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<p style="text-align:center">COMECE</p> <p style="text-align:center">ANNUAL REPORT</p> <p style="text-align:center">2002</p>

INTRODUCTION

The Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE) is tasked with monitoring the evolution of European policy-making by the European Union institutions. It is also charged with making input to the European Union institutions in respect of a range of policy areas. It fulfils this mission on behalf of the fourteen Bishops' Conferences in the Member States of the European Union and also on behalf of the Episcopal Conferences of the acceding countries. To this end throughout the year 2002 COMECE continued to provide for encounter and dialogue with EU officials through a range of activities: the two annual Plenary Meetings, two meetings of the Executive Committee, initiatives undertaken by its Bishop members in their respective countries, the monthly publication and through of a range of activities involving the EU institutions on the one hand and exchanges and encounters with groups and organisations from the local Churches in the Member States on the other.

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

The final section of the Annual Report for 2001 outlined a series of areas in which the COMECE secretariat would concentrate its work throughout the year 2002 thus:

- (i) Continued monitoring of EU policy-making in all areas of interest to the Church by staff members, Commissions and working with a view to making appropriate input
- (ii) The work of the Convention, which will begin on 28 February 2002, will be monitored by the secretariat. Briefing sessions will be organised by the secretariat for Church agencies after the meetings of the Convention. An "ad hoc" Working Group, chaired by Bishop A. Nicora, will be created to prepare a submission and resource appropriate input. The Episcopal Conferences of the Member States and the candidate countries will be kept abreast of the development of the work of the Convention.
- (iii) A seminar in Brussels on Agricultural Policy and Rural Development for Bishops from candidate countries will be co-organised with Commissioner Fischer's cabinet and DG Agriculture.

- (iv) The secretariat will co-organise with the Catholic University, Lille, and Archbishop G. Defois, Lille, an academic session, *Meeting its global responsibilities and its citizens' expectations, Challenges for a United Europe*, in March 2001.
- (v) A Social Congress will be co-organised with the Spanish Bishops' Conference and CELAM in Madrid on 13-14 May with a view to making input to the EU-Latin American summit.
- (vi) A second encounter between COMECE Bishops and Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church will take place in Marienrode, Germany.
- (vii) A fourth summer university, to be held in Slovenia, will be prepared.
- (viii) With reference to developments in CFSP, a COMECE Electronic Network on Foreign and Security Policy will be launched.
- (ix) In the context of ESDP, a seminar on the ethics of intervention will be held at the secretariat.
- (x) A meeting will be co-organised with CCEE for the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences of South-East Europe.
- (xi) A special issue of *Europe-Infos* on the European Convention will be published in May 2002.
- (xii) COMECE will be represented at the meeting of the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on the situation in the Middle East with the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of the Holy Land, 21-24 January.
- (xiii) COMECE will be represented at the conference *Humanizing the Global Economy*, co-organised by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, CELAM and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in Washington, 28-30 January.
- (xiv) The series of evening lectures will be continued.
- (xv) The COMECE website will be launched.

This report shows that the objectives set out in the aforementioned areas were achieved and that other significant initiatives were also undertaken.

Spain held the Presidency of the European Union for the first half of the year; Denmark followed from 1 July until the end of December. With the aim of promoting a sharper awareness of the role that the EU and its institutions play in the lives of citizens and communities, the Spanish Presidency took "*More Europe*" as the keynote theme of its Presidency. Among its priorities were: overseeing the transition to the Euro, supporting its value against the dollar, advancing the enlargement negotiations on a series of sensitive chapters with the candidate countries, re-energising the Barcelona process and the EU / Latin American summit held in Madrid, 17-18 May. The Danish Presidency steered the final stages

of the negotiations enabling the ten candidate countries to join the EU in 2004. Among its other priorities it aimed to launch a series of initiatives to improve cross-border security, to promote the single market in financial services and to launch the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. H. E. Francisco-Javier Conde de Saro, Permanent Representative of Spain to the EU, addressed the Plenary Meeting of COMECE, November 22-23, 2001 on the aims of the Spanish Presidency. The COMECE secretariat monitored the work programme of both Presidencies.

The Convention on the Future of Europe, tasked with preparing a draft constitutional treaty for the European Union, commenced its work on 28 February 2002. Monitoring the progress of the Convention, meeting with numerous members from both Member States and the candidate countries, making input to some of its Working Groups, drafting proposals for provisions on the Churches and religion in the text of the constitution and for a formulation in the preamble featured among the core activities of COMECE for the year 2002. The decisions of the Copenhagen summit on enlargement also prefigured the enlargement of the membership of COMECE.

Whilst this report sets out the main activities carried out by COMECE throughout 2002, it does not attempt to provide an exhaustive listing of all the initiatives undertaken by the staff of the secretariat. It seeks simply to give an overview of the main activities undertaken in the service of the Bishops' Conferences and of the European project.

COMECE FROM WITHIN

1.1. THE PRESIDENT

1.4.1. The President chaired the two Plenary Meetings (7-8 March and 28-29 November) and two meetings of the Executive Committee (19 June and 30 September). He addressed the academic conference *Meeting its Global Responsibilities and its Citizens' Expectations*, held in Lille on 7 March. He also took part in and addressed the congress *Latin America and the European Union: Together for the Universal Common Good*, 13-14 May 2002.

1.4.2. He continued the annual visits as President of COMECE to the Orthodox Churches to discuss and explore with these churches the mission and role of the churches in regard to the European project. He visited the His Beatitude Alexy II, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia (9-10 January). During the course of his visit to Moscow the President also met with Archbishop Kondrusiewicz, the Apostolic Nuncio, members of the Department for External Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church and with Mr. Richard Wright, head of the Delegation of the European Union in Russia. From 11-14 January he visited His Beatitude Karekin II, Katholikos of the Armenian Orthodox Church in Etschmiadzin and held discussions with Bishops and members of the clergy.

1.5. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1.5.1. The Executive Committee – the President, Bishop J. Homeyer, the two Vice-Presidents, Bishop A. van Luyn and Bishop A. Nicora and the Secretary General – met

twice in the course of the year. The meetings were also attended by the Apostolic Nuncio, H. E. Archbishop F.Sainz Munoz, M. S. Lunte and Dr. M. Meyer.

- 1.2.2. Bishop A. Nicora, Vice-President of COMECE, was nominated President of the Amministrazione del Patrimonio della Santa Sede on 1 October 2002. On assuming his appointment to the Roman Curia he relinquished the Vice-Presidency of COMECE. He attended the opening day of the Autumn Plenary Meeting as a guest. On that occasion the President and members expressed their gratitude for his contribution to COMECE and its work over the years, especially in the fields legal and constitutional affairs.
- 1.4.1. The first meeting of the year was held in the Villa Mater Dei, Rome on 19 June. Having received an account of the work of the secretariat in a range of EU policy areas since the previous meetings of the Committee and the Plenary in March 2002, particular attention was given to the issues currently on the EU agenda and to the progress of the Spanish Presidency. The Committee assessed the Social Congress, *Latin America and the European Union – Together for the Universal Common Good*, El Escorial, 13-14 May, which COMECE co-organised with CELAM and the Spanish Bishops' Conference. Inter alia the significance of the event as a first initiative of its kind undertaken by two continental groupings of Bishops' Conferences was noted. Regret was expressed that the participation of European bishops was not as strong as desirable. The proceedings and outcome were positively assessed in general and it was decided to pursue and concretise the plan to meet with the Presidium of CELAM in early 2003 with a view to exploring possibilities for further co-operation, as agreed in principle with the Bishop Jorge Jiménez Enrique Carvajal, President of CELAM at El Escorial. A detailed report was given on the work undertaken by the secretariat in respect of the Convention. An assessment was made of the academic seminar *Meeting its Global Responsibilities and its Citizens' Expectations, Challenges for a United Europe*, held in Lille on 7 March. The work of the *ad hoc* Working Group under the chairmanship of Bishop A. Nicora was considered. The two documents produced by the group, *The Future of Europe Political Commitment, Values and Religion* (21 May 2002) and the draft of a legislative proposal, to be entitled, *Churches and Religious communities in a Constitutional Treaty of the European Union* (29 May 2002) were presented. The first document had been circulated in draft form to the members of the Presidium in early May for their approval. A report was given on its distribution to the members of Convention and on the significant and positive reaction it had received among Convention members. There was a discussion on an "*invocatio Dei*" in the preamble. The draft for a legislative proposal was presented by Bishop Nicora. It contained three elements to be incorporated in a constitutional treaty of the EU – a provision on the right to self-determination of the Churches and religious communities, a provision recognising the specificity of Churches and religious communities and providing for a structured dialogue between them and the appropriate institutions of the EU and the incorporation of Declaration No. 11 on the status of Churches and religious communities attached to the Final Act of the treaty of Amsterdam in the constitutional treaty. The Executive Committee approved the draft, encouraged the *ad hoc* Working Group to pursue its work on the proposal in the light of developments and requested the Secretary General to make every effort to gain the support of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) through its Commission for Church and Society for the contents of the draft proposal so that an agreed proposal

might be presented ecumenically to the Convention in the near future. He was also urged to inform the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the EU and the representatives of the Orthodox Churches and to explore the possibility of gaining support from the appropriate Jewish and Muslim sources. The members of the Committee also addressed internal matters of an administrative and juridical nature. They considered the question as to whether the SIPECA (*Service d'Information Pastorale Catholique Européenne*), created by the Holy See on 30 July 1976, later established as a not for profit organisation on 13 December 1983 in accordance with the French law on such associations of 1 June 1924, registered in Strasbourg, entrusted to COMECE in 1980 on its inception (viz article, *Les Tâches de la COMECE* in Oss. Rom. 13/3/1980), should not be dissolved since its original purpose had been surpassed. The Executive Committee, having received a written report on the origins of SIPECA, and noting that the Holy See left the final decision to the COMECE Plenary, decided to recommend its closure to the Plenary Meeting. The Committee also deliberated on the legal entity of the *Association des Evêques de la Communauté Européenne* and made recommendations for the annual meeting of its Assembly General and its Administrative Council. The meeting also received an account on a meeting of Church organisations, NGOs and other interested parties on the report to the COMECE bishops on Global Governance, *Our responsibility to make Globalisation an Opportunity for All*. A report was also given on the work of the Reflection Group, *Foi chrétienne et construction européenne*, chaired by Bishop H. Simon. A plan for a pilgrimage in 2004 to Santiago de Compostella, to be organised by COMECE to mark the spiritual significance of 2004 as the year of the enlargement of the EU to ten new Member States and as the year of the European constitution was also presented. During a meeting with Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran and Mgr. E. Balestrero, the President and members of Executive Committee gave an account COMECE's current work, of the outcome of Social Congress in El Escorial and of COMECE's work in respect of the Convention. The members the Committee also met with H. E. Mgr. G. Crepaldi, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace to discuss possibilities for follow-up to the report made to COMECE on global governance.

- 1.4.2. A second meeting of the Executive Committee took place at the COMECE secretariat in Brussels on 30 September 2002. Again significant attention was given to the Convention and to the development of an agreement in the course of the summer months with the Commission for Church and Society of the CEC on the contents of the legislative proposal as presented to the Executive Committee in June. The members of the Committee also discussed at length the matter of an "*invocatio Dei*" in the preamble as well as other possible formulations for a reference to the Christian and religious patrimony/heritage of Europe. The Committee also discussed and greeted the forthcoming integration of Dr. Michael Kuhn and the contact-office of the Austrian Bishops' Conference into the COMECE secretariat. The importance of a single representation of the Bishops' Conferences through COMECE in the perspective of an enlarged European Union was agreed. The meeting also noted that the enlargement of the EU will require COMECE to undertake the necessary steps to develop and sustain its work. The meeting also received and adopted a text updating the report to the COMECE Bishops on Global Governance. A draft proposal for a COMECE-SECAM seminar in view of the EU-Africa summit, scheduled for April 2003, was discussed and recommended for presentation to the autumn Plenary Meeting. A further report

was given on the progress of the text being prepared by the group *Foi chrétienne et construction européenne* which is due to be presented to the autumn Plenary. The meeting was also presented with a detailed draft programme for the proposed pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella and the congress to be held thereafter. Finally the meeting examined draft statutes for the initiative *Une âme pour l'Europe – Ethique et spiritualité* which includes among its founding members COMECE, CEC, the Liaison Office of the Orthodox Church to the EU, the Congress of European Rabbis, the Muslim Council for Co-operation in Europe and the European Humanist Federation. The Executive Committee recommended that the Secretary General check the statutes of the European Humanist Federation to ensure that they did not include explicitly anti-christian or anti-catholic or anti-ecclesial provisions.

1.3. THE PLENARY MEETINGS

- 1.3.1. The opening day of the Spring Plenary 7-8 March 2002 took the form of an academic conference co-organised by COMECE, the Catholic University of Lille and the diocese of Lille. Entitled *Meeting its Global Responsibilities and its Citizens' Expectations, Challenges for a United Europe* it was the fruit of a sustained effort by COMECE to engage the Catholic academic world in addressing foundational issues in European integration and this with reference to the European Convention. The seminar was opened by Archbishop G. Defois, Archbishop-Bishop of Lille, by Professor G. Vandecandelaere, President-Rector of the Catholic University of Lille and by Martine Aubry, Mayor of Lille. The keynote address was delivered by J. Delors, President of the Foundation "*Notre Europe*". Two Round Table discussions, the first chaired by Professor A. Lepas of the free Faculty of Economics, Lille and the second chaired by H. E. Anne Anderson, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the EU addressed respectively the EU's responsibilities at the global level and the EU and its citizens. Participants then divided into discussion groups from which reports were taken in a final Plenary session. Mr. Jean-Luc Dehaene, Vice President of the European Convention and former Prime Minister of Belgium addressed the participants on the task of the European Convention and on early stages of its work during dinner. On 8 March the members of COMECE evaluated the academic conference positively. They discussed at length the responsibility of COMECE to accompany the European Convention on behalf of the Bishops' Conferences. They set out the broad lines for a strategy to make submissions to the Convention, mandating the secretariat and the ad hoc Working Group on the Convention to continue their efforts to prepare appropriate submissions and to pursue contacts and exchange with convention members. A draft letter to the Barcelona summit, the fruit of the meeting of the Commission for Social and Economic Affairs, was presented and adopted. A report was also given on the Sixth Framework Research Programme of the EU with specific reference to ethical issues arising in particular research programmes. A series of reports were also given on initiatives undertaken since the previous Plenary: the outcome of the first meeting of the reflection group, *Foi chrétienne et construction européenne*, held on 6 March 2002; the information seminar for Episcopal Conferences of the candidate countries on *Enlargement and the Common Agricultural Policy*, 3-4 February; the Presidents' visits to Moscow and to Etschmiadzin, Armenia, 9-14 January; the second meeting of some COMECE Bishops with a delegation of Bishops from the Serbian Orthodox Church, 11-13 February; the second meeting of the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences of

South-Eastern Europe in Celje, Slovenia, 12-13 March. Written reports were submitted from the Working Groups on Legal Affairs, Information Society, Communications and Media Policy and on the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The mandate of the Secretary General was renewed for a further three years.

- 1.3.2. The Autumn Plenary was held in Brussels on 28-29 November. On account of the significance of the Convention for the future of Europe and given the close and intense monitoring of its work on the part of the secretariat, it was decided to take "*Towards a Constitution for Europe: issues for the Church*" as the principal theme of this assembly. A presentation by Mme. C. Roger, Chef de Cabinet for Commissioner M. Barnier, one of the two representatives of the European Commission in the Convention, launched the proceedings. Thereafter the meeting was appraised of the contents of the legislative proposal submitted together with the Commission for Church and Society of the CEC to the Convention on 27 September 2002, of the proposals in view of a reference to God and religion either in draft article 2 and /or in the preamble, and of the discussions which members of the secretariat and the Apostolic Nuncio had engaged in with members of the Convention. The meeting recorded its thanks for the "Briefing" note made available to the Bishops and the services of the Bishops' Conferences after each meeting of the Convention and encouraged the secretariat to continue its work in this field. A draft statement entitled, *Towards Sustainable Agriculture in Europe*, was presented, discussed and adopted for publication. With a view to the Copenhagen summit, 12-13 December, a draft statement, *Hope, Trust and Solidarity, A statement on the accession of new Member States to the European Union*, was submitted for deliberation. The draft was accepted after discussion, members were given until 2 December to submit further amendments. Thereafter the text would be sent to the members of the Presidium for final approval before publication on 6 December. Noting the significance of the year 2004 in the European political calendar, the assembly received the first draft of the document produced by the Reflection Group, *Foi chrétienne et construction européenne*. In this context a programme for the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella (17-21 April 2004) was presented; a plan for a congress immediately thereafter (22-23 April 2004) and the intention to hold the Spring Plenary on 24 April 2004 were also outlined and accepted. On the evening of 28 November M. E. Moavero Milanesi, Assistant Secretary General of the European Commission, addressed the meeting on the recent and current developments in the consultative process used by the European Commission, with particular reference to the consultation process launched by a Commission Communication, *Towards a Reinforced Culture of Consultation and Dialogue – Proposal for General Principles and Minimum Standards for Consultation of Interested Parties*, COM (2002) 277 final. He noted the contribution of the COMECE secretariat to 29 July and outlined possibilities for the Churches to avail of such processes. On the matter of Global Governance the meeting was provided with the text (dated 30 September 2002) updating the report to the COMECE Bishops on Global Governance. The preparations and draft programme for the COMECE-SECAM colloquium, to be held in Lisbon on 27-28 February 2003, were outlined. The assembly was likewise informed of the forthcoming meeting between the Presidencies of COMECE and CELAM scheduled for 6 January 2003 in Rome. On Friday morning 29 November Professor Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission, received the Bishops at the Breydel building. The discussion focused on the Convention, enlargement and neighbourhood policy, ethical issues attendant on the

Sixth Framework Programme for Research. In camera the Bishop members deliberated on a series of administrative issues. The number of members present being insufficient to constitute a quorum, the election of a new Executive Committee was deferred to the Spring Plenary 2003.

The Plenary received a report on the activities of CCEE and staff members provided written and oral reports on the work of the secretariat on EU policy issues.

1.4. THE SECRETARIAT

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

1.4.2. Staff meetings were held regularly in order to execute the decisions of the Plenary Meetings, to prepare the forthcoming Plenary Meetings, to plan the ongoing work of the secretariat, particularly in regard to the Convention and to provide for exchange of information between staff members.

1.4.3. In March Marilena Missorici, who had joined the staff in November 2001, learned of her success in a competition for the Italian civil service, returned to Italy. This position of a COMECE staff member who also works on behalf of the Italian Bishops' Conference was duly filled by Adriana Opromolla as of 3 July 2002. In July 2002 Isabelle Gilles, who had given outstanding service as a secretary from July 2000, was recruited by the Belgian Ministry of Finance as a translator on the basis of success in a public competition. She was succeeded by Maud Oger as of August 2002.

1.4.4. The Secretariat was also assisted in the course of the year by voluntary interns: Constanze Bollman, a High school pupil, Lübeck, Germany, (28 January–1 February); Mirko Pejic, Osnabruck, Germany, son of Reverend Milan Pejic, Vicar General of the Serbian Orthodox Church in central Europe, (4 February-27 March); Dr. Wolfgang Schröder, priest of the diocese of Tübingen (27 May-28 June); Ana Claudia de Sousa Fonseca, Lisbon, (2 September–20 December); Thomas Kinnen, Trier, former banker and law student (1 November – 31 January 03).

1.5. COMMISSIONS AND WORKING GROUPS

1.5.1. The **Commission for Legal Affairs** met on 8 February, 5 June and on 6 November. The February and June meetings were chaired by Bishop A. Nicora. Reports on the work of the Commission were given to the Plenary Meetings. Each meeting included a report on juridical matters of current concern to the Church in the Member States represented. The February meeting addressed the following issues: the legislative programme of the European Commission for 2002; follow-up by COMECE to the White Paper on Governance; the task to be undertaken by the Convention instituted by the Laeken summit. The afternoon session was dedicated to an exchange with the members of the Commission for Legal Affairs of the CEC. The June meeting was addressed by Mr. A. Peterle, representative of the government of Slovenia in the Convention and a member of its Presidium. The Commission members were updated on the work of the Convention, on the submissions made by COMECE and on the

work of the ad hoc Working Group. This meeting was also appraised of a European Commission proposal for a Directive on the free movement of EU citizens and their families, COM (2001) 257 final –2001/0111. The November meeting was given a detailed report on the work of the Convention and on the reactions to the proposal submitted by COMECE and the Commission for Church and Society of the CEC. Family policy and legislation on cohabitation throughout the EU were discussed. The implementation of the directives 2000/78/EC and 2000/43/EC on non-discrimination were considered. The possibility of a reduced VAT rate on the restoration of historical monuments and Churches and other buildings in the context of the review of Directives 1999/85/EC and 77/388/EEC was also discussed. The Commission also deliberated on a follow-up to the European Commission Communication of 5 June 2002 on consultation (COM (2002) 277).

- 1.5.2. The **Reflection Group on Bio-Ethical Affairs** met on 19 April and on 13 December. The meeting of 19 April considered the European Commission document, *Life Sciences and Biotechnology – a strategy for Europe* (COM 2002, final 27), published on 23 January 2002.

It produced a commentary on ethical aspects of the document which was sent to Members of the European Parliament and to the appropriate services of the European Commission. During its December meeting the members of the group deliberated on the ethical aspects of Bio-medical research in developing countries in view of an opinion to be published by the European Group on Ethics (EGE) on the subject. A note was also produced on this subject, submitted to members of the EGE. Both notes were published on the COMECE website.

- 1.5.3. The **Commission for Social Affairs**, chaired by Bishop A. van Luyn, met in Brussels on 22-23 February and on 11-12 October. Reports and documentation from the two meetings were presented to the Plenary Meetings of COMECE. The February meeting addressed the issue of *Demographic Changes in Europe and the modernisation of Social Welfare: Socio-Ethical reflections*. Ms. Miet de Smet, Member of the European Parliament, former Minister for Labour and Employment and in Belgium, shared ideas with the group on the basis of her political experience. Mr. D. Costello, Directorate General Finance of the European Commission, gave a notable presentation on implications of ageing for public expenditure in the Member States. A series of presentations were also received on the recent Caritas Report, *Poverty in Europe*, on the *Projekt Sozialwort* of the Churches in Austria and on the proposals of German employers for the future of pension systems. Ms. A. von Wurmb, Director of the Office of European Employers Confederation, spoke to the meeting on systems of complementary pensions in Europe. Dr. F. Kennedy, a member of the Commission shared some thoughts on possibilities for a political response to current trends in European demography. The second meeting of this Commission, held in October, worked on *The Future of the European Common Agricultural Policy: Socio-Ethical Considerations on the European Commission's recent Reform Proposals*. Dr. R. Strohmeier, Head of Unit in Directorate General Agriculture of the European Commission addressed the meeting on the need to reform the CAP; Dr. O. Dreute, adviser to the EPP group in the European Parliament explored the issues in the CAP and Trade Policy. Mr. W. Piskorz spoke on the future of the CAP and Polish agriculture. Further presentations were made by Mr. Long, Director of the European Office of the WWF on the environmental dimension of the CAP reform and Mr. J.

Murray, Director of the European Consumers' Organisation, BEUC, on their organisations' recommendations for the CAP reform. Further inputs were received from M. G. Choplin of the European Farmers' Co-ordination (CPE) and by M. D. Souchon, Committee of the Agricultural Organisations in the EU (COPA) and the General Committee of Agricultural Co-operation in the EU (COGECA). The deliberations of the Commission served as a basis of the preparation of the draft statement, *Towards Sustainable Agriculture in Europe*, presented to the autumn Plenary (viz. 1.3.2 above).

- 1.5.4. The **Working Group on Information Society, Communications and Media** held a meeting on 4-5 February. The meeting began with a report on a series of initiatives to take place in the Member State to which members of the Working Group would make contributions: the November meeting in Cardiff of the Consortium on Church-State Research in Europe; the Conference on media education at the University of Edinburgh; the *semaines européennes de la communication*, Catholic University of Lyons. The group reviewed progress on the revision of the EU Directive on "Television without Frontiers" on the basis of an input made by M. Vincent Jamois, European Commission. Other issues addressed by the group were; lifelong learning and e-learning; protection of minors from harmful content in the media; the November 2001 European Commission communication on state aid to public service broadcasters. The meeting also considered a draft document on public service in the new media. On the basis of a contribution by Ms. K. Puttermans, assistant to Mr. K. van der Taelen, MEP, the members of the group deliberated on the September 2001 European Commission Communication and a forthcoming European Parliament report on the legal aspects of cinema and other audio-visual works. Likewise the January 2002 Report of the European Commission seminar on GATS and the audio-visual sector and proposals in the Spanish Presidency programme to promote cultural diversity in the media and audio-visual sector were also evaluated. With regard to the information society and international co-operation, the meeting considered the January 2002 Communication of the European Commission on ICTs in development policy and the @LIS-EU-Latin America "Alliance for the Information Society".
- 1.5.5. It did not prove possible to reconstitute the **Working Group on Islam in Europe** in the course of the year, as had been planned. Nevertheless the secretariat was represented at two colloquia organised by the Directorate General Education and Culture of the European Commission on inter-religious dialogue: on *The Church and inter-religious dialogue*, 20-21 March and again on *Peace, Security and Stability, International Dialogue and the Role of the EU*, 05-06 December. The Group of Political Advisers (GOPA) to the President of the European Commission also consulted members of the secretariat on issues pertaining to Christian-Islam dialogue.
- 1.5.6. The **COMECE Platform on Migration issues** brings together specialists from the Bishops' Conferences and representatives of the Brussels-based Catholic organisations working on migration, asylum and refugee issues. An ecumenical dimension has also been given to this platform through the presence of a representative of the Churches Commission for Migration in Europe (CCME). The platform held two meetings in the course of the year: on 25 March and on 17 June. The March meeting considered a proposal for a future directive on the admission of third country nationals for the purpose of unpaid activities and its potential interest for Churches. It also deliberated

on a proposal for a Council Directive laying down minimum standards for the *qualification and status of third country nationals and stateless persons as refugees* in accordance with the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees and the 1967 Protocol, or as persons who otherwise need international protection, COM (2001) 510 final, and considered joint comments for submission. This meeting also discussed the Commission proposal, COM (2002) 0071 final, for a Council Directive on the short-term residence permit issued to victims of action to facilitate illegal immigration or trafficking in human beings who co-operate with the competent authorities. The proceedings ended with a follow-up to the Round Table on Carriers' liability related to Illegal Immigration. The second meeting provided for an update on JHA Council decisions regarding illegal immigration and a common border control for the EU in view of the European Council of Seville, 21-22 June. M. C. Klos, Directorate General, Justice and Internal Affairs, European Commission, presented the Green Paper on a Community Return Policy on Illegal Residents COM (2002) 175 final. The meeting also considered the amended proposal for a Council Directive on the Right to Family Reunification, COM (2002) 225 final, and prepared comments for submission. On the basis of the work carried out in these meetings comments were published and submitted to the relevant EU authorities on various European Commission initiatives in the field of asylum and immigration: Communication on a Common Policy with Regard to Illegal Immigration (May 2002); the Directive on a Common Definition of Refugee Status (June 2002); Directive on a Short-term Residence Permit for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (June 2002); Directive on Family Reunification for Third Country Nationals (December 2002). Reports on the work of the Platform were given to the two Plenary Meetings. A compendium of all of the joint comments published by the Platform since 1999 was presented to the November 2002 Plenary Meeting.

- 1.5.7. The secretariat's work on **EU Foreign and Security Policy** was pursued through a series of events of various kinds: a informal consultation in collaboration with Misereor on the situation in Pakistan with Bishop Joseph Coutts, Bishop of Faisalabad on 22 January; a briefing meeting with Mme. Th. Sobieski, Directorate General RELEX of the European Commission on South-East Europe on 8 February; an informal consultation at the secretariat on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the role of religions in the prevention of conflict, 12 April, held in view of the Euro-Med ministerial meeting, Valencia, 22-23 April; a meeting at the secretariat with Professor Fred van Iersel, Tilburg University, on the initiation of a European Centre for Military Ethics, 17 May; a meeting with M. D. Loelke, Directorate General RELEX on the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 17 June; the preparation of a visit by H. E. M. Sabbah, Patriarch of Jerusalem to the EU institutions, in particular his meeting with Mr. X. Solana, the High Representative, 22 October; an informal consultation at the secretariat on Africa-EU relations with the participation of Bishop K. Dowling, Bishop of Rustenberg, South Africa, representatives of Church offices, the Apostolic Nuncio to European Communities, EU civil servants which was followed by meetings with the Secretary General of the ACP Group and the Ambassador of Burkina Faso, Mr. Ouedraogo, 30 October.
- 1.5.8. A group of specialists on issues relating to **Global Governance** took place in the secretariat on 23 April. The meeting was designed as a consultative session during which representatives of Church-linked organisations and others who had reacted to or

criticised the report to the COMECE Bishops, *Global Governance, Our Responsibility to make globalisation an Opportunity for All*, might engage in discussion with specialists on the subject. Among the contributors to the proceedings were: Fr. D. Peccoud, S. J., Special Adviser for Socio-Religious Affairs at the ILO; Mr. T. van Hees, Director of Eurodad, an NGO which was an important actor in the Jubilee Campaign; Mr. O. Dreute, specialist in Trade Policy with the EPP group in the European Parliament; Mr. R. van Ermen, Director of European Partners for the Environment; Mr. J. Felix, Secretary General of CIDSE. Mr. R. Felke, European Commission gave an overview of recent EU initiatives in the field. Commissioner Pascal Lamy also addressed the meeting on Commission thinking on issue related to global governance. The proceedings ended with a discussion which pointed to the usefulness of preparing an update note on the significant international events and conferences which took place in the year since its publication, chief among such conferences and events being, the WTO Ministerial, Doha, Qatar, 9-14 November 2001; the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 21-22 March, 2002; the formation of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development; the G7/G8 Summit, Kananaskis, Canada, 26-28 June; the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 26 August-04September 2002.

- 1.5.9. In accordance with the decision of the Autumn 2001 Plenary Meeting an **ad hoc Working Group** to prepare input to the **European Convention** was established by the secretariat. It held four meetings in the course of the year: 4 March; 11 April; 29 May; and 22 October. Bishop A. Nicora chaired its the first three meetings. The members of the group are: Dr. S. van Bijsterveld, Associate Professor, Faculty Law, Tilburg; Professor J-P Durand, Dean of the Faculty Canon Law, Institut Catholique, Paris; Bishop P. Erdö, Rector of the Catholic University, Budapest, Bishop A. Nicora, Dr. V. Marano, Legal Observatory of the Italian Bishops' Conference, Professor Dr. G. Robbers, University of Trier; Dr. F. Ronge, Secretariat of the German Bishops' Conference, Professor P. Valdrini, Rector of the Institut, Paris, Dr. F. Leinemann and the Secretary General of COMECE. The group produced the first substantial contribution to the Convention by a Church organisation on the basis of its first two meetings, a draft having been prepared by Dr. van Bijsterveld: the final version, duly approved by the COMECE Presidium, was submitted to the Convention on 21 May 2002. This text, *The Future of Europe Political Commitment, Values and Religion*, consisted of an introduction and sections on Human Dignity and Fundamental Rights, Solidarity and the Common Good, Subsidiarity and Participation, Churches and the European Union – Sharing Responsibility. The COMECE secretariat received much positive comment from various sources, including from members of the Convention on this document. In its further meetings in May and October the ad hoc Working Group developed a legislative proposal, *Churches and Religious Communities in a Constitutional Treaty of the European Union (I)* which was duly approved by the COMECE Presidium. The contents of this proposal were agreed ecumenically with the CEC and duly submitted to the Convention on 27 September 2002. The members of the group were consulted by electronic mail on the Tool Box document *Churches and Religious Communities in a Constitutional Treaty of the European Union (II)* of 18 December 2002, which provided suggestions as to where and how the contents of the legislative proposal might be incorporated into the constitutional treaty. This document

was also submitted ecumenically to members of the Convention. The group members are kept abreast of the progress in the Convention by the COMECE secretariat.

1.5.10. The Group *Foi Chrétienne et Construction Européenne*, chaired by Bishop H. Simon, met twice in the course of the year: 6 March in Lille and 7-8 July in Paris. A further meeting of four of its members took place at the COMECE secretariat to amend the draft text in the light of observations submitted by the group members. The members of the group are: Dr. L. Diotallevi, Professor at the University of Rome III; Fr. Th. Eggensperger, o.p., Director of the Dominican network, ESPACES; Dr. O. Gonzalez de Cardedal, Professor of Theology, Salamanca; Dr. M. Kranitz, Professor of Theology at the Catholic University of Budapest; Dr. M-H. Lavianne, Director of the Institute of Theology, Catholic University of Lille; Professor Dr. D.A.A. Loose; Rev. Dr. P. Marzukiewicz, Professor of Political Science, Warsaw; Dr. T. O'Connor, Professor of Modern History, Maynooth; Dr. U. Sander, St. Georgen/ Heder Korrespondenz; Dr. J. Soskice, Professor of Theology, Jesus College, Cambridge, Drs. S. J. M. Waanders, Radboud Foundation, Netherlands, and S. Lunte and N. Treanor from the COMECE secretariat. The group elaborated a document entitled, "*Let Us Open Our Hearts*" containing an introductory section and three thematic sections. A first draft was presented to the November Plenary 2002 for discussion; an amended version will be presented to the Spring Plenary Meeting in 2003 before launching the document for consultation. This document, duly amended and developed in the light of a consultation process, will serve as a basis for the Congress foreseen for Santiago de Compostella, April 2004.

1.5.11. A number of working sessions with the **financial advisers** assisted the secretariat in preparing and managing the annual budget and in preparing the accounts for the November 2002 Plenary Meeting.

1.5.12. In preparing and carrying forward the agendas of the Working Groups, the secretaries and staff members of the secretariat maintained contact with other Church-linked offices in Brussels, especially with CARITAS, CIDSE, ESPACES, OCIPE, Justice and Peace, Pax Christi International. They also kept close contact with offices of the other Churches working in the same policy areas. They also exchanged information with the officials of the EU institutions and with relevant policy centres and think-tanks.

2. COMECE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

2.1. Encounter and Exchange

2.1.1. The two Plenary Meetings were times of direct exchange between the Bishop members of COMECE and officials of the EU institutions. In the course of the year further contacts were made with European civil servants by the President, by members of the secretariat and on occasion by members of the Working Groups. The COMECE secretariat was contacted on occasion by officials of the institutions and by Members of the European Parliament in search of a Church viewpoint or input on EU policy matters.

- 2.1.2. The Social Congress, *Latin America and the European Union: Together for the Universal Common Good*, held at El Escorial (Madrid) on 13-14 May 2002, was a first encounter between COMECE and CELAM and also a time of exchange between them and representatives of political life on the issues of the EU-Latin America-Caribbean summit. Co-organised by COMECE, the secretariat of the Spanish Bishops' Conference and CELAM, the programme provided for work in Plenary sessions and also in workshops. Opened by Cardinal Antonio Maria Rouco Varela, Archbishop of Madrid and President of the Spanish Bishops' Conference, the Plenary was addressed by Bishop Jorge Enrique Jiménez Carvajal, President of CELAM, by Bishop Josef Homeyer, President of COMECE and by Archbishop Manuel Monteiro de Castro, Apostolic Nuncio in Spain. The assembly was then addressed by President José Maria Aznar, Prime Minister of Spain and President of the European Council and by Patricio Aylwin Azócar, former President of Chile and by the former Prime Minister of Portugal who explored the relationship between the two continents in terms of a partnership for better world governance. The current political, economic social and cultural challenges in the EU-Latin American relationship were outlined by Professor Guillermo León Herran, Gregorian University and ambassador of Colombia to the Holy See. Thereafter a Latin American viewpoint on the Church's contribution to the exchange between Europe and Latin America was given by Professor Carlos Maria Galli. Professor José Tomas Raga Gil, Professor Economics at the University of San Pablo, Madrid, and Member of the Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences delivered a paper on *The EU and Latin America in the face of globalisation*. Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, Archbishop of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, explored the theme *Human Development – a permanent call from the Church* with reference to the central issues of the summit. On the second day of the proceedings the participants met in workshops to discuss the themes: Human Rights, Democracy and Security; Regional integration and Nations; Social Justice and Sustainable Development; Cultural Diversity in the Information Society. Reports were taken in Plenary from the four workshops. A Final Message entitled, *The Encounter of Two Worlds, For a More Humane Global Society Founded on Solidarity*, was adopted and duly sent with a covering letter to the Co-Presidents of the summit, President José Maria Aznar, Prime Minister of Spain and to Mr. Ricardo Lagos, President of Chile.
- 2.1.3. The secretariat organised an informal exchange on the situation in Pakistan with respect of human rights, education, health and economic issues and the role of the Church in these fields for representatives of the EU institutions on Pakistan with Bishop Joseph Coutts, Bishop of Faisalabad on 22 January. The meeting was attended by Mr. Thomas Mann MEP, Ms. Maria Martens MEP, Mr. H. Marius, Directorate General RELEX of the European Commission, by representatives of the Europe Aid Office, Caritas Europa and by representatives of Misereor. The Members of the European Parliament, respectively Vice-President and a member of the European Parliament Delegation for relations with the countries of South Asia and the South Asia Association for Regional Co-operation (SARC), their assistants and the desk officer for Pakistan from RELEX found the session informative for their work at the EU institutions.
- 2.1.4. Following on the proposal of Bishop J. Homeyer to Commissioner Franz Fischler at a breakfast meeting during the Autumn 2001 Plenary, the secretariat organised an

information seminar for Bishops and their advisers from the candidate countries on *Perspectives for Agriculture after Enlargement*. Ten Bishops – Mgr. C. Proykov, President of the Bishops’ Conference of Bulgaria, Mgr. I. Seregely, President of the Bishops’ Conference of Hungary, Mgr. A. Veres (HU), Mgr. M. Golebiewski, Bishop of Koszalin-Kolobrzeg (PL), Mgr. W. Skworc, Bishop of Tarnow (PL), Mgr. J. Szlaga, Bishop of Pelpin, (PL), Mgr. M. Cislo, Auxiliary Bishop, Lublin (PL), Mgr. E. Janiak, Auxiliary Bishop, Wroclaw, (PL), Mgr. J. Jeziernski, Auxiliary Bishop, Olsztyn, (PL), Mgr. A. Perka Auxiliary Bishop, Iasi, (RO) – and six advisers took part. The participants were addressed by M. José Manuel Silva-Rodriguez, Director General, DG Agriculture of the European Commission, by the Permanent Representative of Spain to the European Union, H. E. Francisco-Javier Conde de Saro, by Commissioner Franz Fischler, Member of the European Commission with responsibility for agriculture and fisheries, by M. Eneko Landaburu, Director General, DG Enlargement. The participants had an opportunity to visit their respective Missions to the EU to pursue discussions with national representatives. This seminar offered both sides a memorable opportunity for a frank exchange on an issue of major concern to local communities where the Church is deeply involved with citizens and the future of their communities.

- 2.1.5. On 12 April 2002 the secretariat organised a consultation on the *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, Conflict Prevention and the Dialogue between Cultures and Religions* in view of the Euro-Med Ministerial meeting, Valencia, 22-23 April. COMECE staff members and representatives of other Church-linked offices in Brussels had an exchange with Ms. M. Mc Laughlin, DG RELEX (Head of Unit, Conflict Prevention and Management, ACP issues) and Mr. Bjorn Larsson, Policy Unit, Council, gave input to the session and heard from the twelve participants of efforts and contributions made by the Churches to preventing and resolving conflicts in the Euro-Med area.
- 2.1.6. As in previous years COMECE together with the Commission for Church and Society (CEC), together with the local Churches, requested meetings with the incoming Spanish and Danish Presidencies of the EU to discuss the priorities of the Presidency programmes and issues of concern to the Churches. A meeting took place in Madrid on 31 January with Mr. Ramón Miguel, Minister of State for European Affairs. COMECE was represented by Archbishop Elias Yanes Alvarez, Professor José Raga Gil and Stefan Lunte. Matters discussed with the Minister of State were: the Convention; a proposal that the Convention should organise a Hearing specifically for the Churches; the European Commission’s White Paper on European Governance; the state of the negotiations for the accession of new Member States; social cohesion and sustainable development. The Minister of State was also informed of the concerns of many churches concerning ethical issues relating to biomedical research. He was asked to signal these matters during the negotiations on the Sixth EU Framework Programme in respect of funding research projects. Concerning Europe’s role in the world, the representatives of the Churches expressed the desire that the Euro-Med Ministerial meeting in Valencia, 22-23 April, would mark a renewed commitment to inter-religious dialogue. They also discussed the objectives of the EU-Latin American summit and the COMECE participants outlined the aims of the COMECE-CELAM Social Congress scheduled for Madrid, 13-14 May. A request for a meeting with a representative of the Danish Presidency, submitted via the CEC, did not receive an answer.

- 2.1.7. In the context of their daily work and in the course of preparing the meetings of the Working Groups staff members were in regular contact with the European Commission, its cabinets and Directorates General, with staff and members of the European Parliament and with services of the Council of Ministers. The daily Press Conferences at the European Commission were attended by the COMECE press officer and journalist. COMECE documents were submitted, as appropriate, to officials and services. Throughout the year numerous officials of the EU institutions visited the secretariat for discussions, briefing sessions and to address visiting groups as well as COMECE Working Groups.
- 2.1.8. Close working relations were maintained with the Group of Political Advisers (GOPA) to the President of the European Commission. Dr. M. Weninger made numerous visits to the secretariat in the course of the year to discuss the challenge of the future of Europe debate for the Churches, to assist in planning various common initiatives, to address visiting groups, to seek input in efforts to develop dialogue with Islam and to keep abreast of the work of COMECE.
- 2.1.9. Staff members took part in the Briefing session organised by the Group of Political Advisers (GOPA) for the Church-linked offices in Brussels on the meetings of the European Council.
- 2.1.10. The Plenary sessions of the European Parliament in Strasbourg were covered and reported. The proceedings of the EP committees pertinent to the COMECE Working Groups were monitored by staff members. There were several meetings with Members of the European Parliament and with officials both in the COMECE secretariat and in the European Parliament.
- 2.1.11. The staff of the secretariat liaised with officials of the Permanent Representations of the Member States and the Missions of the candidate countries. Officials of various Representations addressed meetings of the COMECE Working Groups and attended other meetings at the secretariat.
- 2.1.12. Contacts were maintained with offices representing the regions of the Member States. Staff members participated in breakfast meetings, seminars and consultations organised by policy centres, in particular by the European Policy Centre (EPC) and by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS).

2.2. INPUT TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

- 2.2.1. As already indicated in this report, COMECE focused much of its work on the proceedings of the **European Convention**. The Lille seminar in March and the Autumn Plenary provided the Bishop members with an opportunity to elaborate on an overall plan for the secretariat and for representations in the Member States and in the candidate countries. As indicated above, the ad hoc Working Group produced and submitted two documents, *The Future of Europe, Political Commitment, Values and Religion* and a Legislative Proposal, *Churches and Religious Communities in a Constitutional Treaty of the European Union*. Other submissions were made to the

Convention's Working Groups by the secretariat: to the Working Group VI on European Monetary Union, 14 August; to the Working Group on the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, 15 October; to the Working Group on Social Policy, January 2003. In making input to the European Convention COMECE co-operated closely with the Apostolic Nuncio to the European Communities from which immense and significant support was given. Furthermore members of the secretariat met with numerous Convention members to explain and present the Churches' proposals. Various political seminars dealing with the Convention were attended by staff members in the course of the year. Staff members attended Sessions of Information and Dialogue on the European Convention organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC). In several Member States and candidate countries the Bishop's Conferences, kept abreast of developments in the Convention by the regular *Briefings* circulated by the COMECE secretariat after each of its Plenary Meetings and made contact with Convention members to appraise them of the proposals from the Churches.

- 2.2.2. The Social Congress, *Latin America and the European Union: Together for the Universal Common Good*, described in section 2.1.2., constituted both a real and symbolic contribution by the Church in Europe and in Latin America to the EU-Latin America summit. Its final message was sent to the Co-Presidents of the summit, to Heads of government of both continents and to interested officials of the EU institutions.
- 2.2.3. COMECE monitored and responded to the consultation process launched by the European Commission Communication document, *Towards a Reinforced Culture of Consultation and Dialogue – Proposal for General Principles and Minimum Standards for Consultation of Interested Parties by the Commission*, COM (2002) 277 final, issued on 5 June 2002. The document was the initial part of a package of legislative and political measures announced by President Prodi to implement the White Paper on European Governance. Comments elaborated by the secretariat were submitted to the Commission on 29 July. They stressed the need for democratic participation and transparency and set out a proposal that Churches be included in consultation processes and that their specificity be recognised. An interim document, summarising the contributions received, was published by the Commission on 2 September. A definitive Communication was adopted on 11 December, COM (2002) 704 final, which provides some possibilities for input from Churches and religious communities.
- 2.2.4. In the field of **Human Rights** policy the secretariat monitored the preparation of the Annual Report published by the European Parliament's Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs. Meetings took place with members of the committee; amendments were submitted to the draft report; comments were also submitted on the opinion produced by the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities; a letter was sent to numerous members of the Committee on Citizens' Rights prior to its final adoption, 12 December 2002. This proved a difficult field arena in which to communicate an accurate and differentiated understanding of the contribution of Church and religion to human rights. The secretariat also monitored developments regarding the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, particularly through the Report on the Impact of the Charter and its Future Status,

adopted by the Committee on Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament and also through the Working Group II of the European Convention. The secretariat also took part in a dialogue session on the Charter organised by the European Policy Centre (EPC), 13 September. A staff member took part in the meetings of the Human Rights Contact Group which consists of civil servants of the EU institutions and representatives of various organisations involved in the field of Human Rights and which aims to gather and provide information on current and future EU initiatives in the field.

- 2.2.5. The work of the Commission for **Legal Affairs** provided the basis for input from the secretariat on a range of policy issues, including a Commission proposal for a directive on the free movement of EU citizens and their families, COM (2001) 257 final, the Commission Communication, “Towards a Reinforced Culture of Consultation and Dialogue, 5 June, 2002 and issues attendant on the work of the European Convention and the proposals submitted by the Churches.
- 2.2.6. As indicated in section 1.5.2. submissions were made to the EU institutions on **bio-ethical issues** in research policy on the basis of work carried out by the Reflection Group on Bio-Ethical Affairs. Staff members participated in and made contributions to: a European Parliament Public Hearing on sexual and reproductive rights and reproductive health in the EU and in candidate countries, 26 February; to a meeting of the Working Group Life Sciences and Health: Human Blood and Blood Components, quality and safety or transfusion chain, 27 February; in the conference Global Healthcare and Development: the EU Policy Dimension Programme, 4 June; to a meeting with M. Martens MEP on a proposed regulation on reproductive health in developing countries 28 July; to a meeting with a staff member of the Italian Permanent Representation on the same subject on 16 August and to a discussion with the rapporteur, Ms. U. Sandbaek on the EP report on the issue, when COMECE amendments and reasoning were elucidated, 17 September; to the EGE Round Table, Ethical Aspects of bio-medical research in developing countries, 01 October.
- 2.2.7. As indicated above in section 1.5.3. of this report on **social and economic policy issues**, significant input was made on the part of the members of the Commission for Social Affairs to issues in EU social policy through the exchanges and discussions with EU officials and others involved with the shaping of EU policy. The documents produced by the group were submitted to the appropriate officials and institutions of the EU.
- 2.2.8. Input to EU policy in **Information Society, Communication and Media** is set out in section 1.5.4 above. Contributions were made in view of the revision of the European Directive, *Television without Frontiers*.
- 2.2.9. Through the COMECE Platform on Migration issues (viz. section 1.5.6. above) continuous and significant contributions were made to **Justice and Home Affairs** (JAI) policy issues. Contributions were submitted in respect of various Commission initiatives in the area of asylum and migration: Communication on a common policy with regard to illegal immigration (May 2002); Directive on a common definition of refugee status (June 2002); Directive on a short-term residence permit for victims of

trafficking in human beings (June 2002); Directive on Family reunification for third country nationals (December 2002).

2.2.10. In the field of **EU Foreign and Security Policy** the secretariat organised and hosted consultations for both EU officials and Church representatives on EU policy regarding Central Africa, Pakistan and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

2.2.11. As indicated in section 1.5.5. contributions were made by the secretariat to consultations organised by the EU institutions on **inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue**, particularly with reference to dialogue with Islam.

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

3.1. Throughout the year the secretariat continued its tradition of inviting officials of the EU institutions, Members of the European Parliament and persons engaged in the process of European integration to working breakfasts and lunches to discuss EU policy issues pertinent to COMECE's concerns.

3.2. As in previous years and at the request of the Group of the European Peoples' party in the European Parliament, once a month the COMECE secretariat received a group of *stagiaires* from the Christian Democratic movements in central and eastern European countries. During these meetings these future civil servants and politicians are briefed on COMECE's work and on the Church's engagement in the process of European construction.

3.3. Staff members maintained and developed contacts with think-tanks, political foundations and offices working on EU issues. They also took part in several seminars organised by think-tanks and foundations, particularly in the two weekend seminars organised by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Res Nova Publica Foundation in Roquebrune/Cap Martin (28-30 June) and Frascati (8-10 November) on the work of the European Convention.

3.4. In the series of evening lectures, discussions and receptions, an event on *Values in a European Constitutional Treaty*, with E. Teufel (representing the German parliament in the Convention), G. Amato (Presidium, Convention), Mgr. H. Simon (COMECE), Th. Mazowiecki, (former Prime Minister of Poland), 29 October had to be cancelled at the last moment. A evening discussion for EU civil servants and Members of the European Parliament was co-organised with the Katholisches Büro and the EKD Büro, Brussels with a address, "*It is not you that sustains the root, but the root that sustains you*" (Rom. 11.18b).

4. INFORMATION SERVICE, PUBLICATIONS, LECTURES

- 4.1. The monthly review, *Europe-Infos*, produced in collaboration with the Jesuit Office OCIPE, was published in French, English, German, Spanish and Polish. An editorial board made up of members of the COMECE and OCIPE secretariats and of EU civil servants met monthly to plan the forthcoming issues. A special issue was devoted to the European Convention (No. 38) in May 2002. The review was distributed to all Bishops in the Member States of the European Union, in the candidate countries of central and eastern Europe, to the services of Bishops' Conferences and to subscribers.
- 4.2. The analyses and reports of the COMECE Working Groups were sent to the appropriate services of the Bishop's Conferences. Circular letters were sent to the Bishop members and to the secretariats of the Bishops' Conferences in regard to draft EU policy. The regular "Briefing" reports on the work of the Convention were sent to the Bishops of COMECE, to the secretariats of the Episcopal Conferences and to interested Church organisations.
- 4.3. A further number of the series of COMECE publications, *Responsible Biomedical Research A Way Forward For Europe* containing the papers delivered at the COMECE seminar on 7 December 2000 were published. A Spanish language version of the report to the COMECE on Global Governance, provided by the services of the Spanish Bishops' Conference, was published. *An update, One year later an update of the Report to the Bishops of COMECE* was published on 30 September 2002.
- 4.4. Articles were written by staff members for the monthly review. Staff members published articles in reviews and in newspapers. Lectures were given on the work of COMECE and on issues pertaining to EU policy, many of them on COMECE work vis-à-vis the Convention, by staff at conferences organised by Bishops' Conferences, universities and academic institutes both in the Member States and in the candidate countries.
- 4.5. COMECE co-organised a number of academic events in the course of the year, inter alia, the International Colloquium, *Churches and religious communities in the EU, The legal obligations of its Member States – Present and Future*, University of Perugia 21-23 March; the study seminar *Verso una Costituzione Europea?*, Rome 20-23 June, 2002; *Modernisation and Faith, The Role of the Catholic Church in European Integration*, Cracow, 13-14 September; a lecture to a seminar on Islam in Europe, held at the PISAI, Rome, 6-18 December. Staff members gave lectures and took part in panel discussions at the aforementioned events.
- 4.6. On invitation and as their responsibilities permitted, staff members took part in and addressed congresses, seminars and study events throughout Europe. A selective review of this aspect of the secretariat's work is reflected in the following: lecture to civil servants of the EU institutions in Luxembourg, 16.01; address on Islam in Europe to the Görres Gesellschaft, Rome, 19.01; address to the Cercle Jean-Paul II, Moulins (F) 24.01; address to the Study Day of the Czech Bishops' Conference on European integration 21.01; participation and presentation to a workshop in *Globalisation and Catholic Social Teaching*, Washington D.C. 28-30.01; participation in the Congress

Zum Bilde Gottes geschaffen, Bioethik in evangelischer Perspektive, Berlin, 28-29.01; address to seminar at Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung on Churches and the Future of Europe, 05.02; address to a group of Austrian Sozialethiker, German parish centre, Brussels 05.02; contribution to the European Commission seminar, *Television without Frontiers*, Brussels, 18.02; address to group of Church leaders from Ireland, information visit to EU, Brussels, 19.02; EPC breakfast, *After Laeken – the fight against terrorism*, Brussels, 21.02 and also a seminar with J. Kavan, Deputy Minister of foreign Affairs, Czech Republic, Brussels 22.02; participation in German ecumenical task force on Daseinsvorsorge (services of general interest), 29.02; EPC seminar on *Sustainability and Globalisation: Towards Johannesburg*, 26.02; participation in the ZdK/Semaines Sociales seminar, *Taking our Responsibility for a New Era of European Integration*, Berlin, 28.02-03.03; participation in the conference-debate, Recherche biomédicale et Ethique, ADIC (Assoc. Chrétienne des Dirigeants et Cadres), Brussels, 05.03; EPC breakfast on Ecosystem and Environmental Research: sustainable development, Brussels, 06.03; participation in the meeting of the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences of South-East Europe, Celje, Slovenia, 09-13.03; address to the Cellieriers bénédictins d'Europe, Paris, 18.03; participation in European Commission colloquium DG Culture on inter-cultural dialogue, Brussels, 20-21.03; lecture to a group from Aachen on the Church and European integration, German parish centre, Brussels, 22.03; participation in COMECE co-organised seminar, *Churches and religious communities in the EU – The Legal obligations of Member States- Present and Future*, Perugia, 21-23.03; a presentation to Benedictine Sisters, Chantelle, (F), 02.04; participation in seminar on Islam and Violence at the Kontaktstelle für Interreligiösen Dialog, Austrian Bishops' Conference, Salzburg, 03-05.04; contribution to a workshop on immigration policy issues, *Journée de doctrine sociale de Evangile et Société*, Paris, 06.04; meeting with representatives of German Bishops' Conference on European Convention, Bonn, 10.04; assessment meeting on SIR Europa, Verbania, (I), 13-14.04; participation in a Round Table debate on EU education policy, Representation of Baden-Württemberg, Brussels, 11.04; address on global governance to a Bosphorus Gesellschaft group, Brussels, 12.04; presentation to a German Caritas group (Mecklenburg), Brussels, 17.04; participation in symposium, Legal Consequences of EU Enlargement for the Churches, Kleinmariaszell, (A), 22-24.04; contribution to EKD symposium, *Das Deutsche Staatskirchenrecht im Spannungsfeld zwischen Grundgesetz und EU-Gemeinschaftsrecht*, Hannover, 25-26.04; lecture on Directive *non-discrimination in work and occupation* to conference of Catholic school managers from UK and Ireland, Glasgow, 23-24.05; contribution to symposium on Theology Faculties within Humanities and Sciences in the Europe of Tomorrow, Klingenthal, Strasbourg, 31.05; presentation on Gentechnik und Menschenwürde, Diözesanrat, Aachen, 03.06; presentations to the regional Episcopal Conference of Piemonte, COMECE secretariat, Brussels, 04.06; contribution to annual meeting of press officers of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe, Otocek, Slovenia, 13-16.06; presentation to a group of representatives of Christian Workers Movement in Uganda, COMECE secretariat, Brussels, 27.06; presence at study session of EPP members in the European Convention, Roquebrune/Cap Martin (F), 28-30.06; participation in study assembly of the European Forum of national Laity committees, *Building a Europe of Values –contribution of the laity*, 28.06-03.07; presentation to a group of students and academics from the Université Catholique, Ouest France, Brussels, 05.07; exchange with American Catholic academics, Wildbad Kreuth, (D), 13-14.07; discussion with officials at the Europaabteilung Bayerische Staatskanzlei,

Munich, 15.07; contribution to panel at European Commission Hearing on a Common Return Policy for the EU, Brussels, 16.07; presentations of COMECE and its work to two study programme groups at CELAM's ITEPAL institute, Bogotá, 22-23. 08; participation in European Ethics Summit, Sustaining Humanity beyond Humanism, European Ethics Network, Leuven, 29-30.08; participation in the Sixth Renovabis International Conference, Freising, 05-07.09; lecture to conference *on Modernisation and Faith – Role of the Church in European Integration*, Cracow, 13-14.09; planning meeting with the office of the Semaines Sociales, Paris, 12.09; lecture to study programme for journalists from central and eastern Europe, Scy-Chazelle, 28.09; address on Issues of Current Concern in EU policy to a group of KAB, Brussels, 30.09; participation in General Assembly of Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions, Salzburg, 28-29.09; participation in the European Group on Ethics (EGE) Round Table, Ethical Aspects of biomedical research in developing countries, European Commission, Brussels, 01.10; presentation on European Convention to CCEE Plenary Meeting, Sarajevo, 03-06.10; participation in Soul for Europe symposium, Giving Dialogue a Chance – the contribution of religious and philosophical convictions to a common understanding in the Cities of today's Europe, at European Commission, Brussels, 14-15.10; participation in the Avicenne colloquium, L'Etat Européen; de la convention vers...une constitution? une constituante?, European Parliament, 16-17.10; lecture *on Concept and understanding of Charity in Islam* to the Fondation Rhodain conference, Lourdes, 23-26.10; participation in Council of Europe Hearing on Euthanasia, Paris, 29.10; lecture at Staatspolitisches Seminar, Osterweiterung und Verfassungskonvent, Fulda 07.11; participation in EPP study seminar on the European Convention, Rome/Frascati, 08-10.11; participation in the first meeting of WCRP European Council of Religious Leaders, Oslo, 11-12.11; participation in Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung/ ZEI third workshop, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership – political, economic and security co-operation, Brussels, 14.11; participation in Semaines Sociales de France, Paris, 15-16.11; presentation to a delegation from the Church of Sweden, Brussels, 15.11; participation in meeting of German Bishops' Conference Expertengruppe Europa, Bonn, 18.11; participation in a seminar, La situation des Eglises en Europe centrale et orientale: difficultés et défis dans la période post-communiste, Borgloon in Limburg (B), 23.11; participation in European Youth Forum – Muslim Youth and Student Organisation, European Parliament, Brussels, 25.11; contribution to a European Parliament Hearing on governance issues, 25.11; participation in the ecumenical group of Churches in Germany on Daseinsvorsorge (services of general interest), 03.12; presentations to an information seminar on European issues for Catholic journalist from Poland, Brussels, 03-05.12; participation in information seminar organised by the GOPA with Commissioner Vitorino on the European Convention for Church organisations, European Commission, Brussels, 03.12; participation in a conference organised by DG Culture of the European Commission, Peace, Security and Stability: *International Dialogue and the Role of the EU*, Brussels, 05-06.12; address to the Convention of e-Christians on the European Convention, Barcelona, 06-08.12; lecture on COMECE's proposals to the European convention to conference organised by Stichting Christenen voor Europa, Salons de la KBC, Brussels, 09.12; participation in EPC breakfast seminar, Le Sixième Programme-Cadre: Mettre la Recherche et le Développement au service des objectifs de Lisbonne, Brussels, 12.12; presence at Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung lecture by Lord G. Robinson, New Defence Agenda, Brussels, 12.12.

5. THE TEACHING OF RELIGION IN THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

- 5.1. In matters pertaining to the content of the teaching of the catholic faith in the European schools located in various Member States, COMECE is recognised by the *Conseil Supérieur* of European schools as the representative of the interests of the local Bishops.
- 5.2. Apart from the abiding challenge to find suitable teachers for the various linguistic sections in these schools, the teaching of religion in the nine schools proceeded calmly and efficiently. Serious administrative difficulties were not encountered during the course of the year.
- 5.3. The Secretary General of COMECE monitors developments in respect of the teaching of religion in the European schools. Meetings were held with the COMECE adviser (C. Roba) for the teaching of religion in the European schools at the secretariat to monitor potentially new policy developments in view of the forthcoming Enlargement of the EU.
- 5.4. In December it was planned to arrange for a meeting with the Secretary General of the *Conseil Supérieur* in early 2003.

6. ECUMENICAL CONTACTS AND COLLABORATION

- 6.1. Throughout the year contacts were maintained with the secretariat of the Commission for Church and Society(CSC) of the Conference of European Churches, with the Brussels office of the Orthodox Church, with the office of the Greek Orthodox Church, and with the office of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD).
- 6.2. In co-operation with the Commission for Church and Society of the Conference of European Churches, the COMECE secretariat assisted the relevant services of the EU institutions in preparing information visits for ecumenical groups of church leaders to Brussels.
- 6.3. As indicated in section 1.1.2. above the President visited the Patriarchate of Moscow 09-11 January, where he met with the Patriarch Alexj II, other leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church. He then travelled to Armenia, where he met with the Catholicos Karekin II 11-14 January.
- 6.4. Throughout the year the staff of the secretariat received ecumenical groups from the Member States and the candidate countries at the secretariat. The staff members invited CEC, EKD and the Orthodox representatives to breakfast and lunch meetings which led to fruitful co-operation in a range of policy areas, especially in the area of common work vis-à-vis the European Convention. The Secretary General and staff members received a group of Greek Orthodox Bishops as part of their study seminar to the EU institutions.

- 6.5. The meeting of the Joint Committee COMECE-Commission for Church and Society of the CEC was held in Brussels on 4 February. The Vice-President, Bishop A. van Luyn and the Secretary General represented COMECE. The agenda covered a the following issues: a review of co-operation on policy issues throughout the previous year; the accession of the New Member States to the EU and its implications for both organisations; the debate on the future of Europe following upon the Declaration of Laeken; the EU after the events of 11 September 2001, especially the implications for JAI; issues of bio-ethics and biotechnology; European Governance and the Churches; a review of the twice yearly dialogue seminars; an examination of the European Commission Work Programme for 2002; a consideration of the consequences of the Charta Oecumenica for the work of COMECE and the Commission for Church and Society. Mr. Keith Jenkins announced his forthcoming retirement (autumn); Bishop A. van Luyn closed the meeting and offered his good wishes to Mr. Keith Jenkins for a long and happy retirement in England.
- 6.6. COMECE participated in the Sixth Dialogue “*The religious and societal consequences of the events of 11 September 2001: the fight against terrorism and for peace*” which was held in Bucharest, 29-30 August.
- 6.7. Staff members took part in ecumenical prayer breakfasts at the European Parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg. Assistance was given to European Parliament officials to prepare the Ecumenical Prayer Service for the deceased members of the EPP group during the November Plenary Meeting. Staff members attended the annual European Prayer Breakfast in the European Parliament on 04 December 2002.
- 6.8. Numerous meetings of the initiative *Soul for Europe* were attended during the course of the year. The meetings dealt in the main with the possibility of constituting this inter-religious initiative with the participation of the European Humanist Federation as a not-for-profit organisation and providing it with statutes. A seminar, *Giving dialogue a chance: the contribution of religious and philosophical convictions to mutual understanding in the cities of today’s Europe* was prepared and held at the European Commission, Brussels, 14-15 October 2002.

7. COLLABORATION WITH CCEE AND THE BISHOPS’ CONFERENCES

- 7.1. Regular contacts and exchanges of information were maintained between the secretariats of COMECE and CCEE. The Secretary General attended the annual meeting of the General Secretaries of the Bishops’ Conferences in Istanbul, 13-16 June 2002. The Secretary General of COMECE attended and contributed to the CCEE Plenary Meeting in Sarajevo, 3-6 October.
- 7.2. The Secretary General of CCEE attended the Plenary Meetings of COMECE and reported on the activities of CCEE.
- 7.3. As a member of the CCEE-KEK Joint Committee the Secretary General of COMECE attended its meeting in Ottmaring,(Augsburg), 25-27 January 2002..

- 7.4. Several enquiries from the Bishops' Conferences regarding EU policy issues were dealt with. The secretariat played a vital role in keeping the services of Bishops' Conferences informed of developments in a range of EU policy areas as indicated throughout this report.
- 7.5. As a contribution to building up a sense of European identity among younger professional assistants and advisors in the secretariats of the Episcopal Conferences in the Member States and in the candidate countries, the COMECE secretariat organised a fourth summer university, "*Borders: Drawing borders, crossing borders and peaceful co-existence: a challenge for the Catholic Church in Europe*" at the Dom Sveti Jozef retreat house in Celje, Slovenia, 7-11 September 2002. Some forty five participants took part. The programme was launched by Archbishop Franc Rode, Archbishop of Ljubljana, and by Bishop Egon Kapellari, S. Lunte, J.Coughlan and M. Kuhn. Dr. Erhard Buzek, Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South-East Europe addressed the participants on the priorities of the Stability Pact. Contributions were made on the following subjects: *Catholicity without borders* (Prof. P. Nissen, Catholic University of Nijmegen); *Political and historical aspects of borders: the example of the border between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire* (Prof. K.Kaser, Institute for South-Eastern Europe, University of Graz and Dr. Petar Vrankic, Augusburg); *the border in the mind* (L. Wieser, Publisher, Klagenfurt with a panel discussion P. Vranic, L. Ovecka, N.Treanor); *Blurring borders: regional awareness and national sovereignty – the example of England, Scotland and Wales* (Roseanne Cunningham MEP); *Regional identity – European identity: Regionalisation as a model for a future Europe?* (Dr. A. Peterle, Member of the Slovenian Parliament and member of the European Convention and H. Hartung DG Education and Culture, European Commission); *'senza confini' - on the way to a Europe without borders?* (Dr. G. Albert, Renovabis); *There is always a border in the end: thoughts about otherness* (Dr. P. Plieger, University of Munich).

8. LOOKING FORWARD TO 2003

- 8.1. The COMECE and its secretariat will continue to monitor European Union policy-making on behalf of the Bishops' Conferences of the Member States and of the candidate countries.
- 8.2. The work of the Convention, which started on 28 February 2002, will continue to be monitored closely by the secretariat. Briefing sessions will be organised by the secretariat for Church agencies after the meetings of the Convention. The "ad hoc" Working Group will be convoked and consulted as necessary. The Episcopal Conferences of the Member States and the candidate countries will be kept abreast of the development of the work of the Convention. They will be advised on the need for intervention at the national level as required.
- 8.3. The secretariat will pay particular attention to EU Human Rights policy and seek to explore possibilities for input in this field.
- 8.4. The secretariat will continue its close monitoring of EU research policy and particularly to ethical and bio-ethical issues in this field.

- 8.5. The possibility of developing a barometer or index of development in Global Governance as a form of follow-up to the report made to COMECE in September 2001 will be explored.
- 8.6. A meeting will take place between the Presidencies of COMECE and CELAM to consider appropriate forms of follow-up to the Social Congress, held in Madrid in May 2002.
- 8.7. COMECE will be invited to send representatives to the XXIX Ordinary Assembly of CELAM, Tuparendà, Paraguay.
- 8.8. A seminar on the issues of the EU-Africa summit will be co-organised by COMECE and SECAM; it will take place in Lisbon, 27-28 February 2003.
- 8.9. A special issue of Europe-Infos on EU-Africa will be published in co-operation with CIDSE, Caritas Europa, Pax Christi International and AFJN, in February 2003.
- 8.10. The COMECE secretariat will be represented at a meeting of the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences of South-East Europe, to be held in Shkoder, Albania, 9-11 March 2003.
- 8.11. The series of thematic evenings and receptions will be continued and intensified to present events and initiatives in the life of local Churches throughout Europe to the EU milieu and also to explore some pressing themes such as that of relations with Islam.
- 8.12. A fifth summer university, to be held in Budapest, will be prepared.
- 8.13. The COMECE website will be demonstrated to the Bishop members at the Spring Plenary.
- 8.14. Preparations will be advanced for the COMECE pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella 17-21 April 2004, for the Congress in Compostella, 22-23 April 2004 and for the COMECE Plenary, 24 April 2004. COMECE members will nominate the members of the national delegations.

N. Treanor
25 March 2003