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COMECE

ANNUAL REPORT

2003

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INTRODUCTION

The Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE) monitors 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 present Member States of the European Union and also on behalf of the Episcopal Conferences of the acceding countries. To this end and throughout the year 2003 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 a range of activities involving the EU institutions on the one hand and groups representative of 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 worked closely with the Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union, with numerous Catholic organisations which liaise with the EU, with the secretariats of the Bishops' Conferences and with the offices of the other Churches in Brussels.

The COMECE work programme for 2003 was dominated by the European Convention. This is clearly reflected in the agendas of the two Plenary meetings. Many of the Bishop members took part in meetings with Convention members in their respective countries. The secretariat staff worked constantly on issues arising from plenary sessions, meetings of the Presidium and on reports of developments in the Convention's work. Much of this work was done in ecumenical consultation and co-operation with the Commission for Church and Society of the CEC, with the office of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and with the office of the Orthodox Church of Greece. In all its endeavours in this field COMECE maintained regular contact with the Apostolic Nuncio to the European Communities and received support from the Nuncio H. E. Faustino Sainz Muñoz and the Secretariat of State.

The final section of the Annual Report for 2002 outlined a series of areas in which the COMECE secretariat would continue its work in the course of 2003. They were delineated as follows:

- (i) 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.
- (ii) 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 national level as required.
- (iii) the secretariat will pay particular attention to EU Human Rights policy and seek to explore possibilities for input in this field.
- (iv) the secretariat will continue its close monitoring of EU research policy and particularly to ethical and bio-ethical issues in this field.
- (v) 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.
- (vi) a meeting will take place between the Presidencies of COMECE and CELAM to consider appropriate forms of follow-up to the Social Congress which was held in Madrid in May 2002.
- (vii) COMECE will send representatives to the XXIX Ordinary Assembly of CELAM, Tuparendà, Paraguay.
- (viii) 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.
- (ix) 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.
- (x) 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.
- (xi) 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.
- (xii) a fifth summer university, to be held in Budapest, will be prepared.
- (xiii) the COMECE website will be demonstrated to the Bishop members at the Spring Plenary.
- (xiv) 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.

This report for 2003 indicates that the objectives in the aforementioned areas were pursued and achieved. Other initiatives were also undertaken in response to the EU agenda.

Greece held the Presidency of the European Union from January to June 2003. With the motto, *Our Europe, Sharing the future in a Community of Values*, it targeted five priorities: (i) the enlargement process, with particular attention to preparing the Balkans (ii) further implementation of the Lisbon process, (iii) immigration, asylum and management of external borders, (iv) facilitating an intense debate on the Future of Europe during the European Council in Thessaloniki (21 June). Taking over the Presidency on 1 July, Italy trained its focus on (i) preparations for the intergovernmental conference, (ii) strengthening the Lisbon strategy, (iii) initiatives promoting the “greater Europe”, paying particular attention to the Western Balkans, to advance the accession negotiations with Romania and Bulgaria, relations with the Russian Federation, and to relaunch the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

The European Commission’s work programme for 2003 set out three core priorities for the year: (i) completing the enlargement process with the ten candidate countries, (ii) strengthening the foundations of stability and security throughout the EU and in the new neighbouring countries, (iii) promoting economic growth and employment. It also undertook to play a key role in the WTO negotiations, launched in Doha, in Cancún (September 03) as well as in regard to the Kyoto commitments.

COMECE and its secretariat monitored the work of the Greek and Italian Presidencies, the unfolding of the Work Programme of the European Commission and the relevant initiatives of the European Parliament. This report sets out the main activities carried out by COMECE in the course of 2003. It does not attempt an exhaustive listing of all the initiatives of the Bishop members and the staff of the secretariat. It seeks rather to give an overview of the principal activities undertaken in the service of the Bishops’ Conferences and of the European project.

COMECE FROM WITHIN

1.1. The President

1.1.1. The President chaired and guided the deliberations of the Plenary meetings 27-28 March and 30-31 October and two meetings of the Executive Committee, the first in Rome on 16-17 June, the second in Brussels on 19 September.

1.1.2. He addressed the opening session of the seminar, *Africa and the European Union, Partners in Solidarity, Contribution of the Church*, organised by COMECE together with SECAM and the Portuguese Bishops’ Conference, in Lisbon, 27-28 February 2003. He attended and gave a lecture at the Adalbertsforum, Gniezno, Poland, 15-16.03. He met with Patriarch Teoctist, Nürnberg, 11.05. He gave lectures on the Church and European issues to the Bertelsmann-Stiftung, Berlin, 05.07, at the Canisianum, Innsbruck, 09.07; to the Maximilian-Kolbe-Werk, Berlin, 26.09; to the Study Day of the German Bishops’ Conference, Fulda, 24.09; to the Berlin Brandenburger Gespäche, Berlin, 27.10.

1.1.3. On 16 January he and the Vice Presidents met with the President of CELAM, H. E. Mgr. J. Jiménez Carvajal in Rome to evaluate the Social Congress, *Latin America and the European Union – Together for the Universal Common Good*, held in Madrid, 13-14 May 2002. He took part in a follow-up meeting to the Lisbon seminar (1.1.2.) with Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, then President of SECAM, together with Bishop A. van Luyn and members of the COMECE secretariat. This meeting took place in Berlin on 29 May.

- 1.1.4. Archbishop H. Simon represented the COMECE at the promulgation of the Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Europa*, in St. Peter's Basilica during Evening Prayer, 28 June, 2003.

1.2. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 1.2.1 The Executive Committee – the President Bishop J. Homeyer, the two Vice-Presidents, Bishop A. van Luyn and Archbishop H. Simon and the Secretary General – met twice in the course of the year. The Apostolic Nuncio to the European Communities, H. E. Archbishop F. Sainz Muñoz attended. Mr. S. Lunte and Dr. M. Meyer also took part.

- 1.2.2. The meeting of 16-17 June took place in Domus Sanctae Marthae, Vatican City. The meeting was appraised of activities of the secretariat since the Spring Plenary meeting. At this first meeting since the elections of the Presidium at the Spring Plenary a range of EU policy fields were identified as basic priority areas for the 2003-2006 mandate: the IGC - Constitutional arena, enlargement, the revision of the financial perspectives 2006-2013, research policy, the role of the EU in the world. Particular attention was given to the work of the European Convention. Reports were made on the secretariat's monitoring of its proceedings, the submissions made, on numerous exchanges with members of the Convention and civil servants working in its services. Documentation was provided outlining the results of the Convention's work, the outstanding issues, and also the provisions of the draft dealing with religion and with the status of Churches and non-confessional organisations. The issue of a reference to the Christian tradition and/or an invocatio Dei were discussed at length. The committee members also gave some consideration to the modi of a future dialogue between the EU and the Churches. Having considered the implications of the forthcoming enlargement for COMECE, reports were given on the preparation of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, 17-21 April 2004. Archbishop H. Simon reported on the elaboration of the text, *Let Us Open Our Hearts* and on the initial plans for the theological congress to be held in Santiago de Compostela, 22-23 April 2004. In the course of a meeting with H. E. Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran and Mgr. E. Balestrero (Secretariat of State) the following issues were discussed: the European Convention, enlargement of the EU, the events planned for Santiago in April 2004. The Committee members also met with H. E. Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald, President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and discussed recent developments in the sphere of inter-religious dialogue, paying particular attention to its pertinence for the Barcelona process. A further meeting took place with H. E. Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops, during which the President and Vice Presidents presented the work of COMECE, some recent initiatives and the challenges facing the Church in the enlarged EU.

- 1.2.3. A further meeting of the Executive Committee took place at the COMECE secretariat in Brussels on 19 September. After a review of the main activities since the previous meeting, the Committee members discussed the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Europa*, published on 28 June 2003. Taking the results of the Thessaloniki Council into consideration, the Committee reflected on a strategy to monitor the intergovernmental conference to take place towards the end of the Italian Presidency. The initial reflections of the June meeting on the future dialogue with the EU (Article I-51 of the draft treaty) were continued. In view of the forthcoming enlargement and the further integration of the EU, extensive consideration was given to adequate future staffing of the secretariat, the matter of shortage of space in the office even for present needs, present and future budgetary requirements and the revision of the statutes. Among the other issues discussed were: preparations of the events in Santiago, the Global Governance Assessment Report, the principal theme for the Autumn Plenary meeting.

1.2.4. The Vice Presidents undertook engagements on behalf of COMECE: Bishop A. van Luyn had discussions with the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, 20.02; he gave a lecture *An Opportunity for Truth and Justice: the Unification of Europe as a Challenge to Church and University* at the KUL, 06.03. Archbishop H. Simon represented the COMECE at the promulgation of the Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Europa*, in St. Peter's Basilica during Evening Prayer, 28 June 2003.

1.3 THE PLENARY MEETINGS

1.3.1. During this meeting elections were held for the post of President and the two Vice-Presidency posts of COMECE. Bishop J. Homeyer was re-elected President. Bishop A. van Luyn was re-elected Vice-President. Archbishop H. Simon was also elected Vice-President. The first day of the Spring Plenary meeting 27-28 March 2003 focused on the theme, *L'Europe s'unit autour d'une; elle se divise au niveau de sa politique extérieure*. Mr. Elmar Brok, Member of the European Parliament and one of its representatives in the European Convention, addressed the reasons for a constitution for the EU, its significance and its relationship to the constitutions of the Member States. Fr. Professor Peter Serracino Inglott, representative of the government of Malta in the Convention, explained the working method of the Convention and gave an assessment thereof. A discussion on Europe and the international situation taking account of the war in Iraq, the Middle East and other strife-ridden areas, was led by Bishop John Crowley and Bishop Vaclav Maly. Thereafter Mr. E. Barón Crespo, Member of the European Parliament (EP) and President of the Socialist Group in the EP, spoke on the EU's role in the world and the implications of that role for the forthcoming constitution. Over lunch the members of the Executive Committee had an opportunity to discuss with Mr. Barón Crespo the COMECE proposals in view of an article in the constitution and also the possibility of including a reference to the Christian heritage in its preamble. The agenda then provided for an updating on the proposals made by COMECE to the European Convention. F. Leinemann outlined the various submissions, concentrating on the legislative proposal elaborated by the COMECE Convention Ad hoc Working Group and then agreed ecumenically with the CEC. He gave an overview of the discussions on this subject in the Convention. He then appraised the meeting of discussions of a reference to Christianity or to God in the preamble. Bishop J. Duffy (Ireland) and Bishop A. Veres then led a Round Table report and discussion on meetings in the Member States and adhering countries (to the EU) with members of the Convention. Under the heading *Faith and the making of Europe* the programme provided for a discussion of (i) the working document "Let Us Open Our Hearts", (ii) the possibility of a Europe-wide homily on the subject of Christians and Europe, (iii) the doctrinal note of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on Catholics in Political life (24.11.02). Before Evening Prayer and dinner J. Coughlan and fellow members of staff gave a demonstration of the recently launched COMECE website. An evening discussion explored the EU-USA relationship in the light of the Iraq war; the discussion was opened by two presentations, the first by Mrs. Leslie Lebl, Minister Counsellor for Political Affairs at the US Mission to the EU, the second by Mr. J. Palmer, Director of the European Policy Centre, Brussels. The second day of the meeting opened with reports from the adhering countries on preparations for their entry to the EU. This led to an account of preparations for the pilgrimage to Santiago in April 2004 and to the theme and preparation of the COMECE summer university, to be held in Budapest in September 2003. A further thematic section addressed COMECE initiatives regarding the relationship of the Church to the EU's role in the world: (i) on the preparation of an Assessment Report on Developments in Global Governance, (ii) a report on the COMECE-SECAM seminar in Lisbon on EU-Africa relations, February 2003 (iii) the meeting with the President of CELAM in January, (iv) a report on the meeting of representatives of Episcopal Conferences in Jerusalem, January 2003. Staff members then reported on the work of the

Commissions and Working Groups. Mgr. A. Giordano gave an update on the activities of CCEE. The Press conference on Friday 28 March was well attended.

1.3.2. The Autumn Plenary took place in Brussels on 30-31 October. *The EU and its Neighbours* was the subject chosen for the first day. Presentations were made by: (i) Mr. Michael Leigh, Associate Director General for External Relations and Head of the "Wider Europe Task Force" at the European Commission, who outlined the history and objectives of the policy, (ii) H. E. Ambassador M. Melani, Permanent Representative of Italy to the Political and Security Committee on key elements in the neighbourhood policy for the Mediterranean region, (iii) Ms. Loyola de Palacio, Vice-President of the European Commission on issues in Energy and Transport policy in the framework of EU Neighbourhood policy. After a Round Table discussion to assess the outcome of the input and discussions, the meeting turned its attention to the Intergovernmental Conference. The discussion opened with a presentation by M. Etienne de Poncins, spokesman of the Permanent Representation of France to the EU, who had assisted M. V. Giscard d'Estaing throughout the Convention. Thereafter the meeting considered the significance of draft Article I-51 and discussed the matter of a reference to the Christian heritage in the preamble. After Evening Prayer and dinner H. E. G. Cardinal Danneels and H. E. P. Morel, Ambassador of France to the Holy See, addressed a public soirée attended by 150 persons on the subject, *The Responsibility of Christians for tomorrow's Europe*. Both presentations evoked great interest in the audience. Cardinal Danneel's presentation on the content of the Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Europa* brought to attention a Brussels/EU public. The text of his paper was much requested afterwards. Mass was presided on Friday morning by Archbishop Elias Yanes Alvarez (Spain). The opening session heard of progress in the preparation of the Santiago events, pilgrimage, congress and Plenary meeting. Thereafter the Bishop members met to discuss administrative and budgetary affairs. Thereafter under the heading *Solidarity in Europe* they deliberated on outline drafts for two projects: (i) a COMECE statement, *The EU on the Way towards a Community of Solidarity* foreseen for Spring 2004, (ii) a text proposing an EU strategy promoting the Family to be launched in early 2004 in the context of the UN Year of the Family and the mid-term review of the Lisbon strategy. In a further thematic ensemble entitled, *Europe in Solidarity with the World*, a series of initiatives were treated: (i) the Global Governance Assessment report was presented and received, (ii) a report was given on the WTO meeting in Cancún (Mexico), (iii) a contribution by the secretariat to the EU Security Strategy, (iv) the preparation of the EP annual report on Human Rights, and (v) on exchanges with SECAM and with CELAM. Reports were given by staff members on the work of the Commission for Legal Affairs. Presentations on various issues in Research Policy and Bio-Ethics were received and discussed. The Marty report on Euthanasia (Council of Europe) was elucidated. Other issues discussed were: (i) a report from the Working group on Media Policy on the secretariat's contribution to a consultation on the revision of the TC Without Frontiers Directive, (ii) an account by Bishop Merisi of the meeting between the Churches and the Italian Presidency, 14.10.03, (iii) a report on the COMECE summer university, Leanyfalu, Hungary, (iv) events in the context of the Semaines Sociales européennes and the Mitteleuropäische Katholikentag. Mgr. Aldo Giordano reported on CCEE and its work. Several journalists attended the Friday Press conference.

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. On 16 October 2003 Dr. Felix Leinemann, who had worked with COMECE since 1 February 1999, joined the European Commission (DG Energy and Transport). Mr. Henrik Lesaar succeeded him as a counsellor for Legal Affairs as of 1 July 2003.
- 1.4.4. Having worked with the Service d'Information Pastorale Catholique Européenne (SIPECA) since its inception in 1976, Agnès Paillard became secretary of the COMECE on its creation on 3 March 1980. Combining her work as office secretary and assistant to the Secretary General, she also put her professional skills in financial administration at the disposal of COMECE. With her energy, multiple organisational and administrative skills, she contributed greatly to setting up the secretariat at its present location in Rue Stévin. She retired from the COMECE secretariat on 31 December 2003. COMECE is greatly indebted to her for the impeccable quality of her work, her unstinting service and dedication and for the countless hours of labour given freely beyond the call of duty.
- 1.4.5. At the end of July Katharina Schauer and her husband moved to Berlin. By electronic means, telephone from Berlin and regular working sessions at the secretariat she continues to work with COMECE.
- 1.4.6. The Secretariat was assisted in the course of the year by voluntary interns: Nadège von Hansen, Lübeck, (3-7 February); Jutta Förtsch, Bamberg, (3-29 March); Mario di Piazza, Berlin, (1 March – 27 June / 1 day per week); Monika Rzemieniecka, Polish, living in Belgium, (1 May – 6 June); Burkard Berkmann, Innsbruck, (30 June – 25 July); Josef Oberger, Gumpoldskirchen/Salzburg, (1-30 September); Matthias Häfner, Tübingen/ Paris, (1 September – 22 October), Aleksandra Hebda, Poland (October 2003 for one year/ two days per week), Belkacem Amarouche (8 November- 22 December).

1.5. COMMISSIONS AND WORKING GROUPS

- 1.5.1. The **Commission for Legal Affairs** met on 7 February and on 14 October. Reports on the work of the Commission were given to the Plenary meetings. Each meeting included a report on juridical issues of current concern to the Church in the Member States represented. The February meeting considered developments in the Member States in regard to the implementation of directives 2000/78/EC and 2000/43/EC on non-discrimination and their import for the Church. The developments in the European Convention were discussed; provision was made to ensure contacts with members of the Convention at national level were made and maintained, where possible. The European Commission Communication of 11 December 2002 on a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue, (COM(2002) 704) was examined; proposals in view of the revision of directives on VAT on certain services involving intense labour were considered. The members of the Working Group met with the CEC Legal Affairs Working Group for an exchange

of information and to discuss issues in regard to the work of the European Convention and issues in European governance. The meeting of 14 October concentrated on the Intergovernmental Conference, the pertinent contents of the draft constitutional treaty, the position of governments in regard to Article I-51 and to a reference to the Christian heritage in the preamble. The provision of draft Article I-51.3 for an open, transparent and regular dialogue was considered with a view to possible modalities for such dialogue. Ms. B. Helfferich, a member of the cabinet of Commissioner Diamantopoulou, addressed the group on preparations for a draft directive implementing the principle of equality between men and women. Steps were taken to develop proposals regarding the proposal for a directive to modify directive 77/388/EEC on VAT. The group was provided with an update on a proposal for a directive relative to the right to free movement and establishment of citizens and their families in the Member States (COM(2001) 257).

1.5.2. The **Commission for Social Affairs**, chaired by Bishop A. van Luyn, met in Brussels on 14-15 February and 3-4 October. Reports and documentation from the two meetings were presented to the Plenary meetings of COMECE. The February meeting took as its theme *The Financial Participation of Workers in capital and profit of industry*. Contributions on various aspects of the theme were made by guest speakers: Dr. Martin Selmayr, Bertelsmann AG; Dr. Monika Lücke, EKD; Dr. Martin Ahbe, General Secretariat of the European Commission; M. B. LeBret, Cabinet of Commissioner M. Barnier; Mr. D. Vaughan-Whitehead, European Commission; Bishop A. Losinger, auxiliary Bishop of Augsburg; Mr. G. Bittner, Austria. The Commission chose *Solidarity in the European Union* as the theme of its October meeting. From the viewpoint of social ethics it explored the exercise and realisation of solidarity in the EU with particular reference to the revision of the EU financial perspectives. Presentations were made by speakers: M. Ph. De Schoutheete, former Permanent Representative of Belgium to the EU on the Delors I and II packages; M. Eckart Guth, Assistant Secretary General of the European Commission on the European Commission's initiative to prepare the post-2006 financial framework; M. D. Vienot, Caritas Europa on its recent report on poverty; Pierre Defraigne, Associate Director General, European Commission DG Trade, assessing the WTO Ministerial at Cancún. A Round Table discussion explored the expectations of the Member States in respect of the future financial framework. Contributions to the Round Table discussion were made by: Louisa Lamela, Permanent Representation of Spain; Ronald Luttikhuis, Permanent Representation of the Netherlands; Rudolf Paul, Permanent Representation of Austria; Ewa Synowiec, Permanent Representation of Poland. The members of the Commission then worked on a draft statement on Solidarity in the EU, to be submitted to the COMECE Plenary.

1.5.3. The **Reflection Group on Bio-ethical Research** met on 14 March and on 10 October 2003. The first meeting considered and examined the European Commission's draft Report on Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research (not publicly available at that time), produced as a basis for discussion at an inter-institutional seminar, Brussels, 24 April 2003. The members of the Group concluded that the report revealed a pre-emptive decision by the Commission to promote the joint financing of research involving human embryonic stem cells and the creation of new stem cell lines. The Group produced an informal report in its regard. Other pertinent issues, such as the position taken by UCL staff on stem cell research and issues attendant on genetic testing were discussed. The October meeting opened with an update on: (i) developments of interest in the national context, (ii) the visit to the EU institutions of the Joint Bio-Ethics Committee by the Episcopal Conferences of England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland, (iii) opinion No.18 of the EGE on the *Ethical Aspects of Genetic Testing in the Workplace*, (iv) the European Commission document on financing of research on human embryos. The ethical issues attendant on genetic testing were the main subject of the meeting. On the basis of their deliberations the members of

the group produced a text entitled, *Commentaires sur l'Avis no.18 du Groupe européen d'éthique relatif aux aspects éthiques des tests génétiques dans le cadre du travail*, which was submitted to the members of the European Group on Ethics (EGE).

- 1.5.4. The **Working Group on Information Society, Communications and Media Policy** convened on 5 February and on 25-26 June. The February meeting opened with an update on the European Commission's Work Programme for 2003 and its provisions for initiatives in the field. A report was also taken on the programme for the Greek Presidency of the EU with particular reference to Media policy issues. Thereafter the meeting concentrated on the revision of the *Television Without Frontiers* (TVWF) Directive on the basis of an input made by M. Vincent Jamois, DG Education and Culture, European Commission. Work was undertaken to prepare a contribution to the revision of the directive. The meeting of 25-26 June received an outline draft contribution in view of the revision of the TVWF Directive. Having received input from Mr. P. Shaw, assistant to Mr. R. Perry M.E.P., rapporteur on the EP report on the subject, from Dr. F. Leinemann on the results of the European Convention in respect of cultural and media policy, from Ms. Nicola Frank, the European Broadcasting Union and from M. Vincent Jamois, European Commission, the members of the group proceeded to finalise the submission. This text was duly submitted to the European Commission in July.
- 1.5.5. It was not possible to reconstitute the **Working Group on Islam in Europe**. However the secretariat was represented at several exchanges and meetings in the EU institutions on inter-religious relations and relations with Islam in particular: at a Conference organised by the European United Left (GUE) and the Nordic Green Left (NGL) in the European Parliament on the Iraq crisis and the co-existence of religions in the Near East, 5 March; at a Conference, organised by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) on behalf of Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Ms. A. Diamantopoulou, on the fight against anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, European Commission, Charlemagne building, Brussels, 20 March. The EPP Group in the European Parliament and the Group of Political Advisers (GOPA) 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). In the course of 2003, the platform continued its work by contributing comments on several documents issued by the European Commission and by following up the legislative procedures in the European Parliament and in the Council of Ministers. On the basis of an earlier comment, the Platform produced press-releases commenting on the agreement (27 February 2003) and the formal adoption (22 September 2003) of the Directive on the Right to Family Reunification (2003/86/EC) by Justice and Home Affairs Council. The Platform supported the initiatives of the COMECE Secretariat to promote an appeal against the Family Reunification Directive in the European Parliament. Furthermore, the Platform contributed to several comments submitted to the relevant EU institutions: a proposal for a Council Directive on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status, COM (2002) 326 final/2 (May 2003); a proposal for a Council Directive on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of studies, vocational training or voluntary service, COM (2002) 548 final (May 2003); a Communication from the European Commission towards more accessible, equitable and managed asylum systems COM(2003) 315 final (October 2003); Communication from the European Commission on the development of a common policy on illegal immigration, smuggling and trafficking of human beings, external borders and the return

of illegal residents COM (2003) 323 final (January 2004). The compendium of all joint comments published by the Platform since 1999 was updated in 2003.

- 1.5.7. The secretariat's work on **EU Foreign and Security Policy** was pursued through a series of events: contacts with the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in view of the joint COMECE-SECAM seminar on Africa and the EU, 27-28 February; contacts with the ACP secretariat and Ambassadors of those countries to prepare the aforementioned seminar; an exchange with Archbishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and three members of the Zimbabwe Democracy Trust on the occasion of his visit to the EU institutions, 15 May; the preparation of a programme for the visit for a delegation from Bunia/Ituri, DRC whose members met with Dr. Michael Weninger (GOPA), Ambassador Aldo Ajello, EU Special Representative for the Great Lakes; Ms. Claude-France Arnold, Director of External Relations, EU Council Secretariat; the office of Mr. Xavier Solana, EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy; Ms. Barbara Brandtner, Member of the Cabinet of Mr. C. Patten, Commissioner for External Relations; with representatives of the European Great Lakes Forum.
- 1.5.8. **Briefing Meetings** for Church-linked organisations and agencies were co-organised by the COMECE secretariat and the secretariat of the Commission for Church and Society(CSC) as a means of informing those Church offices not attending all sessions of the Convention of relevant developments. They took place after each Plenary session of the Convention. The written reports, prepared alternatively, by COMECE and CSC staff members, were made available and were duly sent to the members of COMECE, the secretariats of Episcopal Conferences, to agencies of the Churches in the Member States. These meetings also provided an opportunity for Church organisations to discuss issues of common interest in respect of the Convention and to monitor its progress. The reports produced after each session were co-published in English and German.
- 1.5.9. The **Group Foi Chrétienne et Construction Européenne** did not have occasion to meet in the course of 2003. 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. Archbishop H. Simon, President of the Group, met with S. Lunte and the Secretary General met on 21 January in Clermont to review the draft document and to prepare it for presentation to the Spring Plenary meeting of COMECE. As decided at the COMECE Plenary in March 2003, the document produced by the Group, *Let Us Open Our Hearts*, was distributed widely for comment. By the end of the year numerous reactions had been received. In accordance with the decision of that Plenary these comments were prepared for a meeting of the Group scheduled for January 2004, when they would be processed and assessed with a view to presenting them together with the document at the Congress in Santiago, 22-23 April 2004.
- 1.5.10. A number of working sessions with the two **Financial Advisers** assisted the Secretary General in preparing and managing the annual budget and accounts. On 7 October a meeting of the Financial Advisers of the Bishops' Conferences of the fifteen Member States and of the ten adhering countries was held in Brussels, in the Centre Interdiocesan. This meeting aimed to

present a developed key to regulate in a fair and just manner the contribution of the Episcopal Conferences of the twenty five EU Member States to the budget of the enlarged COMECE.

- 1.5.11. 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 moments 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. Particular attention was given to meeting and maintaining contact with members of the European Convention and civil servants in its service. 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 seminar *Africa and the European Union, Partners in Solidarity, Contribution of the Church*, a collaborative initiative between COMECE and SECAM, took place in Lisbon, 27-28 February 2003. The Portuguese Bishops' Conference contributed significantly to the preparation and organisation of this event. This seminar aimed to prepare a contribution on behalf of the Episcopal Conferences of the EU and of Africa to the EU-Africa summit, which was postponed *sine die*. The programme provided for plenary sessions and workshops. The seminar was opened by a series of addresses: H.E. Cardinal José da Cruz Policarpo, Patriarch of Lisbon; H. E. Bishop Josef Homeyer, President of COMECE; H. E. Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, President of SECAM; H.E. Archbishop Alfio Rapisarda, Apostolic Nuncio in Portugal; H. E. Jorge Sampaio, President of Portugal. Thereafter the participants heard contributions from African and European speakers. Mr. Edem Kodjo, former Prime Minister of Togo and former Secretary General of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) spoke on *Africa's Responsibility for economic and political development*. M. Michel Camdessus, Adviser to President Chirac on Africa and former Director General of the IMF, addressed the participants on *Europe's Responsibility for Africa's development*. With the title *Towards a new partnership between Africa and Europe*, Mr. Friedrich Hamburger, Chief Adviser, Directorate General Development, European Commission, explored recent developments in Africa-EU relations, especially since the Cairo summit in April 2000, and reflected on priority policy areas for the coming years. H. E. Kadré Désiré Ouedraogo, Ambassador of Burkina Faso on the Benelux and the UK and former Prime Minister of Burkina Faso spoke to the theme *Africa and the European Union – partners in solidarity*. Thereafter participants deliberated in one of four thematic working groups: (i) external debt and internal governance, (ii) dialogue between cultures and religions, (iii) peace and conflicts, (iv) health and life. The conclusions of the proceedings were drawn by Bishop A. van Luyn Vice President of COMECE, Archbishop John Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja, (Nigeria), Vice President of SECAM and by Mr. António Martins da Cruz, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Portugal. Conclusions and Recommendations were signed by the Presidents of COMECE and SECAM and were duly published.

- 2.1.3. In accordance with practice since 1994, COMECE together with the Commission for Church and Society (CSC) of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) requested meeting on their own behalf and on behalf of the Churches in the Member States holding the Presidency of the EU – Greece and Italy – in the course of the year. A meeting took place with the Minister of State for European Affairs Tassos Yannitsis on Tuesday 28 January in Brussels. The delegation of the Churches was composed of Bishop Athanassios of Achaia, the representative of the Greek Church to the European Union, Reverend Rüdiger Noll, Director of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of the European Churches (CEC) and Stefan Lunte, Assistant to the Secretary General of (COMECE). The members of the delegation stated their general support for the European integration and the ongoing enlargement process. They expressed the willingness of the Churches to participate in the dialogue on the future of Europe, which should not be conceived of without a reference to the role played by Christianity in the history of the continent. With regard to the work of the European Convention they asked therefore that a religious reference should be included in the preamble. They also explained the proposal for legal provisions in the constitutional treaty, by which the European Union declares its respect for the existing relations between Member States and Churches and religious communities. They restated the reasons why the Churches wish to establish a structured dialogue with the Union. In a view to the summit of the European Union and the countries of South-East Europe which is to be held on June 21 in Thessaloniki, the representatives of the Churches showed their interest in contributing to the preparation of this important event. Other issues discussed at the meeting were bioethics, social policy and education. The members of the delegation declared their concern regarding the threat of a war in the Gulf region. They expressed hope for a peaceful solution of the conflict in the framework of the United Nations. Through the good offices of the Italian Bishops' Conference (CEI) a meeting was arranged with the Italian Presidency. The delegation on behalf of the Churches was composed of: H. E. Cardinal C. Ruini, Bishop G. Merisi, delegate of the CEI to COMECE, Bishop G. Merisi, Secretary of the CEI, Mgr. N. Treanor, Secretary General, COMECE, the Reverend R. Noll, Director of the Commission for Church and Society (CSC), Professor G. Long, Dr. P. Naso and Dr. A. von Hammerstein Dupré. The representatives of the Churches were received in the Camera Verde, Palazzo Chigi, Roma, by the Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, President-in-office of the European Council, Gianfranco Fini, Deputy Prime Minister, Franco Frattini, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Rocco Buttiglione, Minister of State for European Affairs. H. E. R. Avogardo, the Ambassador of Italy to the Holy See was also in attendance. Mr. Gianni Letta, Under Secretary of State was present throughout the meeting. Mr. Berlusconi opened the meeting and invited Mr. Frattini to give an overview of the priorities of the Presidency and of the state of play in the IGC. Mr. Fini elaborated on the challenges faced by the European Convention and by the IGC. He underlined the significance of Art I-51 and recalled the efforts in the Convention to insert a reference to the Christian heritage in the preamble. Mr. Buttiglione addressed both of these points and expressed his support for such a reference in the preamble. The representatives of the Churches made contributions and expressed *petita* on the following subjects: the Churches' contributions to the European Convention, the importance of the principles of subsidiarity, solidarity, proportionality; their *petita* to the IGC in respect of securing Art. I-51 and a reference to the Christian heritage in the preamble; the EU and Human Rights; the EU and inter-religious dialogue in the context of promoting inter-cultural dialogue; family policy; research policy and bio-ethical issues; issues in migration and asylum.
- 2.1.4. In the context of their daily work and in the course of preparing the meetings of the Commissions and 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 followed by the COMECE press officer and journalist. COMECE documents were submitted to appropriate 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 Commissions and Working Groups.

- 2.1.5. Close working relations were maintained with the Group of Political Advisers (GOPA) to the President of the European Commission.
- 2.1.6. Staff members took part in the Briefing sessions organised by the Group of Political Advisers (GOPA) for the Church-linked offices in Brussels after the meetings of the European Council.
- 2.1.7. The Plenary sessions of the European Parliament in Strasbourg were followed by Rev. J. Raber (Metz). 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.
- 2.1.8. 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.
- 2.1.9. 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

- 2.2.1a. As pointed out in the introduction to this report, COMECE focused its work primarily on the **European Convention** until its final session on Thursday, 10 July 2003. Thereafter it proceeded to monitor the progress of the negotiations conducted by the Italian Presidency in regard to the Intergovernmental Conference. Many of the Bishop members of COMECE met with representatives of their governments and national parliaments to the Convention to appraise them of the Churches' proposals. The President and the Executive Committee made written interventions in regard to the Churches' legislative proposal and also in regard to the draft preamble. Reports on these matters were given at the Plenary meetings. Staff members of the secretariat closely followed the work of the Convention Plenary meetings and also the proceedings of the Presidium. Regular reports were sent to the secretariats of the Episcopal Conferences. Staff members maintained regular contact with numerous members of the Convention in order to ensure transmission of a comprehensive and accurate elucidation of the reasons for the Churches' proposals.
- 2.2.1b. At the **European Convention** session of 3-4 April 2003 the Presidium presented a new series of draft Articles 33-37 for part I, title VI (the democratic life of the Union) of the draft constitutional treaty. These included draft article 37 (*later to become art. I-51*). A total of 245 amendments were submitted to these articles, 239 of them before the official deadline, of which more than 30 were made in regard to draft Article 37, some proposing its elimination. Monitoring the amendments as they arrived on the Convention website in the course of Holy Week, the COMECE secretariat activated constitutional specialists to draft responses, particularly to amendments opposing Art I-

37; these were distributed to Convention members and relevant parties. Contacts were made with Convention members and with civil servants in numerous countries in the period before the Convention session of 24-25 April, when the draft Articles 33a-37 (CONV 650/03, CONV 670/03) on the democratic life of the Union were discussed. Having followed the work of the Convention to its final session on 10 July 2003, as of the autumn the COMECE secretariat kept close contact with the secretariat of the CEI as it monitored progress in the Intergovernmental Conference.

- 2.2.1c. Several members of the COMECE gave interviews in the course of the year expressing the Church's interest in and support for the work of the Convention, explaining the Churches' legislative proposal and setting out their thinking on the preamble. At the invitation of the Ambassador of Italy to the Holy See, Bishop G. Merisi met informally with the Ambassadors of the fifteen Member States to the Holy See as well as with the Ambassador of Poland to the Holy See on 4 July 2003. For their part staff members of the secretariat gave innumerable interviews. Staff members also undertook a pro-active defence and explanation of draft Article I-51 in public lectures. They also did so at events and Hearings in the European Parliament by groups opposed to the Article e.g. a Press conference to oppose Art. I-51 in EP organised by Mme. Olga Zrihen on 05.11; a Public Hearing in the EP on Art.I-51, organised by the European Humanist Federation, 3 December.
- 2.2.2. The work of the Commission for **Legal Affairs** provided a focus for preparing input for the relevant EU institutions and civil servants on a range of draft policy issues (c.f. 1.5.1 above). The staff of the secretariat maintained contact with EU civil servants on pertinent policy issues throughout the year.
- 2.2.3. Significant input was made by the members of the Commission for **Social Affairs** through their exchanges and discussions with EU officials and others involved with the shaping of EU policy. The documents produced on the basis of the work carried out by the Commission (c.f.1.5.2 above) were submitted to the appropriate officials of the EU.
- 2.2.4. The seminar Africa and the European Union, conceived by the COMECE secretariat, and co-organised with SECAM and the Portuguese Bishops' Conference was a real and symbolic contribution by the Church in Europe and Africa to developing **EU-Africa relations** and to giving support to structures such as, the AU and NEPAD. The proceedings of the seminar were sent to the relevant services of the EU institutions.
- 2.2.5. The **Global Governance Assessment 2003** (COMECE Documentation, Report No. 5) was received by the autumn Plenary meeting. After publication it was distributed to personnel of the EU institutions and to other interested agencies. Positive reactions were received from EU officials, underlining its quality, the unique character of the panorama it provides of developments and advances in international organisations.
- 2.2.6. In the field of Human Rights the Secretariat followed every stage of the adoption of the **Annual Report on Fundamental Rights in the EU for the year 2002**. It maintained contacts with the relevant services of the European Parliament's Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs to keep abreast of the drafting process. Staff members attended preliminary meetings on 25 March and 24 April. Proposals for amendments were submitted to members of the competent Committee on 23 June in view of the Committee vote. Subsequently, it submitted further proposals for amendments on 31 July to the same MEPs in the view of the vote in Plenary. The final report was adopted by the Plenary on 5 September. The Secretariat contributed to a parallel report on **Human Rights in the World**, a special chapter of which was

dedicated to Religious Freedom. The Secretariat contributed to the drafting work by submitting an assessment (25 March) of the situation of religious groups in Turkey, Russia and Belarus. It attended a Public Hearing on Religious Freedom at the EP on 17 June. The secretariat submitted amendments on 24 July to the relevant Committee on dialogue between the EU Institutions and religious communities, as well as inter-religious/intercultural dialogue. One of these amendments was endorsed in the final version of the report, which was adopted on 4 September.

- 2.2.7. Numerous submissions were made by the COMECE secretariat to the EU institutions in the course of the year on **bio-ethical** issues in research policy. Much work was undertaken vis-à-vis the EU institutions in 2003 to advocate adoption of the ethically comprehensive guidelines for research funding after the end of the moratoria (at the end of the year) and thus to exclude EU financing of research projects involving human embryos and embryonic stem cells. Throughout the course of the year the secretariat provided the Bishop members and the secretariats of the Episcopal Conferences with the information and documentation necessary to carry out appropriate advocacy with the competent Ministries in the Member States. The sixth Research Framework Programme (2003-2006) had been adopted by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament on 3 June 2002 with a budget of Euro 16.27 billion over four years. The secretariat followed and monitored the preparation of the European Commission's report on Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research (published 7 April 2003) to the Council and the European Parliament, which formed the basis for discussion at an inter-institutional seminar on bio-ethics, 24 April 2003. COMECE was represented at the inter-institutional seminar and took part in the deliberations. The preparation of the European Commission's proposal for guidelines on EU-funded research on human embryonic stem cell research was monitored by the secretariat. The proposal was published on 9 July 2003; it proposed that research projects involving the use of human embryos might be funded by the EU under certain conditions. The COMECE secretariat contacted the President of the Commission, members of the college of Commissioners and others to highlight the ethical issues at stake. The secretariat continued to follow developments in this sphere in the Council of Ministers (e.g. the informal discussion on the occasion of the Competitiveness Council, 22 September), in the EP Committee for Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy (ITRE) where Dr. P. Liese was rapporteur of the EP opinion (consultation procedure), and in view of the meetings of the Council of Ministers on 26 November and 3 December. Much co-ordination work was carried out by the secretariat to assist the services of the Episcopal Conferences in Member States whose ministries were pro-active in the ethical debate, e.g., Italy, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Ireland, Spain. In this regard, the proposal put forward by the Italian Presidency in the Council meeting of 3 December did not receive support from a majority of Member States. The secretariat was represented at a various conferences: the European Commission conference, *Towards sustainable agriculture for developing countries: options from life sciences and biotechnologies*, 30-31 January; the Hearing organised by the EPP, *Ethical Limits of research – embryo research and cloning – geriatric care*, (where Bishop Eijk, NL, spoke on behalf of COMECE), Strasbourg, 3 September. The visit of the Joint Bioethics Committee of the Episcopal Conferences of England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland also provided an occasion for direct exchange with Commissioner Byrne (Health and Consumer Protection) and with Commissioner Busquin (Research) as well as with many other EU officials. Another initiative taken by the COMECE secretariat in this field concerned Directive 98/44/EC: on 10 July 2003 the European Commission decided to refer eight Member States to the European Court of Justice for not having implemented Directive 98/44/EC on the legal protection of biotechnological inventions. Serious ethical concerns arise from the approach taken by the Directive. Dealing with biotechnological inventions from an economic point of view, the Directive falls short regarding the ethical implications and issues at stake. For instance, it does not exclude explicitly patents on the use of embryos for diagnostical and therapeutical purposes. Furthermore

the Directive infringes on the principle that patents should not be granted to discoveries, since it applies also to integral parts of the human body, animals or plants (e.g. genetic sequences), if isolated and described properly.

Having consulted with competent EU officials and carried out necessary legal research, the COMECE Secretariat sent a letter to Commissioner Bolkestein and his colleagues on 5 September 2003 expressing its concerns and asking for a reassessment of the Directive. Furthermore, the Secretariat sent a copy of this letter to the COMECE Bishops and suggested also contacting the national Governments in view of a possible revision of the directive.

- 2.2.8. Input to EU policy in the sphere of the Information Society, Communication and Media is set out in section 1.5.4. of this report. Contributions were submitted in view of the revision of the Directive, *Television Without Frontiers*.
- 2.2.9. The Platform on Migration issues (c.f. section 1.5.6.) produced significant input on migration and asylum issues and submitted them to the competent EU services and departments dealing with Justice and Home Affairs (JAI).
- 2.2.10. As indicated in section 1.5.5. contributions were made by the secretariat to consultations organised by the EU institutions regarding 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/interns* from the Christian Democratic movements in central and eastern European countries. During these meetings these young men and women, many of them likely to become future civil servants and politicians in their respective countries, 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, the Hans Seidl Foundation and the European Policy Centre (EPC).
- 3.4. The series of evening lectures, discussions and receptions was continued. On 13 January Cardinal C. Schönborn addressed the theme, *Mitteleuropäischer Katholikentag 2003-2004 – die Hoffnung Europas*. Eight Bishops' Conferences were represented (Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic). Many of the bishops addressed the audience (some 70) briefly. On 19 February Cardinal G. Danneels delivered an address, *Les religions et la paix. Le dialogue interreligieux 40 ans après "Pacem in Terris"* to an audience of 80. On 19 March Mgr. B. Panafieu, Archbishop of Marseilles and M. Alain Boyer, Sous-Préfet of Reims, addressed an audience of 75 on the subject, *L'Islam en Europe. Une*

relecture de la laïcité. On June 19 Cardinal L. Husar, Major Archbishop of Lviv and Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church delivered a lecture entitled, *The New Europe and the New Ukraine* to a gathering of some 75 persons. On 30 October in the framework of the autumn Plenary meeting H. E. Cardinal Godfried Danneels and H. E. Pierre Morel, Ambassador of France to the Holy See, addressed an audience of 160 on *La responsabilité des chrétiens pour l'Europe de demain - Exhortation apostolique "Ecclesia in Europa"*.

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 (No. 46) on Africa and Europe was produced in co-operation with CIDSE, CARITAS EUROPA, and Pax Christi International in February. A further special issue (No. 55) on the EU and its Neighbours was published in December 2003. 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 Bishops 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. The following publications were produced in the course of the year: *Amérique Latine et Union Européenne: Ensemble Pour Le Bien Commun Universel*, Academia Bruylant, (the proceedings of the COMECE-CELAM Congress, Madrid 13-14 May 2002); *Borders, Drawing Borders, Crossing Borders and Peaceful Co-Existence, A Challenge for the Catholic Church in Europe*, (COMECE Documentation Report, No. 3, proceedings of the COMECE Summer University, Celje, Slovenia, 7-11 September, 2002); *Africa and the European Union, Partners in Solidarity, Contribution of the Church*, (COMECE Documentation Report, No.4, proceedings of EU-Africa seminar, 27-28 February); *Global Governance Assessment 2003*, (COMECE Documentation No. 5); *The European Convention, The Evolution of a Constitution for Europe / Der Europäische Konvent, Die Entstehung einer Verfassung für Europa*, co-published with the office of the Commission for Church and Society of the CEC and with the Brussels office of the EKD.
- 4.4. Articles were written by staff members for the monthly review. Staff members published articles in reviews and publications and in newspapers in various countries. Lectures were given at conferences organised by Bishops' Conferences, universities and academic institutes both in the Member States and in the candidate countries on the work of COMECE and on issues pertaining to EU policy, many of them on COMECE work vis-à-vis the Convention.
- 4.5. On invitation and as their responsibilities in Brussels permitted, staff members took part in and addressed congresses, seminars and study events throughout Europe. A selective panorama of this aspect of the secretariat's work is reflected by the following: address to the ELDR seminar in the European Parliament on Liberalism in Christianity and Islam, 08.01; presentation to Heinrich Walde Forum, Brussels, 07.01; participation in and contribution to the Co-ordination/Working Group of the Bishops' Conferences on the Holy Land, Jerusalem, 13-16 January; presentation to

a delegation of Greek Orthodox Bishops on Churches and the European Convention, Hilton Hotel, Brussels, 22.01; lecture to Katholische Bildungswerk, Archdiocese Vienna, 24.01; presentation to CCEE-CEC Joint Committee, Bucharest, 31.01; presentation to the Study Day, *Globalisierung – eine Herausforderung für die europäische Entwicklungspolitik, Handelspolitik und Agrarpolitik*, Austrian Bishops' Conference, Vienna, 04.02; presentation on EU and the Middle East to Pax Christi International Group, Brussels, 06.02; presentations to Study Days of Department for International Affairs of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Leeds, 13-14.02; lecture to delegation from the Association de Journalistes de l'Information Religieuse, France, European Parliament, 25.02; contributions to a seminar *Europapolitik – eine Herausforderung für Christen*, Study Day in Brussels in co-operation with diocese of Linz (Sozialreferat), Brussels and Linz, February-March 3; presentation to Semaines Sociales/ZdK European meeting, Cracow, 5-6.03; presentation to meeting of Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences of South-East Europe, Shkodra, Albania, 10-11 March; participation in a podium discussion on the Churches and Europe 1945-1990, in the framework of an EU co-funded historical research project on role of the Churches in Europe in Cold War period, involving six European universities, Münster, 15.03; lecture to the Inter-orthodox Consultation on the Relationship between the EU and the Churches, Iraklion, Crete, 18-19. 03; contribution to Round Table on Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue to combat Anti-semitism and Islamophobia, European Parliament, Brussels, 20.03; GATS – lecture at Study Day at the Kath. Aktion. Austria, 24.03; presentation to Hearing on EU-Africa, organised by Caritas Europa, CIDSE, Pax Christi International, European Parliament, Brussels, 25.03; contribution to a debate on Ethical issues in Research Policy, Bavarian Representation, Brussels, 26.03; presentation to European Commission Public Hearing on the revision of TV Without Frontiers directive, Brussels, 02.04; lecture, seminar Dieu et l'Europe seminar, European Parliament, Brussels, 03.04; lecture to a Study Day, *Die Europäische und Religion – auch ein Platz für Sekten?* for those responsible for studying religious sects for the Episcopal Conferences of Germany, Austrian, Switzerland, Vienna, 03.04; participation in the meeting of the "Expertenkreis Europa" of the German Bishops' Conference, 04.04; presentations to the annual meeting of the spokespersons and media officers of the European Bishops' Conferences, Mechelen/Brussels, 10-13.04; lecture on Islam als Partner im Dialog der Weltreligionen, Verband der Wissenschaftlichen Katholischen Studentenverein, Unitas, Bonn 12.04; contribution to public debate with Mr. G. Watson, M.E.P., leader of ELDR Group in the European Parliament, on God in the European Constitution, organised by the Wyndham Place Charlemagne Trust, European Parliament Office, London, 24.04; contribution to seminar, *Alternative au Néo-Libéralisme: rêve, utopie ou réalisme? La pastorale ouvrière devant les éfis d'aujourd'hui*, organised by the Groupe européen de Pastorale Ouvrière (GEPO), Luxembourg, 26.04; contribution to a Hearing on Civil Liberties and Human Rights, European Parliament, Brussels, 24.04; lecture on Islam and citizenship at Université de St. Louis, Brussels, 26.04; lecture on European Integration and the Churches, to annual conference of the School Principals, deputy Principals and Boards of Management (AMCSS), Killarney, Ireland, 01.05; lecture the Catholic Church's view of the European Convention to international conference, *Values and Principles for the Building of Europe*, organised by Orthodox Church of Greece, Athens, 5-6. 05; participation in seminar on the European Convention organised by Socialist Group in the EP, Brussels, 06.05; participation in debate on EU-US relations in Hans Seidel Stiftung, Brussels, 06.05; participation in a session on the Role of the European Parliament after Enlargement, at Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Political Club, 06.05; participation and presentation to the XXIX Ordinary Assembly of CELAM, Tuparenda, Paraguay, 13-16.05; discussion with staff of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) on European Convention, Brussels, 15.05; contribution to CCEE Consultation on Environment, Wroclaw, 15.05; contribution to seminar, *European Values: Limits and Conflicts*, European Commission, Borschette building, 15.05; presentation to Caritas Cologne Brussels, 21.05; lecture at Renovabis

seminar, Christen im neuen Europa, Erlangen, 22.05; presentation to a group of students from Paderborn, Brussels, 22.05; contributions to the annual meeting of the General Secretaries of the Episcopal Conferences of Europe, Berlin, 25-28.05; address to Vicar Generals of dioceses of Germany on the occasion of their visit to Brussels, 26.05; presence and participation in the Ökumenischer Kirchentag, Berlin, 28.05-01.06; lecture on the Catholic Church and Europe to a group from the (Anglican) diocese of St. Albans, England, Brussels, 10.06; participation in a discussion, Testfal: Öffentlichkeit. Die gesellschaftliche Präsenz der Katholischen Kirche in Deutschland, in the Katholische Akademie, Die Wolfsburg, Essen, 11.06; lecture on the Role of the Churches in Europe, Institut für Theologie und Philosophie, Hannover, 12.06; participation in a public discussion, *Europäische Integration – Eine Antwort der Kirchen*, with H.E. Irena Lipowicz, Ambassador of Poland to Austria, Vienna, 18.06; participation in meeting of the Celliers & Cte Européenne, Marienrode, 18-19. 06; two lectures, Theologische Fakultät und Ringvorlesung, Bamberg, 21.06; lecture, Réforme institutionelle et élargissement, Institut Catholique, Paris, 25.06; presentation to seminar on Churches and the EU, University of Bonn, 27.06; participation in the Wilton Park British-German Forum, Securing Our Future, 30.06-03.07; lecture, *Brennpunkte der europäischen Verfassungsdebatte aus kirchlicher Sicht*, to the Europa Forum, organised by the KSZ, the Centre of Catholic Social Teaching, Zagreb, and the Hans Seidel Stiftung, Zagreb, 04-08.07; symposium on interreligious dialogue, Graz, 05-07.07; participation in the European Symposium, *University and Church in Europe*, organised by the CEI and CCEE, Rome, 17-20.07; participation in the VII International Renovabis Congress, *Suche nach Heimat, Migration in Europa*, Freising, 28-30.08; lecture on Religion, God and the European Convention, CCAD conference, Mariahove Bellem, Bruges, 01.09; participation in St. Egidio International Meeting, War and Peace, Faiths and Cultures in Dialogue, Aachen, 07-09.09; presentations to a group of thirteen seminarians from the diocese of Moulins visiting the EU institutions with their Bishop Pascal Roland, at COMECE, Brussels, 09.09; presentation to the Forum Européen des Grands Lacs, meeting of fifty persons, COMECE secretariat, 11.09; lecture to the conference on the role of the Catholic Church in the process of European integration, organised by the Pontifical Academy of Theology, Cracow, 12-13.09; presentation to the Franco-German colloquium, Berlin, 12-13.09; lecture to the conference Kirche und Identität, Belgrade, 14-16.09; presentation to Interparliamentary Conference on Human Rights and Religious Freedom Agenda, 16-18.09; presentation to a group of priests from the diocese of Mainz, Foyer Catholique, Brussels, 17.09; presentation to study session on Europe during the meeting for recently ordained Bishops, Ateneo Regina Apostolorum, Roma, 17.09; presentation to a group of priests from diocese of Antwerp, visiting the EU institutions, European Parliament, Brussels, 19.09; address to a Study Day on Europe, Plenary meeting of the German Bishops' Conference, Fulda, 24.09; lecture, European Convention and the Integration Process; the role of Religions, to the European Council of Religious Leaders/Religions for Peace (ECRL), in Sarajevo, 30.09; participation in and presentation to CCEE Plenary, Vilnius, 03-05.10; lecture, Europe chrétienne, Europe des libertés, to the Cercle Jean-Paul II, Souvigny, France, 06.10; lecture on European Integration to Kath. Bildungswerk, Vienna, 06.10; presentation to Study Day on European Convention, Vienna, 02.10; address to the Vicar Generals of the diocese of Austria, 07.10; presentation on COMECE and the European Convention to the Groupe de Chevtogne, Liège, Val-Dieu, 09.10; lecture, *Aufbau, Aktuelle Projekte und Arbeitsweise der KOMECE* to the Ketteler Gilde, Frankfurt, 14.10; lecture during the VII EPP-Orthodox Dialogue, Istanbul, 16-17.10; presentation of COMECE, its work, the Church and Europe to a group of youth (35) from Moulins, at COMECE secretariat, Brussels, 20.10; presence at the St. Michaels Jahresempfang, Berlin, 21.10; presentation to and debate with European Parliament intergroup on gay and lesbian rights, Strasbourg, 22.10; participation in and address to the CECE seminar, EU Constitution and the Churches, Brussels, 23-25.10; presentation to the annual assembly of Justitia et Pax Europe, Geneva, 25-26.10; presentation to delegation of Church leaders from Norway and Iceland on visit to EU institutions organised by EU

representation in Oslo, 05.11; presence at the Plenary meeting of the Austrian Bishops' Conference, Vienna, 06.11; contribution to Study Day of Vicars General of dioceses of Austria, *Europäische Förderpolitik*, Salzburg, 07.11; visit of President of the FAFE, Föderation der kath. Familienverbände Europas, /prepared in June and September/, 10-11.11; lecture on the COMECE its Work and the European Convention to the Church of Ireland Group for European Affairs, Dublin, 10.11; lecture to group of Schulamtsleiter from diocese of Germany, COMECE secretariat, Brussels, 12.11; presentation to young Russian politicians, Hans Seidel Stiftung, Brussels, 13.11; presence at the EKD seminar on GMOs, Brussels, 13.11; presentation to a delegation from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, COMECE secretariat, Brussels, 18.11; presence at Press Conference in EP. regarding a reference to Christianity in preamble of European Constitution, organised by Madame Montfort, M.E.P., 18.11; lecture on European Integration and Enlargement to Kath. Bildungswerk, Vienna, 21.11; address to FIDESZ, Hungarian Womens' Movement, COMECE secretariat, 25.11; participation in CEC conference, *Human Life in Our Hands, The Churches and Bio-Ethics*, Strasbourg, 27-29 November; presentation to conference on issue in migration policy, organised by ESPACES, Berlin, 28-29.11; lecture to study seminar of European Dominicans, Luxembourg, 04.12; presentation to Plenary meeting of the Bishops' Conference of the Netherlands, Utrecht, 09.12; participation in EPC breakfast on programme of forthcoming Irish Presidency, 10.12; participation in Briefing at Permanent Representation of Germany to EU on European Council meeting (12-13 Dec), Brussels, 15.12; participation at Briefing on European Council, organised by GOPA for Churches, European Commission, Breydel building, 16.12; lecture on Ecclesia in Europa, Caritas Europa, 17.12.

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. Regular contact has been maintained with the Conseil Supérieur for many years.
- 5.2. Apart from the abiding difficulty of finding suitable teachers for the various linguistic sections in these schools, the teaching of religion in the European schools proceeded calmly and efficiently. Serious administrative difficulties were not reported in the course of the year.
- 5.3. The Secretary General of COMECE monitored developments in respect of the teaching of religion in the European schools. Meetings were held on 13.03, 03.04, 19.05, 20.06 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. A meeting took place with the General Secretary of the *Conseil Supérieur*, Mr. M. Ryan, on 23.05. Issues discussed were: (i) future planning – administrative and pedagogical - for the European schools in view of Enlargement, (ii) staffing issues, (iii) the place of religion on the syllabus at present and in the future, (iv) implications of enlargement for organisation of the teaching of religion, (v) provisions for teaching of religions of pupil minorities, (vi) inspection, (vii) recruitment of teachers of religion. The meeting was prepared before hand with representatives of the Christian confessions, Judaism and Islam at the COEMCE secretariat, co-organised by C. Roba with the Consil Supérieur, and attended by the Secretary General of COMECE, representatives of the Reformed Churches, by a Chief Rabbi Guigi and by a teacher of Islam in one of the European schools in Brussels.

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 Ecumenical Patriarchate, with the Representative of the Greek Orthodox Church, with the Representative of the Patriarchate of Moscow, and with the office of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD).
- 6.2. In co-operation with the Commission for Church and Society (CSC) 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. 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 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.
- 6.4. The work of the European Convention was monitored in close ecumenical co-operation. Numerous ecumenical working meetings were held to reflect on common action. Close co-operation was maintained to formulate texts for submission to Convention members. The IGC was monitored in close ecumenical co-operation. As pointed out in 4.3. above, the offices of COMECE, CSC of CEC and the office of the EKD in Brussels co-published *The European Convention, The Evolution of a Constitution for Europe*.
- 6.5. COMECE was represented and delivered a lecture at the VII Dialogue between the EPP-ED group in the European Parliament and the Orthodox Churches in Istanbul, 16-17 October.
- 6.6. 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 03 December.

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 Berlin, 24-28 May 2003. The Secretary General of COMECE attended and reported on the work of COMECE to the CCEE Plenary meeting in Vilnius, 03-05 October.
- 7.2. The Secretary General of CCEE attended the two 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 Bucharest, 30 January – 02 February 2003.

- 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. Presentations were made to a meeting of the Department for International Affairs of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Leeds, 13-14.02. Staff attended and contributed to the meeting of the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences of South-East Europe, Shkodra, 10-11.03. The Secretary General addressed the Study Day on Europe at the autumn Plenary of the German Bishops' Conference, Fulda 24.09. He also addressed the Plenary meeting of the Bishops Conference of the Netherlands, Utrecht, 09.12.
- 7.6. As a contribution to building a sense of European identity among younger professional assistants and advisors in the secretariats of the Bishops' Conferences in the Member States and in the candidate countries, the COMECE secretariat organised a fifth summer university, *The Europeanisation of the European Union, An Impetus to the Search for a Common Heritage* at Leanyfalu, 13-17 September 2003. The programme was launched by the Archbishop of Esztergom, H.E. Dr. Peter Erdö. An opening lecture was delivered by Professor Istvan Fried, Institute for Comparative Literary Criticism, on Szeged "*Márai Sándor – a Central European Life*". Contributions were made on the following subjects: *The Future of the European Union – a Hungarian Perspective*, By Dr. J. Szájer, Vice-Chairman of FIDESZ, Member of the European Convention; *The relationship to the USA – a test for a "United Europe"?* by Dr. Paul Stoop, Deputy Director of the American Academy, Berlin, with interventions by H. Riegas González and J. Kukar; *How we survived Communism and still laughed?* by M. Krese, (writer, Slovenia), Fr. K. Niedaltowski (Chaplain to artists, Poland); *European cultural unity in the Middle Ages: the case of the Hungarian pilgrims to St. Patrick's Purgatory (European cultural unity in the Middle Lough Derg, Ireland)* by Professor M. Haren, Irish Manuscript Commission, Dublin; *One Europe – common values? The European Values Study* by Professor M. Tomka, Institute for Pastoral theology, Budapest, and Professor J. Kerkhofs, Leuven; *From Christendom to Nationhood – and Back Again? European Identity and the English example* by Professor N. Boyle, Cambridge; *The Complexity of European memory and the fruitfulness of the Christian inheritance for the future of Europe*, Professor Claude Geffré o.p., Paris. After Mass celebrated by Bishop A. Veres on the closing day, 17 September, Professor M. Kranitz presented the working document "*Let Us Open Our Hearts*" for discussion and comment. As in previous years some forty participants took part.

8. LOOKING FORWARD TO 2004

- 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. Every effort will be made to follow progress in the consultations to be undertaken by the Irish Presidency regarding the European constitution; as soon as the Intergovernmental Conference is recalled, the preparations will be followed closely and the necessary initiatives will be taken.
- 8.3. The preparations of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela (17-21 April) will be continued with further visits by members of the secretariat to the ecclesiastical and civil authorities in Santiago and in the cities to be visited en route. The organisation of the Congress, *European Union: Hope and Responsibility, Theological Readings of the evolution of a United Europe* (22-23 April) will be completed. The Plenary meeting of the COMECE in Santiago (April 23-24) will also be organised.

- 8.4.1. COMECE looks forward to the enlargement of the European Union on 1 May 2004. Particular efforts will be undertaken to engage the Bishops' Conferences of the new Member States in the work of COMECE.
- 8.5. The secretariat will pay particular attention to EU Human Rights policy and seek to explore possibilities for input in this field.
- 8.6. The secretariat will continue its close monitoring of EU research policy and particularly the ethical and bio-ethical issues in this field.
- 8.7. The Global Governance Assessment project will be carried forward.
- 8.8. The statement, *Solidarity, The Soul of Europe*, should be published in the Spring of 2004.
- 8.9. A statement will be published in view of the European elections in June 2004.
- 8.10. The document *Let Us Open Our Hearts*, revised in the light of comments received and the deliberations of the Congress in Santiago will be published toward the end of the year.
- 8.11. COMECE will be represented at the co-ordination meeting of Bishops' Conferences regarding the Holy Land, Jerusalem, 12-15 January, 2004.
- 8.12. The COMECE secretariat will be represented at a meeting of the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences of South-East Europe, Belgrade, 20-22 February.
- 8.13. Programmes for information visits to the EU institutions will be organised for groups and for participants in an internship programme of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales at the House of Commons, Westminster.
- 8.14. Every effort will be made to organise a sixth Summer University in Bratislava, Slovakia.

N. Treanor
05.04.2004