



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

Building a better European home

**Declaration of the COMECE Bishops in view of the Election
to the European Parliament on 4-7 June 2009**

Building a better European home

Declaration of the COMECE Bishops in view of the Election to the European Parliament on 4-7 June 2009

European Elections: an opportunity to build a better Europe

After 64 years of peaceful development and 20 years since the fall of the Iron Curtain, which ended the division of the continent, the process of European integration deserves to be appreciated, in spite of some shortcomings. For this reason we, the Bishops of COMECE, support and promote the European Union as a project of hope for all of its citizens.

Even in this unsettled time of financial and economic crisis, the European Union has proved to be a dependable home that strives to safeguard stability and solidarity among its members. Today, in 2009, the European Union has the capacity and the means to respond to the most urgent and pressing challenges of our age.

By participating in the European Parliament elections, all citizens have the opportunity to contribute to the development and improvement of the European Union.

Participating in the elections: a right and a responsibility

The Catholic Church has supported the project of European integration since the very beginning and continues to do so. Every Christian not only has the right but also the responsibility to be actively engaged in this project by exercising his or her vote.

The participation of Christians is essential in order to rediscover the 'soul of Europe', which is vital to fulfil the fundamental needs of the human person and the service of the common good.

The European Parliament, through its powers and competences (which would be further enhanced by the final ratification of the Lisbon Treaty), must contribute to these aspirations and goals.

What Christians expect from the European Parliament:

The basic principles of any society are Human Dignity and the promotion of the Common Good. Therefore these principles must be at the very heart of all European Union policies.

Given the important role of the European Parliament, we expect the Members of the European Parliament actively to participate and contribute towards the following:

- to **respect human life** from conception to natural death as integral to all European Union legislation, programmes and policies;
- to **support the family** founded on marriage – as understood between one man and one woman - as the basic unit of society;
- to **advance the social rights** of workers providing them with working conditions which respect their health, safety and dignity;
- to **endorse economic governance based on ethical values** in order to achieve sustainable human development within the European Union and at global level;
- to **promote justice** in relationships of the European Union with developing countries through financial assistance and innovative partnerships;
- to **demonstrate solidarity** by shaping policies that help the weakest and poorest in our societies (in particular people with disabilities, asylum-seekers, migrants);
- to **protect creation** by fighting climate change and encouraging a moderate lifestyle;
- to **promote peace** in the world through coordinated and coherent external EU-policy.

Enlightened and guided by Christ's teaching, Christians are ready and willing to help fulfil these aspirations, mindful of His Holiness Pope John Paul II's assertion: "*Christian inspiration is capable of transforming political, cultural and economic groupings into a form of coexistence in which all Europeans will feel at home*" (*Ecclesia in Europa*, 121).

Brussels, 20 March 2009

✠ Adrianus van Luyn, SDB	President, Bishop of Rotterdam (The Netherlands)
✠ Piotr Jarecki	Vice-President, Auxiliary Bishop of Warsaw (Poland)
✠ Reinhard Marx	Vice-President, Archbishop of Munich and Freising (Germany)
✠ Gianni Ambrosio	Bishop of Piacenza-Bobbio (Italy)
✠ Virgil Bercea	Bishop of Oradea Mare/Gran Varadino (Rumania)
✠ Ferenc Cserháti	Auxiliary Bishop of Esztergom-Budapest (Hungary)
✠ Jozef De Kesel	Auxiliary Bishop of Brussels (Belgium)
✠ Nikólaos Fóscolos	Archbishop of Athens (Greece)
✠ Fernand Franck	Archbishop of Luxemburg (Luxemburg)
✠ Adolfo Gonzalez Montes	Bishop of Almeria (Spain)
✠ Mario Grech	Bishop of Gozo (Malta)
✠ Anton Justs	Bishop of Jeglava (Latvia)
✠ Egon Kapellari	Bishop of Graz-Seckau (Austria)
✠ William Kenney	Auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham (England & Wales)
✠ Czeslaw Kozon	Bishop of Copenhagen (Scandinavia)
✠ Christian Kratz	Auxiliary Bishop of Strasbourg (France)
✠ Vaclav Maly	Auxiliary Bishop of Prague (Czech Republic)
✠ Peter A. Moran	Bishop of Aberdeen (Scotland)
✠ Rimantas Norvila	Bishop of Vilkaviškis (Lithuania)
✠ Christo Proykov	Apostolic Exarch of Sofia (Bulgaria)
✠ Frantisek Rabek	Bishop of the Armed Forces (Slovakia)
✠ Anton Stres	Archbishop coadjutor of Maribor (Slovenia)
✠ José Amândio Tomás	Bishop coadjutor of Vila Real (Portugal)
✠ Noel Treanor	Bishop of Down and Connor (Ireland)