich in Europe, and as members of societies who are to be counted amongst the poorest.

We can also bring in divergent interpretations, whether as convinced supporters of European integration via the EU or as opponents of this specific process of integration, not to mention many who are indifferent.

The multiplicity of situations and the legitimately diverse opinions among the Catholics of the EU, goes hand in hand with a strong consciousness of the unity and universality of the Church. The horizons of the Catholic Church are not limited to a single continent. The Church is aware of her universal responsibilities to all humanity. The Church, the Second Vatican Council tells us, is "*in Christ, in a manner of speaking, like the sacrament of salvation, that is, by faith, the sign and the means of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all humankind*".<sup>22</sup> Jesus Christ is the light for all peoples and for all humanity. The Pope, the Bishop of Rome, has received the ministry of guarding the unity of the Church. This opening to the universal is expressed both symbolically and concretely, for example, through pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Rome, or Santiago de Compostela.  
*The enduring concern to maintain the diversity and unity of the Church,*

<sup>22</sup> Vatican II, Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, No. 1.

is a difficult balance to preserve in the daily life of the Church. However, this is equally the case in the political sphere. This must be a permanent concern from the perspective of integration. It is in this context that the principle of subsidiarity, often recalled by the Church, takes its place<sup>23</sup>. There is at play here a primary characteristic of the Christian tradition to which we wish to draw attention. This principle could become a source of inspiration in regard to European integration insofar as the European institutions are often reproached for a lack of consideration of cultural particularities in the Member States.

#### 42. Catholics in Europe share a common conviction: the distinction between religion and politics

As Christians we share the conviction that, although politics is not everything, political action is important for our faith and our faith is important for our political engagement. Catholicism does not involve having a rigid political concept, or adhering to a series of narrow rules. For us, there is no pre-determined form of political community or a “*confessional Christian state*”<sup>24</sup>. Catholics have lived their faith within different political frameworks and have given witness through their lives. Christian faith is not to be identified with any particular political order, but it is possible to identify situations and behaviour contrary to Christian doctrine.

When we have to take decisions, the Common Good of humanity must be our ultimate criterion. At the same time, we must be able to distinguish between different levels of our actions, whilst giving

<sup>23</sup> As it was described in 1931 by Pope Pius XI in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, No. 79. Cf. the speech of Pope John Paul II to the President of the Parliament of the EU on 23 September 2000. DC 2234 of 15 October 2000. (French version)

<sup>24</sup> On this point, we are reminded of what Pope John Paul II said to the European Parliament on the occasion of his visit to Strasbourg: “*It seems important for me to recall that it is from the rich soil of Christianity that modern Europe has learned the principle, often lost sight of during the centuries of ‘Christendom’, which governs the very basis of its public life: I mean the principle proclaimed for the first time by Christ, that distinguishes ‘that which is Caesar’s’ f*

appropriate importance to provisional attitudes. For it is there in the concrete reality of our commitments, that our spiritual fulfilment is realised.

The distinction between “*temporal and spiritual*” which Vatican II clarified in the declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*, constitutes the second characteristic of the Christian tradition which this document seeks to emphasise. It is not only important to determine the balance of relations between Church and State within the EU. It also concerns associations and citizens in their personal responsibilities. If the Catholic Church is particularly attentive to its own autonomy and concern for its internal organisation, it is because it considers that the State should recognise that it does not have competence in certain areas which are a matter for the conscience of its citizens. This is equally true, be it at the regional, national or European level. According to the principle of subsidiarity, responsibility in these areas belongs to people or to groups of people, and in the last instance, to the well informed conscience.

Contempt for this principle has always carried heavy consequences. Thus the “disenchantment” that one can currently observe to some extent in the political arena, is perhaps the reaction to excessive hopes *vis à vis* the state which manifested themselves in both parts of Europe since the Second World War. These expectations were inevitably disappointed because political power cannot take care of everything. It does not have the capacity to respond to all human aspiration.

rom ‘that which is God’s’ (Mt 22:21). This essential distinction between the management of the external plan of the terrestrial city and that of the autonomy of individuals, clarifies the respective nature of the political community to which all the citizens necessarily belong, from that of the religious community to which all believers freely belong.” (11 October 1988).

**43. Catholics in Europe share a common conviction: the link between the dynamism of faith and commitment to the world while awaiting the manifestation of the Kingdom of God**

Christian Hope opens a perspective for our thoughts and our political commitment. This hope should be described as “eschatological”, that is to say referring to “the last things” of humankind, not to be understood in the same sense as various “Messianisms”, or political utopias. The theoreticians of temporal Messianisms paint a picture of a future where the contours could rapidly change, but which is supposed to happen within the horizon of history. Christians put their confidence in the Kingdom of God, which is of another order to that of history, at once really close, and not yet revealed<sup>25</sup>. In their daily conduct, they make themselves available for a future, which they know rests in the hands of God<sup>26</sup>. Nevertheless, this opening to the unexpectedness of God, does not leave us without orientation: the overwhelming example of Jesus Christ animates us; reason and experience anchor us in the present; the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount constitute a manifesto of charity. Confidence in the fact that our path leads us towards God, inspires our actions. The rejection of political Messianisms and their goals and purposes and being rooted in an eschatological Hope, constitute a third characteristic of the Christian tradition. This permits us to value that which has already been realised, while still seeking to help and improve our society. But we do not have the illusion of

<sup>25</sup> “After Christ it is no longer possible to idolise society like some grand collective consumer of the human person and his irreducible destiny. Society, the state, political power belong to the changing and always imperfect nature of this world. No social project can ever establish the Kingdom of God, that is, eschatological perfection on earth. Political Messianisms emerge under the worst of tyrannies. The structures devised by society never acquire a definitive value; they cannot of themselves procure all the good to which mankind aspires. In particular, they cannot themselves replace the conscience of man in his quest for truth and the absolute.” John Paul II to the European Parliament, 11 October 1988.

<sup>26</sup> Matthew 24:43-44, “But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

arriving at a closure of history: according to the Christian faith, this remains open to the initiative of God.

**44. Like all other citizens of Europe, Catholics do not possess a ready-made plan for the future**

The EU is currently living through a process of change, not only because of the accession of new Member States, but also with regard to its institutions and its areas of intervention. We are all concerned by this process of profound change.

In the midst of these diverse and overlapping issues, the Catholic Church appears like one actor among many others, even if it is important to underline the prime importance of Christianity for the future of Europe.<sup>27</sup> Europe cannot be inclusive without acknowledging the founding role which Christians have played in her history. Even if today a form of vague agnosticism seems to dominate public debate, the convictions of Christians are still recognised by many as having a role to play, like those of Jews and Muslims, or members of other religious communities.

In turn, in the EU, Christians, Jews, Muslims, and members of other religious communities, like all citizens, are affected by the rules of the Common Market, by monetary policy and the various common policies, as well as by all that is related to the Charter of Fundamental Rights. In the same way, the negotiation of trade agreements is already a matter for common policy, and the manner of envisaging relations with the poorest nations and with refugees is becoming more and

<sup>27</sup> cf. *Ecclesia in Europa*, No. 108 : “There can be no doubt that the Christian faith belongs, in a radical and decisive way, to the foundations of European culture. Christianity in fact has shaped Europe, impressing upon it certain basic values. Modern Europe itself, which has given the democratic ideal and human rights to the world, draws its values from its Christian heritage. More than a geographical area, Europe can be described as a primarily cultural and historical concept, which denotes a reality born as a continent thanks to the unifying force of Christianity, which has been capable of integrating peoples and cultures among themselves, and which is intimately linked to the whole of European culture.”

more the subject of common policies. In other respects, one cannot forget that not only Christians, but also Jews, Muslims and members of other religious communities often encounter non-Europeans belonging to their particular church or community. As a result, anyone concerned by the ethical orientation of international politics should feel involved in the development of European structures, as well as in the international policy of the EU.

For Christians, the political challenges associated with changes met on the route of European integration have a spiritual dimension. To be a Christian means to be a pilgrim<sup>28</sup>. This call to live as pilgrims offers a particular enlightenment to our responsibilities as politically engaged citizens and actors. Our advance towards the Kingdom of God is inseparable from our commitment to the service of the political community: such a hope opens for us a common future and invites us to decide at each step what is the better way. Practically, it amounts to our defining the path of a Europe characterised by stability, peace, respect for the dignity of persons, especially the most vulnerable, that will serve not only its own citizens, but also the whole world.

From this foundation stone and with this perspective, and from within our conscience as Christians, we find a great liberty which paradoxically leads us to choose a style and rhythm of life in communion, since we know that is the by quality of the bonds which we establish now with our fellow men that will be measured the quality of our faithfulness to Christ. This requirement should be a spur for all Christians in Europe without at the same time setting them apart from the other citizens. In this regard, we can make our own the rejoicing which is found throughout the famous Epistle to Diognetus: "The difference between Christians and the rest of

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<sup>28</sup> Philippians 3:20, "*But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

mankind is not a matter of nationality, or language or customs. Christians do not live apart in separate cities of their own, speak any special dialect, nor practice any eccentric way of life. The doctrine they profess is not the invention of busy human minds and brains, nor are they, like some, adherents of this or that school of human thought. They pass their lives in whatever township – Greek or foreign – each one's lot as determined; and conform to ordinary local usage in their clothing, diet and life style, whilst witnessing to the extraordinary and surely paradoxical laws of their spiritual republic.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Letter to Diognetus.

## Conclusion

45. As attentive as the Catholic Church is to the progress and development of the European Union, it does not forget that its mission stretches well beyond the frontiers of Europe and concerns the entirety of the human family.

With the opening a nunciature to the European institutions on the 10 November 1970, the Holy See expressed the significance it attached to this political development, heretofore unprecedented in history<sup>30</sup>. Indeed, the European Union does not constitute a State in the strictest sense of the term, but the Holy See wanted to be represented to the EU institutions by a diplomatic representative at the highest level.

Unique though it is, the European Union cannot disregard the rest of the world. The EU is at the service of peace and the development of the peoples of which it is made up, but it is also an intermediary at the behest of peace and development of all the peoples of the planet.

And because it brings together nations, some of which played a major role in colonisation, the European Union, in a certain way, consequently inherits a responsibility towards all the peoples who have emancipated themselves from the tutelage of their colonisers. The different politics of partnership, along with the other regional assemblies are, in this respect, particularly important.

Furthermore, the European Union also includes two States which

<sup>30</sup> This mission was entrusted firstly to the Apostolic Nuncio to Belgium and carried out by him until June 1996, when the Holy See opened in Brussels an Apostolic Nunciature to the European Communities.

are nuclear powers. This then too bestows upon it a particular responsibility at the heart of the international community and at the UN. For all these reasons, and in concluding this investigation as to the responsibility of Catholics for the evolution of the Union, we cannot but refer our readers to the Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Europa*. In No. 111, we read the following: “*Saying “Europe” must be equivalent to saying “openness”. Despite experiences and signs to the contrary, which it has not lacked, European history itself demands this: “Europe is really not a closed or isolated territory; it has been built by expanding overseas and meeting other peoples, other cultures, other civilisations”.*<sup>173</sup> Therefore it needs to be an open and welcoming Continent, continuing to develop in the current process of globalisation forms of co-operation which are not merely economic but social and cultural as well.”

*There is one need to which Europe must respond positively if it is to have a truly new face: “Europe cannot close in on itself. It cannot and must not lose interest in the rest of the world. On the contrary, it must remain fully aware of the fact that other countries, other continents, await its bold initiatives, in order to offer to poorer peoples the means for their growth and social organisation, and to build a more just and fraternal world”. To carry out this mission adequately will demand “re-thinking international co-operation in terms of a new culture of solidarity. When seen as a sowing of peace, co-operation cannot be reduced to aid or assistance, especially if given with an eye to the benefits to be received in return for the resources made available. Rather, it must express a concrete and tangible commitment to solidarity which makes the poor the agents of their own development and enables the greatest number of people, in their specific economic and political circumstances, to exercise the creativity which is characteristic of the human person and on which the wealth of nations too is dependent”.*<sup>174</sup>

9 May 2005

## ANNEX

THE ROBERT SCHUMAN  
DECLARATION OF 9 MAY 1950

World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it.

The contribution which an organised and living Europe can bring to civilisation is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations. In taking upon herself for more than 20 years the role of champion of a united Europe, France has always had as her essential aim the service of peace. A united Europe was not achieved and we had war.

Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity. The coming together of the nations of Europe requires the elimination of the age-old opposition of France and Germany. Any action taken must in the first place concern these two countries.

With this aim in view, the French Government proposes that action be taken immediately on one limited but decisive point.

It proposes that Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole be placed under a common High Authority, within the framework of an organisation open to the participation of the other countries of Europe.

The pooling of coal and steel production should immediately provide for the setting up of common foundations for economic development as a first step in the federation of Europe, and will change the destinies of those regions which have long been devoted to the manufacture of munitions of war, of which they have been the most constant victims

The solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war

between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible. The setting up of this powerful productive unit, open to all countries willing to take part and bound ultimately to provide all the member countries with the basic elements of industrial production on the same terms, will lay a true foundation for their economic unification.

This production will be offered to the world as a whole without distinction or exception, with the aim of contributing to raising living standards and to promoting peaceful achievements.[...]

In this way, there will be realised simply and speedily that fusion of interest which is indispensable to the establishment of a common economic system; it may be the haven from which may grow a wider and deeper community between countries long opposed to one another by sanguinary divisions.

By pooling basic production and by instituting a new High Authority, whose decisions will bind France, Germany and other member countries, this proposal will lead to the realisation of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace.

To promote the realisation of the objectives defined, the French Government is ready to open negotiations on the following bases.

The task with which this common High Authority will be charged will be that of securing in the shortest possible time the modernisation of production and the improvement of its quality; the supply of coal and steel on identical terms to the French and German markets, as well as to the markets of other member countries; the development in common of exports to other countries; the equalisation and improvement of the living conditions of workers in these industries.

To achieve these objectives, starting from the very different conditions in which the production of member countries is at present situated, it is proposed that certain transitional measures should be instituted, such as the application of a production and investment plan, the establishment of compensating machinery for equating prices, and the creation of a restructuring fund to facilitate the rationalisation of production. The movement of coal and steel between member countries will immediately be freed from all customs duty, and will not be affected by differential transport rates. Conditions will gradually be created which will spontaneously provide for the more rational distribution of production at the highest level of productivity.



In contrast to international cartels, which tend to impose restrictive practices on distribution and the exploitation of national markets, and to maintain high profits, the organisation will ensure the fusion of markets and the expansion of production.

The essential principles and undertakings defined above will be the subject of a treaty signed between the States and submitted for the ratification of their parliaments. The negotiations required to settle details of applications will be undertaken with the help of an arbitrator appointed by common agreement. He will be entrusted with the task of seeing that the agreements reached conform with the principles laid down, and, in the event of a deadlock, he will decide what solution is to be adopted.

The common High Authority entrusted with the management of the scheme will be composed of independent persons appointed by the governments, giving equal representation. A chairman will be chosen by common agreement between the governments. The Authority's decisions will be enforceable in France, Germany and other member countries. Appropriate measures will be provided for means of appeal against the decisions of the Authority.

A representative of the United Nations will be accredited to the Authority, and will be instructed to make a public report to the United Nations twice yearly, giving an account of the working of the new organisation, particularly as concerns the safeguarding of its objectives.

The institution of the High Authority will in no way prejudice the methods of ownership of enterprises. In the exercise of its functions, the common High Authority will take into account the powers conferred upon the International Ruhr Authority and the obligations of all kinds imposed upon Germany, so long as these remain in force.

## Previous publications:

European Integration and Religious Institutions  
*Acta of a conference held in Brussels (1995)*

The Euro and Europe  
*Acta of a Social Congress held in Brussels (1998)*

The Future of Democracy: A challenge for Society and Church  
*Acta of the second autumn academy held in Louvain (1998)*

Truth, Memory and Solidarity: Keys to Peace and Reconciliation  
*Statement by the bishops of COMECE (1999)*

Church and Contemporary Culture:  
Reflections on an ecclesiology for the Europe of today  
*Acta of the summer university at Souvigny (1999)*

Europe's Responsibility for global development:  
Markets and Institutions after Seattle  
*Acta of the second Social Congress held in Brussels (2000)*

Hyperlinks towards the new Europe: In search of bridges between past and present, between nation and continental community  
*Acta of the summer university at Villa Vigoni (2000)*

Stable Monetary Union: The hope for European Solidarity  
*Declaration by the bishops of COMECE (2000)*

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Our responsibility to make globalisation an opportunity for all  
*Report to the bishops of COMECE (2001)*

Islam en Europe - Législation relative aux communautés musulmanes, projets islamiques pour un contrat culturel avec l'État (2001)

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*Acta of the meeting of the Social Affairs Groups in Rotterdam (2001)*

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Challenges for a united Europe

*Acta from Lille (2002)*

Latin America and the European Union:

Together for the common universal good - Contributions by the Church

*Acta of the third Social Congress held in Madrid (2002)*

Borders: Drawing borders, crossing borders and peaceful co-existence

- A challenge for the Catholic Church in Europe

*Acta of the summer university at Celje (2002)*

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*Acta of conferences held in Brussels on 7/12/2000 and 7/12/2002*

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*Report to the bishops of COMECE (2003)*

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Solidarity is the Soul of Europe

*Statement by the bishops of COMECE (2004)*

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The Europeanisation of the European Union:

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*Acta of the summer univeristy at Léanyfalu (2003)*