



ecppm

EUROPEAN
CHRISTIAN
POLITICAL
MOVEMENT



2010
Yearbook

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Word of the editors

“Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see how He would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the beasts of the field” Gen.2: 19-20

The first two chapters of Genesis, the first book in the Bible are always impressive. It starts with a simple statement that “In the beginning God created the heavens and earth”. By the Word of God, light was brought in the darkness, and an orderly division between land and water was made. God is not a God of chaos, but a God of order; he made the heavens and the earth because he has a divine plan for his creation. After He created the heavens and earth God said: “Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness, and let him rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground” (Genesis 1:26). God formed the man from the dust of the ground but He was still not satisfied and made a woman from one of the ribs of Adam. After this it was written: “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27). Man has a great responsibility to rule over the creation, but he does not have to do this alone. We read that God brought all the living creatures to Adam to see how he named them. God did not send the animals, but He brought them to Adam. God did not tell Adam how he should name them since it is written: “and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.”

These principles can also be found in the basic thoughts of Christian Democracy. We are not created to only take care of ourselves, but we have a respon(d)-sibility. We have to respond to our Creator Who made us in the image and likeness of Him. Therefore we have to be good stewards in order to take care of His Creation and to take care of all peoples on this earth. The universal declaration for Human Dignity states that the true nature of Man is that “he is not an animal, but a human being made in the image and likeness of God, his Creator from the conception until the natural death”. What is also in our nature, is the need to live together, we want to live in communities because it is not God’s will that we are alone. Marriage between a man and a woman is the most basic ‘community’ that the Lord prepared for us. Yet, when we realize that we are all made in His image, we should also realize that we are all called upon to follow the teachings of Jesus and to love our neighbour, regardless of belief, ethnicity or social status. Showing the love of God to others is one of our main tasks as Christians. These are all notions that define the aims and work of the ECPM in 2010 as well.

We are thankful for all the activities we could organize, but also for the important events in which we could participate. It seems that the work of ECPM is having a growing impact in Europe. Like the way that God brought the animals to Adam, He brings many opportunities to us and is looking how we are dealing with them. It is a blessing that in 2010 so many people were involved in work of the ECPM.

We want to thank all people who work with us to promote the Christian values in politics. A special thanks to everyone who wrote articles for this yearbook: Elina Foinska, Andrei Hobafcovici, Mihaela Kovacs, Auke Minnema, Viktor Mitevski, Petru-Eremia Moldovan, Camelia Popa, Philip Rashev, Nutsa Shavladze, Ekaterina Smyslova, Shaban Sulce, Jonathan van Tongeren and of course the board members of the ECPM: Peeter Võsu (Chairman), Kris Vleugels, Dick van Dijk and Vladimir Plamadeala. Further thanks to Phyllis Harries and Theresa Creel for the necessary corrections and adaptations in English and Lucian Enasoni & Valentin Trifa for the design of the yearbook.

But above all we thank God for all the blessings and openings He gave us. It is only because of His Goodness that we could do this work in 2010. By His Grace we hope to continue our activities to promote the Christian Democratic values in all different levels in Europe in 2011 and wish all our readers Gods blessings, wisdom and protection. See you next year!

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0113870159 BIC (swift code): RABO NL 2U

For countries not using the IBAN-system:

Dutch bank account number: 1138.70.159

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Preface



ECPM has been growing in size and developing in quality during 2010. It was recognized as a European Political Party by the EU in February 2010, new members have joined, many publications have been published and conferences and seminars have been held in several European countries through the year. The organization is getting wider recognition as a political platform that unites politicians and parties who share common Christian values in Europe.

ECPM started as a small organization, established by five political parties in 2005. By the end of 2010 it has already united more than 20 organizations and individual politicians from 20 countries as full members, and several associated members.

The 2010 Congress of ECPM took place in Brussels, Belgium. Most of the Board Meetings have taken place in Brussels but ECPM has also organized or partnered many events all over Europe. The Board members or member organizations have participated in many gatherings, activities, and conferences. ECPM was represented in the largest meetings for European Christian politicians like the European Prayer Breakfast in Brussels and the International Berlin Gathering and has partnered with Eastern European Christian political parties and politicians in Belarus, Georgia, Romania, the Ukraine and in many other countries to organize conferences. The youth movement of ECPM, the European Christian Political

Youth Network (ECPYN) has organized several conferences as well.

ECPM published its ideas and opinions about several issues, expressing its principles of justice, human rights and family values and partnered the Christian Democrats of Belarus and parties from South-Eastern European countries in order to help them to develop strong, value-based political organizations.

A political foundation, ECPF (European Christian Political Foundation), was also established in 2010. The foundation remains attached to ECPM and received recognition from the EU at the beginning of 2011. The goal of the institution is to work on Christian policy issues and produce relevant political publications, making them available to ECPM member organizations as well as to wider audiences.

This is just a very small and incomplete summary of our work in 2010, yet it shows that we continue to grow each year.

I want to express my gratitude to all our members, organizations and individuals for active participation in the common task of advancing Christian principles in Europe. Our goal is to provide a workable platform for all Christian politicians in Europe to be more effective in standing for Christian principles. I am also thankful to our staff and volunteers who have effectively organized several big events and have kept the organization functioning throughout the past year. I look forward to welcoming new members who want to join us in 2011.

In this yearbook you will be able to read all about activities that I have already named and many more that I forgot to mention. I hope that you will enjoy reading our yearbook and that it will give you a good picture of the dynamics of our organization. I would also like to stress to all our members that whenever you have an activity coming up or are looking for support, please be in touch with us in order to see how we can support you.

After all, it is not I, nor the rest of the board or staff that form the ECPM, it is the unity of our members, associates and friends who continue to stand and work for Christian values in European politics!

Peeter Võsu
President

REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE ECPM

1.1 Report from the ECPM board

Early excitement

2010 started with waiting. Waiting for a message from the European Parliament regarding our application to become a European Party and thus receive additional funding. It was not until February 2010 that we received official information that ECPM was accepted as a European party. We were delighted with this news and realize that this could not have been reached without God's blessing on our movement.

The recognition by the European Parliament was also a confirmation to us that ECPM, as a grassroots movement, has a unique place in the European political arena. ECPM is not focused on power politics or playing games, ECPM wants to unite parties and politicians around Christian values, regardless of party colours. "This way of thinking opens many opportunities for constructive cooperation in national and European politics which will benefit the people of Europe" commented Peeter Võsu on the ECPM website in February 2010.

The board hopes that in the coming years more and more parties and politicians dare to stand up for Christian values and join our movement!

New goals, new projects

On www.ecpm.info we clearly stated our goal for the coming years: With the official status and the funding from Brussels the ECPM aims to become more visible in European politics and to become active in European political debates. With its distinctive Christian-Democratic profile, the ECPM is certain that it can offer constructive new ideas for the future of Europe.

The board feels that we have made an encouraging start in doing this. ECPM members were influential during meetings of the Council of Europe and through more and better cooperation with several associates we could influence the legislation process in several European countries. The work of Leo van Doesburg in these processes was vital for the success of our efforts.

In order to work on new ideas on Europe, the board gave orders for a broad publication on the influence of Christianity on Europe. Dr. Sander Luitwieler was chosen to start working on this publication. ECPM members and associates were asked for their opinion and input concerning the topic during the General Assembly in May in Brussels and on other occasions. In order to be more visible to our members it was also decided to inform our members, associates and friends on a more regular and viewer friendly way. Together with Alaksiej Shein (Belarusian Christian Democracy), our General Secretary Guido van Beusekom started working on a monthly bulletin that informs all members more about each others' activities and situations. In the fall of 2010, the first bulletin was published.

Friends, funds and foundation

Being a European party brings new tasks and responsibilities. Together with the staff we tried to keep track of this, and especially our treasurer Dick van Dijk has been much involved in this process and the contact with the European Parliament. One of the tasks that we had for 2010 was to raise enough funds in order to be able to provide the 15% co-financing requested by the European Parliament. Therefore is it also vital that our members pay the contribution every year. Since ECPM is open for bigger and smaller parties, the board decided not to increase the membership contribution in 2010 but to focus on other ways of fundraising.

Much time and many efforts were invested in increasing the number of ECPM Friends. As a grassroots movement, it is important to have a broad base of Friends who support our movement. In 2010, actions were taken to increase the number of friends by direct mailing but also by special ECPM activities, like concerts, that were aimed to inform people about ECPM and ask them to support our movement. Such events were organized in Tallinn by Chairman Peeter Võsu and in December in Belgium by vice-chairman Kris Vleugels.

2010 was also the beginning of a new foundation linked to the ECPM, the European Christian Political Foundation. First chairman of the ECPF is David Fieldsend (director of CARE of Europe, an associate of ECPM). ECPM board (especially Vladimir Plamadeala) and staff were involved in the forming of this foundation by giving advice and sharing information. ECPF became an official European Foundation in the beginning of 2011. The first office manager of ECPF will be Johannes de Jong who has been an advisor to the ECPM board for many years and who was closely involved in the founding of the ECPF in 2010.

Activities, ECPYN and the coming year

In this yearbook you will read about many of our activities in 2010 that were organized by ECPM or our youth organisation the European Christian Political Youth Network (ECPYN). We are happy that we have such an active youth movement that is training and bringing together young people who may become the future leaders in European politics. In order to invest in the future of Christian politics the ECPM board will support our youth movement where needed!

For 2011, we hope that our work will continued to be blessed and that our efforts will be fruitful. During one of our board meetings we read from the book of Jeremiah (17:7,8) the following encouraging words:

Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD.
For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river,
and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green.
And will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.

We hope that ECPM continues to be the tree planted by the waters that does not fear the heat and will not cease from yielding fruit!



From left to right: Peeter Võsu, Kris Vleugels, Vladimir Plamadeala, Dick van Dijk

1.2 Reports of the activities of the ECPM

by Leo van Doesburg

In our last yearbook, we characterized 2009 as a “very energetic year.” The year 2010 can be called a “turbulent year.” New elections were held in Moldova, the coalition could maintain their majority, but it is still a fragile situation and a new president could not be chosen. In the Ukraine the situation remains unclear after the change in power, and in Belarus the year ended disastrously with the knock down violently of a demonstration after the presidential elections in December 2010. Hundreds of people were captured, and two of the leaders of our member party “Belarusian Christian Democracy” were after being imprisoned and interrogated, condemned for imprisonment or forced labor. Also we see that certain Western diplomats and activists are increasing their attacks on family laws and the traditional definition of marriage in different countries in East Europe. In Macedonia the ECPM tried to halt these attacks by giving objective information about their rights in the negotiation process in the accession towards the European Union concerning family laws. In addition, courses were developed about the relation between “European integration and identity” to give a well-balanced and realistic view on their integration to the European Union. We saw that in many (potential) candidate countries objective information about the different strategic directions of the EU is missing and people are stranded between being Eurofile or Euro-sceptic. We teach the people to be “Euro-realistic.”

However, there were also many things for which we are extremely thankful. In February of this year, the ECPM was officially recognized as a European Political Party. This means that the ECPM is entering into a new phase. We are not just a Movement, a lobby or a pressure group (like secularists like to call us). We are part of the political structure of the European Union, a European party recognized by the European Parliament. This does not only open new financial support for our growing number of projects in different countries, but we notice that we are taken more and more seriously by politicians in different parliaments in Europe, and in the European Parliament. On the other hand, we see that the network is growing and strengthened with new organizations and politicians joining our network. Further in 2010 we saw an increase in our activities and impact compared to 2009. Below you will find a general overview of the most important activities where the ECPM was involved.

1.2.1 Activities organized by the ECPM:

1. Conferences about Dialogue and Cooperation between political youth forums in Albania, in Tirana April and December 2010
2. The ECPM annual congress about: “The relevance of Christian Democracy in Europe” in Brussels, May 2010
3. The conference about “Religious liberty in Romania and the EU” in Bucharest, June 2010
4. The ECPYN Summer school about Reconciliation in Ohrid, July 2010
5. The ECPM Nordic Conference about: “Perspectives of Christian Democracy in Nordic Countries” in Tallinn, September 2010
6. The international Christian Democratic Conference in Belarus (in collaboration with the Association of Christian Democracy East Europe) in Minsk, September 2010
7. The ECPYN regional conference in Georgia about: “Georgia and Post-Soviet Space in Common European Context” in Tblisi, October 2010
8. The conference about “Islam and Christianity in West Europe” in Brussels, December 2010
9. The fifth Romanian Prayer Breakfast and debate about “Christian values in politics,” in Bucharest, December 2010

1.2.2: Events where the ECPM was officially invited as speaker and/or discussion partner:

1. Europartners Leadership Conference in Jerusalem, February 2010. Europartners is a European umbrella for the Christian Business Managers’ Committees from different countries all over Europe. Europartners is actually a European network of business people that want to live out their faith in their work place. During the conference a presentation about the activities of the ECPM was given and was discussed about collaboration with different Committees and with Europartners as a whole. Also Crown Ministries Europe handed in their request to become associate member of the ECPM.

2. Conference about family values organized by the Romanian Family Alliance in Timisoara, April 2010. At this conference Romanian and European politicians and representatives of different religious denominations took part. The outcome was the “Timisoara declaration” in order to promote Christian values in the Romanian society. ECPM took an active part in the discussions and shared their experience in a plenary session

3. Conference about “Celebrating Diversity” organized by PATRIR in Cluj Napoca, April 2010. The goal was to find value and provide leadership for different ethnic groups and communities who are living in a multi-cultural community. Around 100 young people from different ethnic backgrounds in Romania participated during the 3 days conference. Leo van Doesburg gave a session about “the impact of young people in diplomacy in the framework of ethnic diversity.’

4. Global Day of Prayer, in Sofia May 2010. During the annual Global Day of Prayer, an official greeting on behalf of the ECPM was shared on the big square in the center of Sofia.

5. Launching of the Sub-committee for Human Dignity in the Romanian Parliament, May 2010. Deputy and ECPM member, Marius Dugulescu, a subcommittee within the parliamentary committee for Human Rights, Religious Affairs and Minorities was established that is based on the fact that we are created in the image and likeness of God and are divinely endowed with human dignity from conception until the national death. There was a short message presented about human dignity on behalf of the ECPM.

6. The fifth World Prayer Congress for Life “and the Light shines in the Darkness,” organized by the Human Life International, October 2010. This was an important conference where Catholic pro-life organizations and clergy came together to pray and to discuss together how pro-life can be promoted better in Europe.

7. The Politics & Society network within the European Leadership Forum in Eger, May 2010. Every year there is a special forum where hundreds of evangelical leaders come together and offer different sessions and workshops. Also there is a special Politics & Society network formed where actual topics were discussed. This time the main topic was about religious liberty. During the Politic & Society network the goals and activities of the ECPM were presented, and ECPM took the Officer Relations & Networking active part to the discussions.

1.2.3 Network events where the ECPM officially was invited

There were several events where representatives of the ECPM were invited to participate. The most important network events where one or more representatives of the ECPM took part were the following (more information is available in the respective reports)

1. The international Berlin Gathering, June 2010.
2. The National Prayer Breakfast in Riga, November 2010
3. The European Prayer Breakfast in Brussels, December 2010
4. The National Prayer Breakfast in Vilnius, Decembrie 2010

1.2.4 Working visits

Different working visits were made to encourage our local representatives or contact persons as well as to look for possibilities to develop new future projects in their regions. More information is available in the regional reports in this yearbook. Most important regional visits were made in:

1. Latvia and Lithuania, September 2010. We visited the representatives of the parties that are member of the ECPM and politicians in these countries. We discussed the current situation and possible future projects. This visit was done after the Nordic Conference in Tallin (Estonia).

2. Visit to Moscow and St Petersburg, September 2010. We visited our contact persons and gave a training in St. Petersburg and met politicians in both cities. Concrete plans were made for a congress next year for members of the civil society, politicians and representatives of different churches in order to launch an organization that will promote Christian values in their society and politics.

3. Visit to Kosovo, December 2010. After the conference in Albania, a visit was made in Kosovo and our contact persons in Kosovo in order to get insight into the difficult situation in Mitrovica and Prishtina and to look for possibilities to develop a conference about identity and about reconciliation.

1.3 Report ECPM Congress

by Guido van Beusekom and Auke Minnema

The growing relevance of Christian-Democracy in Europe

From May 27 till May 29 the ECPM (European Christian Political Movement) celebrated it's 6th annual congress and it's first year as an European Party. These members, ranging from Ireland in the west till Armenia in the east, met each other these three days in Brussels to discuss 'The relevance of Christian Politics in the 21st century'.

On the 27th, all participants were welcomed during the ECPM cocktail near the European Parliament. During this cocktail the yearbook for 2009 was already handed to chairman Peeter Võsu by Leo van Doesburg who, together with General Secretary Guido van Beusekom, had prepared this book concerning all ECPM activities in 2009. In a very informal atmosphere there was time to talk, have a drink and relax. It was a good moment to celebrate ECPM's first year as a European party.

The next morning the official conference on the relevance of Christian Politics in the 21st century started early on. Lecturers like Gert-Jan Segers (director of Scientific Institute of ChristenUnie), Senator Rónán Mullen (Ireland), David Fieldsend (Care for Europe), and Benjamin Harnwell (Chairman of the Dignitatis Humanae Institute) addressed the participants about the urgent need for Christian-Democracy in Europe and the need to unite as Christians to really be the salt and light in Europe and the whole world. Gert Jan Segers focused mostly on the general picture concerning Christian politics, while David Fieldsend gave us interesting information on how we can influence European policy as Christians. Benjamin Harnwell spoke about one of the core values of Christian Democracy, namely



Human Dignity. Senator Rónán Mullen told about his practical experiences in his function as Irish Senator.

Besides these lectures, several ECPM members from post-Soviet countries discussed the need for more Christian values in their countries and how the ECPM could make a difference in countries like Belarus, Estonia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The General Assembly on May 29 started with a speech of Reinier Koppelaar (personal assistant Andre Rouvoet, at that time vice-prime minister of the Netherlands). He gave an interesting and motivating speech about the strategies that the Christian Union had during the national election campaign of 2006. However, he concluded by stating that besides all the hard work and strategically thinking, the most important thing is the blessing of the Lord. Therefore this good result in the elections must be seen as His blessing and not as a result of only human efforts.

Later during the General Assembly, the ECPM members decided to launch a new project that would research and elaborate on the impact of Christianity on Europe and its institutions. The project will be carried out under the supervision of Sander Luitwieler who already had published several articles and books about the European Union. Furthermore the members accepted the European Christian Political Youth Network as the official youth movement of the ECPM.

All participants also received the official yearbook that documents more than 20 projects in over 15 countries that the ECPM carried out in 2009.

The meeting ended with a group picture and lunch outside of the conference venue. All participants left inspired by the fact that Christian politics are still very relevant in our century and they were all determined to prove that in their own countries!

1.4 The ECPM Nordic Conference in Tallinn

by Peeter Võsu, ECPM president

Perspectives of Christian Democracy in Nordic Countries

The European Christian Political Movement conference on Perspectives of Christian Democracy in Nordic Countries took place on September 10, 2010 in hotel Meriton in Tallinn. Sari Essayah, MEP (Finnish CD); Tõnu Lehtsaar, Professor of the University of Tartu and Mats Tunehag, Swedish EA, were the main speakers at the conference. Estonian church leaders: Andres Põder, Archbishop of Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church; Ruudi Leinus, Board member of the Baptist Union of Estonia; Märt Vähi, Bishop of the Estonian Pentecostal Church and Taavi Hollman, Superintendent of the Estonian Methodist Church, were among the speakers and participated in the conference. Leo van Doesburg (Representative Eastern Europe for the ECPM) explained about the perspective of Christian Democracy in East Europe. After Soviet oppression, freedom in Eastern Europe is an opportunity and a challenge. Christian values are at stake because of Western secularism. In Eastern Europe ECPM is growing very rapidly.

In the afternoon Sari Essayah, MEP from the KD of Finland, encouraged us to "keep and share the faith to change Europe and the whole world." She also discussed the current problems in Europe and the world, which are rooted in "a lack of trust, openness and mutual confidence." Sari Essayah elaborated on her work in the European Parliament and matters that concern her like the relationship of the EU with Israel and the persecution of Christians in countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and China. The European Union is a powerful forum to get the Christian voice better heard, especially on these humanitarian issues. However, the values that are the core of this large commitment to others "come from the Bible and not from humanists." Mrs Essayah feels that "many European politicians deny their history, especially their Christian heritage". The result is that often religion and especially Christianity is not valued and often portrayed as a danger while it is the core of central European values. MEP Essayah summarized it in a striking way: "In politics, being a Christian is even more difficult than being a woman. At least, as a woman, you are treated equally." Professor Tõnu Lehtsaar shared ideas about the secularisation of Europe and about the identity crises caused by the situation of the Europeans. It was a very positive lecture that inspired many to find and keep our own identity, to take a stand in social arenas and to promote Christian values in everyday life. Unfortunately, as a professor, Mr. Lehtsaar has no intention of joining any party.



Mats Tunehag informed the participants about a case of limitation of freedom of speech in Europe. He was a lawyer of a prominent Swedish Pastor Ake Green who was found guilty by a Swedish Court for calling homosexuality a sin. Later the Supreme Court vindicated him. Based on the case of the Swedish pastor, he pointed to the danger to freedom of speech in Europe. One of his points was that "what is funny for some, may be offensive for others". In his opinion we are moving from freedom of speech to freedom from hearing. Laws have to be objective and predictable, but subjective feelings move opinions and even laws from the speaker to the hearer. He signals a problem in our society: "only non-Christians seem to have the right to say whatever they want. And fear of Islam rules the world. But Christ already said: truth shall set you free. I want to keep my right to become offended."

Archbishop Andres Põder spoke about good examples of Christian cooperation in politics. The head office of the church has hosted regular political round table meetings over many years, and has organized two conferences on Christian values in Estonian politics.

Guests from several European countries came to the conference. The CDU of Germany and the CDU of the Ukraine sent written greetings to the ECPM Nordic Conference. A visit to the Parliament and a short city tour were also included in the conference. The final session was a concert for the delegates and larger group of guests with prominent Eurovision singer Maarja-Liisllus & Band, Gospel singers Margit Prantsus, and Timo Lige. The final event gave an opportunity to introduce ECPM to nearly a thousand participants.

1.5 Islam and Christianity in Western Europe

by Guido van Beusekom and Jonathan van Tongeren

ECPM Regional Conference in Brussels, Belgium

On December 3 ECPM held its Western European Conference in Brussels 'Islam & Christianity in Western Europe'. Whereas Christianity has a long historic presence in Europe and has influenced European culture and identity for many centuries, Islam arrived only recently and is mainly related to the arrival of immigrants from the Middle East, Asia and Africa. It became clear during the conference that when we speak about Islam in Western Europe we should first understand about Christianity in Europe. Hence the title of the conference was well chosen.



Due to weather conditions some participants had difficulties coming to Brussels, as some flights were cancelled and roads closed, but in the end all participants from Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain and the Netherlands attended. The conference was addressed by some eminent speakers with knowledge of Islam, some from academia, others from their own experience.

After Kris Vleugels opened the session, the conference was addressed by Gert-Jan Segers, director of the Scientific Institute of the Christian Union party of the Netherlands. Segers has lived in Egypt for seven years and thus has first-hand experience of living in a society with an Islamic majority. Back in the Netherlands he authored a book for the Institute, entitled 'Conditions

for Peace. The arrival of Islam, the integration of Muslims and the identity of the Netherlands'. This book is only available in Dutch, but Segers gave an outline of this study in his presentation during the conference. After discussing the identity crisis of many second and third generation immigrants and the position of Christians within secularized Western societies, Segers introduced the notion of covenant as a Christian contribution to the debate on the integration of Islamic minorities and others into society. Segers lists three challenges within this covenant: behaving, believing and belonging. Everyone should be able to participate when they behave accordingly (behaving); we should be able to find each other around fundamental values, such as freedom of conscience and the rule of law (believing); and people should be made to feel at home in their country of arrival (belonging).

The next lecture was by Prof. Dr. Schirmmacher (Islamic Studies at the University of Leuven), who gave an impression of several trends within Islam and consequences for integration into Western societies for people who adhere to these. She particularly discussed some concepts of Islamic scholars such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Tariq Ramadan, who have tried to come up with ways to reconcile Muslims living in Europe with the fact that they are a minority in society. This involves not seeing the world as being divided between a 'House of Islam' and a 'House of War', with Europe obviously belonging to the latter, but rather as a 'House of Islam' and a 'House of Mission'. The upside to the latter is that it obviously involves less violence. Some critics of Islam point out though that Muslims are allowed to lie for the sake of furthering Islam, which is called 'taqiyya'. The conditions under which this would be allowed are subject to debate, as some say this only applies in case of war or oppression, while others say it is always allowed.

Professor Schirmmacher's lecture was followed by a lecture of Matteo Piano, who spoke about Christianity from the viewpoint of branding. Piano pointed out some weaknesses in the current state of Christianity in Europe



and how this differs from Christianity as it should be. The presentation triggered a whole new view on the discussion. Mr. Piano showed that the most important thing for 'branding' Christianity is to focus on the first part of the word: Christ. Piano also focussed first of all on strengthening Christianity instead of looking to Islam stating that the biggest threat always comes from within. So, if we invest in strengthening Christianity in our society, we will immediately be more able to counter any outside challenges like secularisation or fundamental Islam.

After lunch, Alan Craig, local councillor in Newham (London) and leader of the Christian Peoples' Alliance (CPA), recounted how he began to study Islam as plans arose for a 'Mega Mosque' near where he lives. This idea was an initiative of a strand of Islam called Tablighi Jamaat. The mosque was to be built close to the Olympic grounds, and in order to impress it was to be the biggest mosque outside the Arabian peninsula. When Craig found out what kind of Islam Tablighi Jamaat promotes, he opposed the plan and started a 'Stop the Mega Mosque' campaign, which drew a lot of attention. What Craig wanted to prevent was that some sort of ghetto would form around the mosque, with Islamic shops and so on, which would cause all the followers to come and live there and not integrate into the whole of society and interact peacefully with people of other faiths. As a result the board of the mosque decided to slightly tone down the plans for the mosque. Craig also came to know many Muslims, some of whom wholeheartedly agree with him, while others kindly disagree. Sadly there are also some who have threatened his life. Craig underlined the importance of paying attention to the ideas of Islamic movements and where their funding comes from.

All together, the speakers contributed to a very well-balanced conference where there was room to discuss the good and bad sides of Islam, the problems that many Muslim immigrants face in Europe and, most important, the fact that other religions or ideologies only threaten us when we ourselves are weakened. Therefore, we must start with strengthening Christianity in European societies and European politics.



1.6 Annual report of the ECPYN

by Auke Minnema, ECPYN Secretary General

Annual Report of the European Christian Political Youth Network

The year 2010 gave new opportunities for the European Christian Political Youth Network, the youth organization of the ECPM, to grow. First of all by the Christian-Democratic Union of Youth from Ukraine being given full member status: the CDUY had been an observer member organisation since last year's summer school in Montenegro. Secondly, because ECPYN has established some working groups, working on different topics, and because the number of our activities increased, and finally because the board has been increased to five members.

Two main activities were organized this year: the annual international summer school in Ohrid (Macedonia) and a Eastern European conference in Tbilisi (Georgia). You will read about these two conferences further on in this yearbook. Besides these activities ECPYN participated in several other activities and conferences.

There were also some changes on the board. At our general assembly we thanked our secretary-general, Jonathan van Tongeren, who has stepped down after four years, and also increased our board by one member. The complete board now exists of Razvan Burleanu (Romania, president), Auke Minnema (The Netherlands, secretary-general), Nutsa Shavladze (Georgia, political officer), Vladimir Plamadeala (Moldova) and Denys Dhiver (France).

During the coming year we will be working on several new activities, conferences and projects. It is worth visiting our website www.ecpyn.org regularly to be updated on the latest developments.



1.7 Report about the ECPYN Summer school

by Viktor Mitevski, Auke Minnema & Jonathan van Tongeren

Reconciliation

ECPYN Summer school in Ohrid, Macedonia



From Monday July 12 to Friday July 16, 2010, the 7th International Summer School of the European Christian Political Youth Network (ECPYN) took place in Ohrid, Macedonia, in co-operation with the Boris Trajkovski International Foundation and SGP-jongeren. The summer school started on Monday evening with two short speeches by the Macedonian President of Parliament Trajko Veljanovski and the Minister of Defense Zoran Konjanovski.

The next morning started with a speech by the secretary general of the Department of Culture, who spoke about the importance of preserving the Christian cultural heritage. After this Viktor Mitevski explained the political history and the workings of the current political system of Macedonia. Vladimir Plamadeala (Moldova) also explained the situation regarding the so called frozen conflict over Transnistria (aka Pridnestrovje). After a short coffee break on the terrace overlooking the Ohrid valley filled by

a big lake bordering on Albania, we went on to four different workshops. Leo van Doesburg (ECPM representative in Eastern Europe and officer Relations and Networking) gave a workshop on 'Communication and Conflict Management', Jacques Bazen on 'Geopolitics', Krisztina Deme (Hungary) on 'Minority Problems in the Carpathian Basin' and Jonathan van Tongeren on 'The Christian Concept of Reconciliation'.

In the evening prof. dr. Florin Duma, economist at the University of Cluj (Romania) gave a lecture on the title 'The Economic Integration of Romania in the EU: Opportunities and Challenges'. In his lecture he gave a balanced perspective on this topic, equally discussing both sides and fairly mentioning possible downsides and risks to (fast or unprepared) economic integration into the European Union. He also gave some advice to countries hoping to join the EU in the future, to start preparing already, in order to be able to integrate economically in a way that benefits their country.

On Wednesday we gathered at 9 a.m. to go on an excursion by bus. After quite a long drive, which provided time for a lot of discussions and jokes among the participants, we arrived in Bitola where we visited first the historic museum. There was an exposition on the history of Macedonia from the time of Alexander the Great, the Roman occupation and Christianisation and also of the Macedonian revolution against the Ottoman Turks. After walking through the centre of Bitola and having coffee at a café, we took the bus to an archaeological site, where several layers of urban settlement had been excavated. We could see, among other things, a Roman theatre and a beautiful mosaic in a Christian church, which included a lot of symbolism. From there we went on to Krushevo where we visited the monument to the resistance fighters and Viktor Mitevski gave some explanation of the Macedonian struggle for independence from domination by subsequent multinational countries, the Ottoman empire and the 'Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes'. We then had a look at the inside of the memorial, which housed an exposition on this topic. From the monument we went on to the old town of



Krushevo, where we visited an orthodox church with beautiful icons and frescoes. After dinner at our hotel in Ohrid, we embarked on a boat to make a tour of the lake and look at the monasteries, chateaux and villas by the side of the lake. It was a good tour and the lights in the darkness resulted in a good atmosphere for informal conversation and getting to know each other better. On Thursday the participants gathered in the conference room to listen to Ilija Dimovski, who is among other things a Member of Parliament of Macedonia for the VMRO-DPMNE, a center-right party of Christian-democratic orientation. Mr. Dimovski explained how the Macedonian system secures the rights of minorities. An important instrument in this is the fact that in order to change some basic laws parliament needs to reach a qualified majority. This means that an absolute majority is not enough, but that half of the members of parliament representing the minorities should also agree. Besides this formal requirement there are also some informal political customs aimed at reaching consensus and including minority parties, especially the parties representing the large Albanian minority. We continued with lectures by Guido van Beusekom (ECPM General Secretary) and Aleksander Ogorodnikov (Russian dissident). After lunch we went to see the old town of Ohrid and especially the citadel. This citadel helped the Macedonians to resist for example Austro-Goth invasions. We visited five churches and a gallery of antique icons. We walked to some picturesque parts of the town, finally ending up at the beach, where we had drinks before returning to the hotel.

Friday we started with a lecture by Attila Kiss, assistant professor at the 'Partium Christian University' in Oradea (Romania). Prof. Kiss discussed the historic development of the concepts of statehood and nationhood and how this influenced the situation of minorities in the Carpathian basin in general and in Transylvania in particular. After a short break the plenary session was addressed by Vladimir Gjorcev MP (VMRO-DPMNE), chairman of the Committee on Defence and Security, who spoke to the theme of the summer school. Before lunch a debating course was held. What was learned could of course immediately be applied, not only during the course and over lunch, but also in the afternoon. In the afternoon the group was divided into four. Each group was challenged to design a symbol to represent reconciliation. After some hasty discussions and drawings, each group came up with quite different designs. The seats in the plenary room had now been arranged like in the House of Commons and two parties had to defend their own design against each other and attack the design of the group facing them. Two finalists were decided upon by a jury consisting of Aleksander Gorodnikov, Attila Kiss and Vladimir Plamadeala. The two groups that were selected by the jury stood out on presentation and debating skills respectively. After a fierce final debate the public decided by one vote which design had won. After some cooling down - in the case of many by having a swim in the beautiful nearby lake - the summer school concluded with a dinner. During the dinner many speeches were given, each national delegation represented itself by singing a song and/or dancing a dance and at the end all the participants received a certificate for their participation in and contribution to the summer school. The ECPYN board is very happy with the outcome of this summer school and wants to thank all our partners for their work. We especially want to give thanks to Viktor Mitevski, Aleksandra Jordanovska, Marija Radeska and Aleksander Kolev for their excellent work!



1.8 Report about the ECPYN regional conference in Georgia

Georgia and Post-Soviet Space in Common European Context ECPYN Regional Conference in Tbilisi, Georgia

by Nutsa Shavladze and Jonathan van Tongeren



Around this theme some 30 young people from Belarus, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine and of course Georgia gathered in the centre of Tbilisi from October 28 to November 1 at the East-European Regional conference of the European Christian Political Youth Network (ECPYN). The goal was a better understanding of similarities and differences in political situations and opportunities for the peaceful development of society along Christian democratic lines in and among the respective countries.

The conference was addressed by several lecturers, amongst others Giorgi Targamadze, leader of the Christian Democratic Movement (CDM) and minority leader in the parliament of Georgia; Louis Navarro, NDI country director; Giorgi Rukhadze, international secretary of CDM; Nodar Sarjveladze, Director of Christian Democratic Institute; Katja Plate, country director of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung; Andrea Keerbs, IRI country director; professor George Hudson of Wittenberg University USA; Ihor Lubyantsev (CDUY, Ukraine), and Dzmitry Trafimchuck (BCD, Belarus).

Vladimir Plamadze (ECPM board member), Auke Minnema (ECPYN secretary-General) and Leo van Doesburg (ECPM Representative Eastern Europe) gave a lecture on behalf of the ECPM and ECPYN. Among the topics discussed were such issues as interethnic conflict, democratization, the current internal and external policy of Georgia and (CDM) alternatives and general political and specific Christian Democratic developments in

several countries. Besides lectures, discussions and a Lower House debate, the participants also visited Tbilisi town hall, for a presentation about the workings of the Tbilisi City Assembly (Sakrebulo) by assembly members Zaza Gabunia and Jaba Samushia; the Parliament building, where Levan Vepkhvadze, deputy speaker of parliament, discussed the workings of parliament and Georgian politics in general; the town of Mskheta and Holy Cross Monastery, Svetitskhoveli and the former monastery that is now a church and the spring at Signagi. Because the conference was held in the centre of Tbilisi, the participants were able to see much of the old streets and interesting sites, such as the ruins of the castle, whilst a very knowledgeable guide accompanied them.



On the nights of the conferences there were excellent meals, with some traditional dishes and Georgian wines, in a very good ambiance with live music, to which some of the Georgian participants contributed with their songs or dance both traditional and international. On the final evening the participants received their certificates and a present. The people of Georgia stand out in kindness, hospitality and helpfulness, always willing and eager to go the second mile. In view of this, it can only be a matter of time before ECPYN visits Georgia again!

REGIONAL REPORTS

2.1 Albania about dialogue and cooperation between political youth forums

by Shaban Sulçe

On Saturday, April 10th the Center for Dialogue and Promotion of European Values held a meeting with the leaders of Youth Forums of the main political parties such FRPD (youth forum of Democratic Party), FRESSH (youth forum of Socialist Party) LRI (youth forum of Socialist Movement for Integration) and youth forum of the Party for Justice and unity. This was followed by an extra meeting organized 18 December.

The meeting was organized by the representative of the Center for Dialogue and Promotion of European Values, Mr. Shaban Sulçe in cooperation with Mr. Leo Van Doesburg, regional representative for East Europe of the European Christian Political Movement. The meeting was attended by Mr. Hartmut Puerner, head of the department for Democracy at OSCE presence in Albania. The youth forum of Democratic Party was represented by Alqi Llaku, secretary for foreign relations; the forum of Socialist Party was represented by Megi Ajtyresa, head of the forum. The meeting was also attended by Besjan Pesha, secretary general of Youth Movement for Integration, Ardit Çela deputy head of the SMI forum, representatives of youth forum of Party for Justice and unity and some 50 young members of these forums.



The meeting, being relevant especially because of the actual political situation in Albania, saw interesting discussions related not only to the current political deadlock but also to the European future, between the young representatives of different political parties. The young politicians agreed that more meetings such this one should be held in the future. But these initiatives should not stop with these meetings, more concrete joint projects supporting issues where the youth is directly involved. Mr. Leo Van Doesburg addressed this meeting saying that the dialogue between the youngsters in politic should be encouraged as a European value and a necessity to the integration processes in the country. Mr. Shaban Sulçe, representative of the Center for Dialogue and the Promotion of European Values said that he appreciates the youngsters contribute and willingness to collaborate for the country's future. In his speech he said that such activities should be carried on in the future, focusing in the promotion of dialogue and cooperation between youngsters. He also guaranteed that there will be more joint initiatives involving directly the Albanian youth.

Follow up conference 18 December.

On Saturday 18 December another meeting was held by the Center for Dialogue and Promotion of European Values led by Mr. ShabanSulçe. The conclusion was that the political youth forums of the main parties in our country were ready to launch dialogue and political cooperation between them on issues that are related to the European processes of our country and other issues that protect the interests of all Albanian youth. To the meeting, the political leaders of youth forums in our country, such as secretary of foreign relations in FRPD Alqi Ballko, the general secretary of LRI Besjan Pesha and the vice President of LRI Ardit Cela, the G99 party chairman Ervin Mete and the president of the Forum "Active Youth" Dritan Broke were invited to the meeting. Also the head of the FRESH Elisa Spiropali and the leaders of the Youth Forum of PDU joined the meeting as well as some representatives of the OSCE; one of them was Alenka Verbole, who welcomed the meeting and encouraged the launching of cooperation between youth in politics and expressed support to concrete initiatives in the framework of this cooperation. In this meeting a lot of ideas about youth cooperation in politics were discussed, such as the signing of a pact of understanding between the political youth forums during the election campaign that is coming in order to avoid insults and personal attacks in the campaign. Increasing the level of representation of youth and women in politics was also discussed.

This activity takes place with the support of the ECPM. The representative of this movement Mr. Leo Van Doesburg, in a statement for the newspaper said: "I want to express my congratulations and the congratulations of the representatives of the Institute for Multiparty Democracy NIMD and ECPM, who are attending and encourage this process.

The development of democracy and political dialogue is very important for strengthening the rule of law. This initiative is important not only for Albania but also for other countries of Eastern Europe. Developing this dialogue and co-operation will help build a constructive future for Albania and this is a good example for the region too. This cooperation of youth in politics will contribute positively in the local elections that are approaching in Albania”.

The day after the Conference a lunch was organized with the leaders of young political forums in Albania and also with the Core Group of our organization. During that lunch a lot of ideas were discussed about how to develop dialogue and cooperation between young politicians. Some of these ideas were: how to increase the participation of young candidates in local elections (will be held in 8th of May), how to increase the participation of women candidates in local elections, and how to increase the number of young people to vote in these elections.



One interesting idea discussed during these meeting was about training with representatives of all the parties about dialogue, rule of law and how to develop a democratic and modern electoral campaign. This training can be organized like a summerschool during the summer in Albania. We also discussed the organization of the Center. The idea was to have the leaders of the parties not on the Board of the organization itself but in a kind of Board of Advisers.

The organization itself should be made with Shaban Sulçe as a coordinator and also member of the Core Group, (not from the parties), but there should be a kind of Board of Advisers so that the organization can take independent decisions. It was agreed to register officially the “Center for dialogue and promoting European Values” (in Albanian: “Qendra per dialog dhepromovimin e vleraveevropiane”).

2.2 Christian democratic values in post-soviet countries

International Christian Democratic conference in Belarus

by the press centre of the Belarussian Christian Democracy

The Association of Christian Democrats of Eastern Europe (ACDEE) held a conference on 17-18 September. The conference took place in Minsk and had been organized by the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM), the leaders of the Association and the leaders of the Belarussian Christian Democracy party. The participants at the conference discussed the prospects for development of Christian Democracy in Eastern Europe. As a result of the conference, the Association approved the Declaration of Values, which is meant to unite Christian Democrats in the post-Soviet countries.



These are the values, declared at the conference:

- Every human being was created by God in His image and likeness. All people are born as free individuals, who are equal before God and have their own dignity. The highest goal of human life is serving other people. Every person has certain duties and bears responsibility before God and society.
- Human life and freedom are God's gifts. The right to life from conception until natural death and the right to liberty are fundamental rights and must be granted to everyone.
- Christian moral principles, expressed in God's commandments, should be the foundation of every human life, every society and state. Nevertheless, we respect other religions and stand for every person's right to enjoy freedom of conscience.
- Family, created as a result of marriage between a man and a woman, is the foundation of every healthy society. Men and women are equal before God and the law.
- Religious and moral upbringing is the key to forming a moral person and society.
- State and society must create equal opportunities for all people to realize their potential and fulfil their calling. Every state should serve its citizens, not vice versa.
- Private property is the foundation of a person's economic freedom. Socially oriented economy is the basis of economic development.
- State authority should be based on democratic principles. State authority, as well as units of local self-government, should be a well-balanced system of restraints and counterweights with the balance between power and responsibility. State should not interfere into those spheres of life, where people are able to solve their problems independently.
- Every person, society and state are obliged to do their best to retain peace, protect the environment and ensure the supremacy of the law. They should stand for justice and stability in social life, politics and economy. Fighting against corruption in all its forms and at all levels of power is one of our main priorities.
- Our goal is to implement these values in our societies. Our aim is to make sure our countries develop as democratic, law-abiding and socially oriented states, which can guarantee the European standards of living to every citizen.

During the conference the Estonian Christian Democrats joined the Association officially. There were a lot of famous people among the guests, including the chairman of the European Christian Political Movement Peeter Vosu; ECPM Regional Representative East Europe, Leo van Doesburg; some members of the Parliament of Ukraine; members of the Christian Democratic Union; Parliament Members Volodymyr Stretovich and Oksana Bilozir; deputy speaker of the Georgian Parliament Levan Vepkhvadze, who is also one of the leaders of the Christian Democratic movement and George Rukhadze, international secretary of the Christian Democratic Movement.

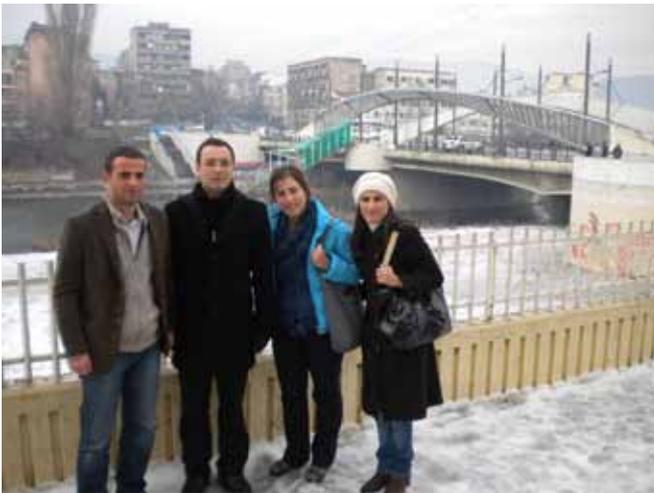


The Belarusian Christian Democracy will chair the Association in the course of the year. Co-chairman of the BCD Alaksiej Shein was elected chairman of the Association for this year. The Association of Christian Democrats of Eastern Europe was established a year ago in Armenia.

2.3 Kosovo: Study Visit

by Ruzhdi Ahmeti

After the conference in Albania, Leo van Doesburg (East European Representative ECPM) went from 20-23 of December on a study visit to Kosovo. He was hosted by Ruzhdi Ahmeti (who participated last year in the ECPYN summer school). He took care about arranging Leo's program and ensuring that he learnt more about the culture of Kosovo. Leo had meetings with youth representatives of all their parties, with the vice-ambassador of the Dutch Parliament and with a representative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). He not only shared his opinion about the situation and future of the Balkans, but also discussed a concrete project with training about the European Union between identity and integration with all the political youth organizations and external affairs officers from local communities. Leo visited also the divided city of Mitrovica where he talked with friends from ROM about developing dialogue cafes in Mitrovica with all the minorities (including Serbs and Albanians). This would be focused not only on dialogue but also on the future of the city. Ruzhdi wants to look for opportunities to develop this idea also on a broader scale in different cities in Kosovo and would seek to invite not only all minorities but also the Christian and Muslim leaders. The idea will be worked out further in concrete proposals.



2.4 Study visit to Latvia

by Vladimir Plamadeala

In September 2010 an ECPM delegation went to Riga to have several meetings. First of all they met with Prof. Mrs. Māra Viktorija Zilgalve, Chairwoman and Mr. Armands Agrums, Secretary-General, KDS Latvia (Christian-Democrats). They introduced ECPM and discussed about the recent developments of KDS, their plans and perspectives. An issue was as well the political situation in Latvia on the elections' eve. After this the future cooperation was discussed and some ideas have been launched.



The day after the delegation had a dinner with pro-life activists, Rev. Martin Irbe and Gunthar Irbe, founders and activists of Latvian Evangelical Alliance; they are also involved in Sanctity of Life Ministries and other activities for the defense of Christian values. They discussed the situation regarding the Family Law in Latvia, the cooperation of Latvian pro-life groups with Members of Parliament and factions in Latvian Parliament and the cooperation between NGOs to promote Christian values.

The last day there was a meeting with Inese Slesere, Member of Parliament of Latvia's First Party/Latvia's Way Party Parliamentary Group and Chairperson of the Latvian National Prayer Breakfast Committee. The discussion topic was the political situation in Latvia and the perspectives of the pro-Christian forces.

2.5 Christian Values in Politics Romanian Prayer Breakfast in Bucharest

by Andrei Hobafcovici

On Wednesday 8 December 2010, the 5th Romanian Prayer Breakfast started with a cocktail party in honor of the participants. This cocktail party was hosted by Roberta Anastase, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament and was followed by the Romanian Prayer Breakfast and a debate about the theme: "Christian values in Politics" organized by the Ecumenical Prayer Group in the Romanian Parliament, the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, in collaboration with the ECPM, the UK Bible Society and the Dutch Reformed Party. All the events took place in the Palace of Parliament.

Cristian Dumitrescu, chairman of the Ecumenical prayer group of the Romanian Parliament and president of the committee of Education, Science, Youth and Sport in the Chamber of Deputies, opened the event, followed by the opening prayer led by the Metropolitan of Targovista H.E. Nifon. Roberta Anastase, president of the Chamber of Deputies, said in her speech, that the Christian model is the best solution to these difficult times of economic and moral crisis.

One of the most important ideas of this event was presented by Emil Constantinescu (president of Romania 1996-2000), who reported: "When I visited the homes of the founding fathers of American democracy, I saw a Bible on the nightstand in every house". The representative of the Romanian Patriarchy, His Eminence Metropolitan Nifon, Archbishop of Targoviste and Patriarchal Exarch, believes that "Christian values in politics is a very interesting and provocative topic". The Papal Nuncio in Romania, H.E. Francisco-Javier Lozano, emphasized the importance of Christian values in politics from the Roman Catholic perspective.

The Bible text, which was the essence of the morning, was chosen and read by Leo van Doesburg: Matthew 5:3-12 (the Beatitudes as basis for political values) and 2 Chronicles 7:14-15 ("If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place").

Other contributors to this morning were: Aurel Vainer - MP, President of the Hebrew Communities Federation in Romania; Otniel Bunaciu, Baptist Union President and Petru Andea, former Chairman of the Ecumenical Prayer Group in the Romanian Parliament and dean of the Polytechnical University in Timisoara. The Prayer Breakfast was concluded with a prayer from Marius Dugulescu, MP and vice chairman for the Parliamentary committee of Human Rights, minorities and religious affairs. Mr. Dugulescu asked the blessing of God on all the Romanian politicians including by name the President, Prime Minister, Presidents of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies of Romania.



In the afternoon a round table took place about the theme: "Christian values in politics". Important contributions were made by international representatives like Paul Petri (coordinator of the Prayer Group from the European Parliament), and Oksana Bilozir MP and member of the leadership of Christian Democratic Union of Ukraine. Valeriu Ghiletschi, MP of the Republic of Moldova and Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe reported about the legislative success to ensure the freedom of conscience for hospitals and doctors to refuse abortions and euthanasia. He mentioned also his disappointment that there was limited or no involvement and interest of Romanian members of the Assembly to participate in these meetings. Lenuca Caran, from the Romanian National Council of Serbia had an unexpected and emotional contribution reminding the participants about morality, responsibility and faith and the work of the Holy Spirit in each person.



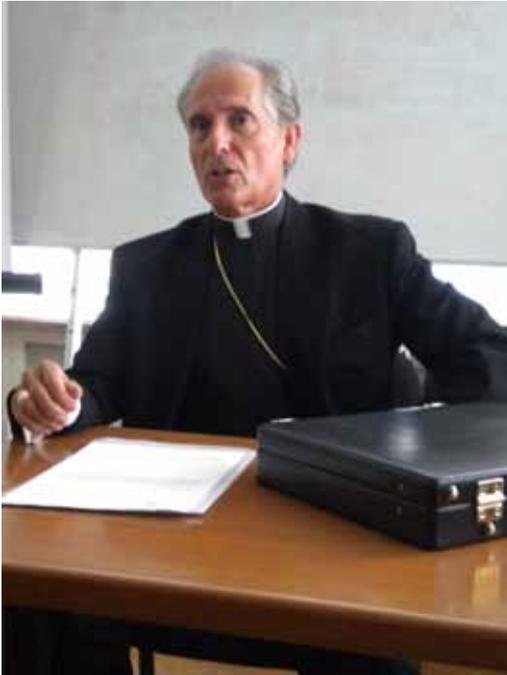
The round table was followed by an explanation about the basics of Christian values and how they are implemented in the UK context by our guests from the Bible Society, Christians in Parliament and the Christians in Politics networks under the leadership of David Lundrum (Senior Parliamentary Officer). They insisted that the young generation should be encouraged to become more involved in politics, based on Christian values and ethics. Another important notion is to put at the base of all things the Faith and Prayer.

This meeting was led by George Davids, general secretary of the Romanian Senate. The conclusions were made by Cristian Dumitrescu, he stressed the important role that the Ecumenical Prayer Group has for the Romanian society, by promoting laws acceptable to God and by directly promoting Christian values in Romanian politics. As Christian politicians, we have a great responsibility. It is our responsibility to do good in the world. Luke 12:48 says: and to whom much is given, much is required, and who has been entrusted with much, much more will be required. Bible and Christian values in politics suggests us to not be mediocre, but to be the best, because this is our calling.



2.6 Reflections on the “Religious Liberty in Romania and the EU” Conference

by Petru-Eremia Moldovan & Theresa Creel



On 15 June 2010, in Bucharest the conference Religious Liberty in Romania and the EU took place. The relevance of a formal discussion regarding freedom and rights within a democratic European community was met with excitement and support by many. The conference was organized by ECPM with the valuable support of the Institute for Political Research (University of Bucharest), who hosted the event. The primary purpose of this conference was to gather political and religious leaders, as well as scholars and NGO representatives, to engage in meaningful dialogue on the transformations and challenges of the concepts and practical experience of religious liberty within the new European society.

The importance of such dialogue and debate was defined by national and historical context, and was also justified by the contemporary institutional approach of the European regulation. Certainly, the Romanian society's numerous heinous and most traumatic experiences under the criminal communist rule greatly impacted the national-historical context of the discussions. There have been 20 years of religious liberties in Romania, and this dialogue celebrated this, but also provided strong impetus to value and continue to defend and promote these freedoms. Another framework for the discussions included the theological and political contemporary transformations that have taken place in the European secular society, which has typically and explicitly tended to generate controversy

and pessimistic predictions about the grave consequences of an arbitrary, antisocial political agenda.

The guests involved in this debate had actually managed to identify the main institutional models and approaches at both the national and the European level; moreover, the discussion also grasped the implications of the political discourse oriented towards and preoccupied with the relation between the state and religious liberty, freedom of thought, and freedom of conscience. With the academic support of the host and moderator, PhD Prof. Daniel Barbu, the discussion had a constructive and elaborated character; every contribution rightfully placed in order of presentation and facilitating meaningful evaluation. As a result, the main speakers and guests were able to formulate several pertinent conclusions.

The discussion began with several premises that had the objective to focus the analysis on specific particular realities and to essentially contribute to the evaluation of the theological-political contemporary dimensions that would eventually conclude the debate. In support of this, Mr Alex Spak, Barrister in the UK, presented several concise cases of gross violation of individual religious liberty by the state, just before concluding that the UK is experiencing a historical reshaping of human dignity, positioning itself on a slippery slope between discrimination and equality, due to its “politically correct” agenda. Leo van Doesburg then most importantly emphasized the danger of the European Union renegading its Christian heritage, and reinforced that the restoration of human dignity can derive only from the sacred teachings of Jesus Christ. In this prospect, Mr. Lorenzo-Javier Lozano, Apostolic Nuncio in Romania, reiterated the importance of Christian values in the past, present and future of the European society. Among those most honored guest speakers were also Ion Armasi (the Orthodox Church Representative) and Lucian Pop (political adviser).



Most encouraging was that the guest speakers and the participants actively contributed to the demarche of articulating a comprehensive and as exhaustive response as was possible, given this short period of time, regarding the dilemmas and the challenges of the discussed issues—focusing on the relation between the individual-religion-church-state and the restrictions of rights and religious liberties in Romania and EU.



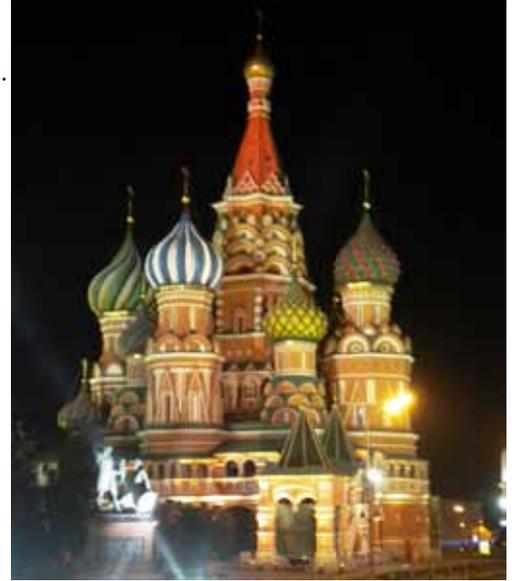
2.7 Russia: Fact finding in Moscow

by Ekaterina Smyslova

From 1-5 September, ECPM Regional Representative Eastern Europe Leo van Doesburg travelled to Moscow for a fact finding. First of all he had a meeting with the Russian teams of initiators of the formation of the Christian political movement. The group has come to the decision that it is extremely important to organize seminar in Russia with some speakers from ECPM and European MPs as participants for Russian society would realize how important it is to promote Christian values inside the country and in Europe, to define the way how Russian Christians can support European ones and how politicians can influence the situation. The seminar can become an instrument for the wakening up Russian Civil society and will be followed by creation of formal NGOs and movement.

After this meeting he had a meeting in the editorial office of the CONTINENT Magazine. Igor Vinogradov, the editor-in-chief of the magazine has ensured us that he will offer the space in the magazine to all of the articles related to the Christian Democracy as well as to the Christian values in political and social life in general. Mr. Vinogradov also has offered assistance to the ECPM and Russian Christian political movement with publishing any printed materials (assistance with editing, pre-printing works, dealing with printing houses, storage etc.).

Furthermore there was a meetin with Rev. Sergey Ryakhovsky, who has confirmed that Russian Parliament has a number of members who are practicing Christians. They who would be deeply interested in the discussion with the European colleagues possible ways of support of the initiatives of ECPM on restoration of Christian values in Europe and especially in promotion of respect toward human dignity from the moment of conception up to the moment of the natural death.



2.8 Ukraine: Study visits

by Elina Foinska

On September 11-13, 2010 the Secretary General of the ECPM Guido van Beusekom paid his first visit to Ukrainian partners of ECPM the Christian Democratic Union of Ukraine. During his visit meetings with the members of the CDU College Volodymyr Stretovych and Volodymyr Maruschenko were carried out. The ECPM Secretary General expressed his concerns as to limitations of freedom of speech and violations of human rights in Ukraine. "Europe has to care about preserving of traditional Christian and family values, currently it is a kind of trend in Europe to be an atheist and to support LGBT movement. Such tendencies should be avoided in the Eastern Europe and it is in the hands of politicians to change the situation for the better. Europe needs Ukraine Also strategies and ways of cooperation between the CDU and the ECPM have been discussed; such cooperation will enlarge the framework for protection of eternal values both in Western and Eastern Europe.



On September 19-23, 2011 the Officer Relations and Networking, Regional Representative East Europe of the ECPM Leo van Doesburg visited Ukraine, during his visit he met with the members of the CDU College Oksana Bilozir, Volodymyr Stretovych and Volodymyr Maruschenko. During these meetings the issues of launching of Human Dignity group in Ukrainian Parliament and mutual events of the CDU and the ECPM were discussed. Leo van Doesburg carried out a meeting with the prayer group in the Ukrainian Parliament. According to Volodymyr Stretovych the task of the CDU in Parliament is to find a paradigm which is uniting and understood both by East and West of Ukraine. Also the parliamentarians informed that the CDU of the first time starts its independent election campaign for local elections. The initiative to carry out the first Ukrainian Prayer Breakfast in 2011 was discussed, too.



REPORTS OF EVENTS WHERE ECPM PARTICIPATED

3.1 European Prayer Breakfast 2010

by Peeter Võsu - 07.12.2010

The European Prayer Breakfast took place in Brussels for the 13th time on December 1 this year bringing together hundreds of MPs, members of national governments, royal families and people associated with European politics alongside the MEPs and staff of European institutions. The Prayer Breakfast was led by Jerzy Buzek, the President of the European Parliament (EP) and Prince Nikolaus von Liechtenstein was the key note speaker. There was a short message from Hannu Takkula, MEP from Finland and the opening prayer was performed by ECPM member Peter Van Dalen, MEP for the Dutch Christian Union. Wintley Phipps from the USA was also there singing. He has sung during Billy Graham evangelistic events over the years, including one in Moscow in 1988.



The whole board of the ECPM (Peeter Võsu, Kris Vleugels, Dick van Dijk and Vladimir Plamadala) and Leo van Doesburg (Officer Relations and Networking) were present during most of the time and were able to speak about the work of ECPM in informal discussions.

The key note speaker Prince Nikolaus von Liechtenstein said that Christianity has influenced Europe more than anything else. In his speech he stressed the need for fellowship, friendship and mutual understanding between European politicians who are united by common values and cultural background. Prince von Liechtenstein pointed out that placing Jesus on a back bench and trying to become „small gods” is a problem we have to deal with. He also proposed an idea to initiate a European Day of Thanksgiving similar to the one in the US, and said that we need to be

more thankful to the Lord for what we have in Europe.

The music was powerful, emotional and inspiring. Before his final song Wintley Phipps spoke about how he had encouraged Oprah Winfrey while she was a young student. His message to the European Christian politicians was similar: „Many of you will have a great future in political life.”

The European Prayer Breakfast has superseded just the meeting of a breakfast over the years. The event started with a dinner on November 30 in the European Commission building where over a hundred participants had gathered. The opening event provided an informal meeting place for the delegates.

A panel discussion followed the breakfast, on the topic *Serving like Jesus in Public Life*, led by Hannu Takkula, MEP from Finland. Zambian Ambassador, H.E. Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika. Two MEPs from Slovakia, Anna Zaborska and Miroslav Mikolasik, also shared practical examples from their public lives related to their faith.

After the panel discussion the guests gathered for lunch during which the discussion was moderated by Vicky Ford, MEP from the UK. A longer speech at the lunch was given by Marius Dugulescu, Romanian MP and member of the ECPM. Mr. Dugulescu stressed the need and importance of Christian fellowship for the politicians. He colourfully described how he has to defend his Christian identity and position in his home country which sometimes creates inferiority and insecurity. Meeting with European top politicians and royalty affirms him and gives him the strength to lead a public Christian life confidently.

Around the lunch table Prince Nikolaus von Liechtenstein, one of the founders of the European Prayer Breakfast, shared how he had visited the US Prayer Breakfast and how it had inspired him to start something similar in Europe. First he had launched a Prayer Breakfast in Switzerland in 1991. Together with the founding group he was able to start the European Prayer Breakfast in 1997. By that time the Prayer Breakfast had also been started in Germany.

The new democracies in Europe have also joined in organizing national Prayer Breakfasts that have grown and become a movement in Europe. The reason for the prayer breakfasts is the need for common prayer and fellowship amongst Christian politicians.

Later that evening, the ECPM organized a Gospel Concert for participants of the Prayer Breakfast. This concert started with a welcome by ECPM vice-chairman Kris Vleugels who informed those gathered about the work of ECPM. After that, the evening continued in an informal and inspired atmosphere that was created by the splendid performances of Arvid Pettersen and the Flanders Gospel Choir.



3.2 International Berlin Gathering 2010

by Peeter Võsu

The International Berlin Gathering brought hundreds of international politicians to the capital of Germany from June 10 to 12, 2010. The annual event took place for the 15th time, organized by the Prayer Breakfast Group and initiated by the Christian Democrats and other parties.



Traditionally, the opening session took place in the Bundestag (The Federal Parliament), followed by a festive dinner in Johannesstift (a suburb of Berlin). The second day of the Gathering started with the International Prayer Breakfast followed by seminars and workshops. All the guests were invited to take part in a church service in Johannesstift in the afternoon. The final session of the main program was at dinner. The third day offered some more optional meetings and ended with a boat tour through Berlin.

The International Berlin Gathering has become the biggest Christian political event in Europe. Each year up to 400 politicians mainly from Europe but also from Africa, Asia and the Americas gather to listen to the topic of the year, to discuss, and to pray together. The event also makes a good platform for meeting with each other and having

fellowship together.

The main theme of the Berlin Gathering is: „Responsibility Before God and Man”– a quote from the Constitution of Germany. Each year a different sub-theme is added to it – this time it was: „Our Responsibility Concerning the Safeguarding of our Creation”. Quotes from Genesis, where God delegated responsibility to man over creation to rule and to organize it, introduced the topic. Several seminars and workshops extended the main idea.

Members of the Bundestag, Anette Hübinger, Johannes Selle and Frank Heinrich and the main organizer of the event, a former MP Rudolf Decker, moderated the sessions. Mr. Paul Magnuson, a Federal Court Judge from the US; Azarias Ruberwa, a former Vice President of Congo and several Members of the German Government contributed to the Gathering. Some of the guests came from closed authoritarian countries or regions of fighting, like a high officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, and some leaders from Somalia, and Sudan (from both sides of the conflict). Among the participants were also several MPs and Members of Government of many European countries.

Paul Magnuson spoke on responsibility before God and man, and of the makers, the interpreters, and the enforcers of the law. He pointed out the danger of any of them feeling important instead of carrying out their responsibilities in humility in order to serve the people.

Rudolf Decker pointed to the changes in the situation in Congo, after calling the conflicting sides to joint prayer, as one of the highlights of the year. He also referred to a recent visit to Sudan where he had met with people from both sides of the conflict; some of those people also attended the Berlin Gathering. He gave thanks for their being able to leave Sudan freely at that time. The joint prayer had laid the foundation to the solutions of the conflict. Rudolf Decker said that following the teachings of Jesus can be dangerous, because he teaches you to love your enemies too, not only friends.

Dr Andreas Jahn, Executive Manager of the Berlin Gathering, knew all the guests personally and was able to have conversation with most of them in their mother tongue. He interpreted some of the speakers



from Spanish or French from the stage and also spoke fluent Russian with some of them. Many volunteers were involved in the organization, among them 12 German police officers, who made everything run smoothly.

Most of the sessions took place in a rather informal setting that gave a relaxed feeling and formed natural conversation groups of different people. Meeting with different people and forming new relationships was also one of the goals of the event. This was certainly accomplished well, as was the whole event which has become more popular every year.

During these sessions there was room for informing people about the ECPM and the work we do in Europe. Many of our projects in Southeast Europe are about reconciliation of different groups. It was wonderful to see that what we have encouraged in several regions of Europe is also being done by others outside Europe.



3.3 “And The Light Shines In The Darkness” Participation in the 5th World Congress for Life in Rome, Italy



The Gospel of Life, as heralded by Pope John Paul the Great, was the resplendent theme behind the congress entitled: “And the Light Shines in the Darkness,” which took place in Rome where 45 nations from 6 continents gathered to pray and work in the continued international building of life. The meetings were held at the FraternaDomus center outside of Rome as well as at the Augustinianum Center at St Peter’s in the Vatican. The speakers were from both clergy and lay leadership from all over the world.

Some of the topics included talks on “Christian Humanism vs Inhumane Humanism,” “Communicating the Church’s Truth on Sexuality in a Hostile Culture,” “NCC(NFP)-Way for Marital Fidelity and Fulfillment”, “De-Christianization and Catholic Counter-Revolution,” “Life in Abundance, Project Rachel,” “The Taboo: Abortion and Sexual Abuse”, “The Dignity of Motherhood-Who cares” and John Paul II’s encyclical “Evan-

gelium Vitae”. The speakers included Msgr. Philip Reilly, Father Dr. Manfred Muller and Raymond de Souza. In addition to the many lectures there were updates from the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) regarding the issue of healthcare workers’ right to conscience that was voted in the Council of Europe.

Thanks to the powerful outpouring of prayer, Eucharistic adoration, masses and political lobbying, the report was reversed and stronger conscience was, in fact, adopted. One of the special aspects of the Prayer Congress was attending a papal audience at St Peter’s Basilica. Our group was ushered to one of the front row seats for the Pope’s Wednesday’s audience, where Pope Benedict XVI was introduced to pilgrims from the world over. Our Prayer Congress was specifically mentioned in the audience. During the Congress time was set aside for pro-life leaders from the various organizations in attendance to meet in order to brainstorm the issues that we are each facing. Representatives from Human Life International moderated the discussion and helped to facilitate the sharing of ideas so that best-practices in one country could be used in other parts of the world.

The conference continued the next day in the Augustinianum Center in the Vatican. Here we heard speakers address topics of abortion and healing. Archbishop Burke addressed the Congress with an applause-punctuated speech entitled: “Catholic Orthodoxy as an Antidote to the Culture of Death”. The speech focused on the teachings of the Church as the foundation for a moral society. The Archbishop also addressed the gravity of scandal when political or religious leaders lead the flock astray.



The group moved then to St Peter's where a Mass of Repentance was said for the abortions performed around the world. The Mass, celebrated by Cardinal Comastri, who is Archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica, commenced with a procession of the con-celebrating priests. This Mass, celebrated at the altar under the chair of Peter for repentance for the sin of abortion, was enormously powerful and moving.

The presentation of the Cardinal Galen Award for 2011 to Msgr. Reilly was one of the highlights of the Conference. Also receiving this award was Dietmar Fisher, director of Human Life International in Austria and coordinator of the congress. The congress was attended by Leo van Doesburg, Officer Relations & Networking of the ECPM and member of the Steering Group of the Dignitatis Humanae Institute. He explained that "in these days its more than ever necessary to come together ."



3.4 Report about the Global Day of Prayer 2010 (Bulgaria)

by Philip Rashev

On May 23 2010, people from 219 countries took part in the Global Day of Prayer. From 5 p.m. leaders and churches from nearly every denomination participated in the corporate prayer for our country in the largest hall in Sofia, Bulgaria. For two hours prayers were lifted up to God, Scriptures were read, and even five-year-olds offered fervent prayers to God for our country. Other cities had gathered together without inviting them. The church, not as a churches, but as a church of the city was united in prayer.



Going back to that verse in 2 Chronicles 7:14 over and over again, we could really see that this call for united prayer is addressed to the whole nation. However, the task proved to be more difficult than we expected. With lots of prayer and a series of meetings, we brought together an independent team of people willing to make an open-air corporate prayer for Bulgaria happen. Even a former Bulgarian Prime Minister took part in the event. Being aware that the large majority of Bulgarians affiliate themselves with the East Orthodoxy, we also started looking for an Orthodox priest to lead people in prayer out in the open.

A full press coverage was offered. The day after this press conference the most influential newspapers had published press releases of the upcoming corporate prayer in the square, and they kept publishing announcements daily. We had invitations extended by radio and TV stations. On the day itself we got a call from the Bulgarian National Television (BNT) requesting attendance and coverage of the event. A number of Internet blogs, websites, newspapers, radio and TV channels publicized the event.



A united prayer for Bulgaria united prayer for Bulgaria led by an East Orthodox priest was held as part of the Global Day of Prayer on St. Alexander Nevsky Square, right in front of the Cathedral in the capital city. The former Prime Minister greeted those present. The same was done by ECPM East Europe representative Leo van Doesburg, a special guest who congratulated Bulgaria on its involvement in the Global Day of Prayer. A representative of the US Senate and Congress conveyed greetings to Bulgaria for the good initiative.



3.5 National Prayer breakfast in Latvia

by Vladimir Plamadeala

As the follow-up of September visit, at the invitation of Inese Slesere, MP Latvia's First Party/Latvia's Way Party Parliamentary Group, Chairperson of the Latvian National Prayer Breakfast Committee, an ECPM delegation took part in Latvian Prayer breakfast in Riga on 5 November 2010. The event was attended by the President of Latvia, Valdis Zatlers, evangelist Franklin Graham and numerous officials, MPs and guests from abroad.

After the prayer breakfast, there was an unofficial discussion and prayer time for MPs and foreign guests organized by Inese Slesere. This was followed by a lunch for foreign guests, which lasted for more than three hours and during which countries and Parties presentations have been made and feed-back given. Politicians from Latvia, Germany (including Dr. Andreas Jahn, in charge of Berlin prayer gathering), Netherlands, USA and Belgium were present. We



again met and had productive discussions with pro-life activists, Rev. Martin Irbe and Guntha Irbe, founders and activists of Latvian Evangelical Alliance.

In the evening, the participants at the prayer breakfast attended the Latvia Hope festival in Riga Arena, where Franklin Graham preached. Thousands people came to repentance during those days. The ECPM delegation attended all 4 days of the festival, including the preparatory day. We also met and had discussions with Mr. Antero Laukkanen, a pastor from Espoo and activist of the Christian-Democratic Party, who run for the Party's Chairmanship.

In the afternoon of November 6, we met Mr. Andis Kudors, President of the Centre for East European Policy Studies and Ieva Dzelme, his deputy and activist of the Conservative Party of Latvia. We introduced them the work of ECPF and researched the possibilities for future collaboration and enlarging our networks by sharing the contacts we have.

3.6 Lithuanian Prayer Breakfast

by Peeter Võsu

Tenth Lithuanian Prayer Breakfast „Eternal Values and Political Wisdom in the Background of Crisis and Hardship” took place in the Lithuanian Parliament in Vilnius on 18 December 2010. The keynote speakers of the event were Irena Degutiene, Speaker of the Parliament of Lithuania; President Valdas Adamkus and Christian J. Jensen on behalf of the US Senate and Congress. The event was led by Dr. Egidijus Vareikis, MP.



President Valdas Adamkus spoke about the tradition of the Prayer Breakfasts in Lithuania. He had hosted the former ones in the Presidents Palace. This year the event had been transferred to the Parliament. Irena Degutiene, the Speaker of the Parliament (Christian Democrat) spoke about the importance of the Christian principles and values in politics.

Christian J. Jensen spoke on the relations with God and between people. He argued that with strong and deep relations to the key politicians our impact is much more effective than with issue based political lobby. Mr. Jensen also stressed that the political leaders are opinion leaders – therefore they have to be as moral examples to the whole society.

The Christian leaders from several denominations took part of the Prayer Breakfast. Among them was Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, Apostolic Nuncio to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Among the guests were also Inese Slesere, MP from Latvia and Peeter Võsu, Chairman of ECPM.



3.7 Reconciliation during the Renewing Our Minds

by Mihaela Kovacs



From 18 July until 4 August a new edition of the Renewing Our Mind Gathering took place in Fuzine (Croatia). This Gathering is a Southeast European initiative of change with the vision of transformed leaders, inspired by the character and teachings of Jesus Christ. Its mission is to develop leaders of integrity, committed to reconciliation, peace-building and constructive social action; leaders who, renewed in their minds, characters, attitudes and actions in the likeness of Jesus, are steadily transforming their constituencies, communities and countries.

During the time the 35 participants from 11 countries (mainly from the Balkan region) had an opportunity to experience unique ways of learning to communicate, to negotiate, to work in a diverse group using tools like café dialogues, forums and workshops; exercises and games with a purpose; small groups; drama, acting, music, movie nights and entertainment events; community service; and inspirational events. It is based on 4 phases: From the embracing phase through the Challenge and Confronting Phase towards the Purpose phase and finding the Mission. During the closing stage various workshops were offered in order to sharpen their focus on their societies and to look how to participate in practical ways in order to serve in their communities.

Leo van Doesburg, regional representative ECPM had two sessions in the 3rd phase: about "Rebuilding the walls, based on the lessons of Nehemiah" and about "How to go from vision to action." Other speakers were Tihomir Kukolia: Director of the Renewing our Minds, Randall Butler, Director of The Institute for Sustainable Peace, Houston, TX , Allen Belton Senior Associate Director from Urban and Global Mission from Seattle ,WA., Botrus Mansour, an Arab lawyer and General Director of the Baptist School in Nazareth. Scott Boldt, Director of the Edgehill Theological College Reconciliation Programme (Northern Ireland) . Zeljko Puja – Phd. Psychologist from Bosnia Herzegovina, Mihaela Kovacs, Director Fundatia Beraca Sighisoara (Romania) and Nate Ussery from the European Gathering.

ROM is foremost a mission that challenges paradigms and assumptions, and refines the characters of young leaders and motivates a change, at personal and collective levels. Then, it is a place where forgiveness and reconciliation are demonstrated realities. Moreover, ROM is a community in progress where loving one's neighbour and serving leadership are taught and practiced. Furthermore, it is the environment where all ingredients are anchored in the teachings, example and following of Jesus of Nazareth. All of those together have formed the life defining identity of the ROM mission.

Former participants often say that a three-week journey in a community of diverse people, often previously considered as enemies, was a life defining experience for them. Over the years Renewing Our Minds Ministry has grown into a transformational international leadership and reconciliation movement, that has inspired the birth of numerous other movements, NGOs, organizations and socially engaging groups



3.8 Celebrating Diversity & Multi-Culturalism

Enabling Youth of Different Ethnic Groups and Communities to Find Value and Provide Leadership in Celebrating and Living a Multi-Cultural Community Seminar

by *Camelia Popa*

The seminar took place in April 14th-16th in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, and has been hosted by the Octavian Goga County Library. It gathered 120 youth, 90 percent being students and pupils, Romanians as well as youth of different ethnic backgrounds living in Cluj-Napoca, and the rest of them young professionals, teachers and people responsible with policy making activities. The activities of the seminar included plenary sessions containing speeches of experts and discussions, facilitated workshops to enable discussions and debates on themes like Discrimination and Human Rights, Segregation and Inclusion, Tolerance and Power, Minority and Majority, movie shows, dance and cultural activities and socializing opportunities. On behalf of ECPM Leo van Doesburg was present and gave a speech about the theme: "The impact of young people in diplomacy in the frame of Ethnic Diversity"



The specific objectives of the seminar were to encourage diversity by engaging 100 multiculturally diverse youth aged 16-30 for 3 days in dialogue, interactions and workshops on peacebuilding and equity and equality themes in relation to ethnic discrimination; To promote equality by including 30 youth with fewer opportunities within the number of participants and developing the quality of support for them by bringing up 3 major stories of success in relation to equality and equity in connection with ethnic discrimination; To promote active citizenship between youth by building a core group of action (made up of 30 multicultural and multi-level youth) for dialogue and strategy planning, that will meet outside the seminar monthly throughout the year to create of this Seminar not just a one time event, but a tradition, offering knowledge and thematic capabilities for civic engagement; and to contribute to developing solidarity amongst youth by making the strategy for and implement a visible campaign against ethnic discrimination in schools in Cluj-Napoca for the scholar year 2010-2011 campaign which will be created by a multicultural core group of young people and aiming to engage 2000 youth in actions with a social message.

The seminar did not promote diversity only from the perspective of different ethnic groups but also age-wise. The group was diverse also education wise and from the experience point of view. We had representatives of local authorities, teachers, students, pupils, graduates, master students as well as some with fewer opportunities, which were treated in the same way as everyone else, totally accepted. The seminar created a space of communication in which youth of different experiences and backgrounds have the chance to exchange ideas, discuss, debate and emphasize the advantages which a multicultural and diverse city like Cluj-Napoca has regarding to culture, education, development, richness. Discussions focused around themes like discrimination and human rights, what it means to be a minority, what means to be a majority, tolerance and acceptance, forgiveness, diplomacy and politics, segregation and inclusion, discrimination and the media, so on.



Three success stories were brought up by 3 people whose lives and successes speak more than a million words.

We had Valeriu Nicolae, from Policy Centre for Roma and Minorities, of Roma ethnicity, who spoke about the dangers of discrimination against the roma and not only and whose story challenged and inspired many people in such a way that we received fantastic feedback from the participants particularly about him. Mihaela Kovacs, again, of Roma ethnicity, who works in Sighisoara with the convicts and preaches against domestic violence. Her articulate speech, story and outstanding attitude brought up the challenge of accepting the Roma as any other ethnic group amongst us. Alexandru Orban, the 3rd great story, a businessman of jewish and hungarian ethnicity, living and working in Cluj-Napoca. The participants were all interested, and took part in activities every day with a fantastic attitude.

A special visit was made to the Highschool of Children with Sight Defficiency, and a fantastic response was received. The participants from this school came together with their teachers as they needed a bit more help and integrated beautifully in all activities and participated through questions, opinions, ideas and talks. A special visit was made as well to the Hungarian Apaczai Highschool where after a wonderful meeting with the director of the school a contract was signed and a promise of 10 Hungarian pupils as participants was made. The children participated in all the works of the seminar, in all of the 3 days plus Sunday, for the visit of Rajmohan Gandhi. We had the participation of a few Erasmus Students living in Cluj-Napoca who were particularly interested in the subject and enlisted for the seminar. We had a delegation of Roma participants sent by our partners, mostly students and a few of them struggling with poverty. They were very well received by the other participants and integrated beautifully in the whole seminar. A group of dancers of roma ethnicity was present. They found it a bit difficult at first as they came to dance, but got caught in the activities of the Discrimination and Human Rights working group and enjoyed it very much.



In the plenary sessions the participants took notes and interveened with questions for the experts and some of them with comments or even with answers. In the first day when Valeriu Nicolae brought up the Roma issue and the statute of the Roma in Romania many questions raised and the level of the engagement of the participants and experts raised a high standard for the rest of the 3 days activities. The questions were carried forward into the working groups where discussions were facilitated and ideas brought up through nonformal methods. Participants had every day 3 hours of workshops where they managed to get to know each other, gain confidence and speak up their thoughts and ideas. They came up with conclusions to the discussions written down and drawn on flipcharts, dreams and ideals expressed and again drawn on flipcharts. Every working group would appoint 2 reporters who would report to the whole group in the plenary sessions each morning what has been discussed during the workshops and what conclusions were reached. During coffee breaks and lunches participants established contact with one another and with the experts, asked questions, talked, laughed and made friends.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ECPM

4.1 Vision document: A Christian-Social Contribution to Europe

We are the members of the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM). This movement includes Christian-democratic and Christian-social parties, NGO's and think tanks in Europe. We have come together to promote a Christian perspective on democracy. In our continent and the nations within it, we face growing problems. Neither the individualistic conservative-liberal nor the technocratic social-democrat approaches are able to give an adequate response or produce robust solutions.

People distrust political institutions and their work. There are growing tensions between different religious and ethnic groups in Europe. European nations are supporting each other less when we need solidarity to deal with our social, economic security and environmental problems.

We want to promote the Christian-democratic perspective on these 21st century questions. They affect individuals on their relationships in the community. They also affect our common responsibility for our society. We are convinced that Christian-social thought can generate political solutions. These can contribute to the well-being of the people of Europe. Christian-democracy made its contribution since its beginning in the 19th century with politicians like Groen van Prinsterer. Christian-democrats like Robert Schuman and Alcide de Gasperi laid in the 20th century the foundations of the European Union. We are convinced that Christian-democracy has also an important role to play in the 21st century.

As members of the ECPM we believe that Jesus Christ calls us to follow Him in every area of our lives. This includes the realm of politics. The Bible is not, and does not provide a political programme. Its basic teachings provide the fundamental elements for just government. There is a call on political authorities, including those at the European level, to work in this spirit and serve the people of Europe. They are to pursue justice and freedom. We recognise that we cannot identify the Kingdom of God with any specific political cause. We affirm that this Kingdom of God demands the pursuit of just government and the promotion of a well-ordered society. We reject the idea that religion is just a private affair for individuals. The Christian faith has been fundamental to European society. It has been irreplaceably important and influential in the processes of shaping the character of our continent. This means that we bear a responsibility both to challenge and to affirm the social and political order. This we will do according to the way that we understand Christian-social principles.

The Christian understanding of the person

The Christian-Democratic tradition of thought takes its bearings from Christian convictions about the person, society, and political authority. These principles include the notion that the basic worth of each human being comes from their creation in the image of God. We understand true human fulfilment as a responsible freedom. We live in relation to others and creation. We find fulfilment in the development of relationships in society. This relational vision of humankind is a key element for the Christian-democrat and the Christian-social policy of the ECPM.

The Christian-social view of society and government

A healthy society has a morale that results from mutual respect. The pursuit of private satisfactions should not interfere with our common duty to protect other members of society. On the other hand, the demands of the State or any other collective body, should not damage the rightful claims of the individual. This means that for a society to flourish it must create and nurture a spirit which respects the freedom and integrity of social and cultural institutions. It must encourage and nurture good relations between those institutions and people. Key social and cultural organisations include the family, school, religious organisations, and representatives of employees and employers. People build a society by developing their mutual relationships and becoming involved in communities and their common concerns.

The fundamental role of political authority is to ensure justice in the public realm. The state must create conditions that promote the common good and social connectedness. The exercise of power by the state must always be equitable and limited. The state must promote just relations between individuals, associations, communities, and other groups. The state must also respect their proper independence and interdependence.

Bearers of political authority are responsible to encourage the good, and rectify injustice. Governments are not required to attempt to remedy every social ill. Government must not undertake tasks that are the responsibility of family, church, or other spheres of authority. They should be able to deal with their own affairs. We believe that churches and other religious organisations can have an essential contribution to make in society.

Democratic participation enlarges the horizons of people. It empowers them as citizens and increases their influence on governments. A responsible democracy requires the expression of opinion through representative elections, political parties, public debate and loyal opposition. These together with respect for political office and open and accountable government are essential. The responsibilities for public affairs should be at a level as close to the citizens as possible. This is our view at subsidiarity. We stand for this balance in power between the various nations and the European Union. We must protect national identity and respect the sovereignty of states. The European Union needs solidarity between nations and peoples. The European Union also needs subsidiarity to keep its solidarity alive. The ECPM recognises the different peoples of Europe.

No party or grouping may claim special legal privileges. Christian-democrat thinking strongly rejects secularism as a public ideology. The ECPM warns of the damage that fundamentalist secularism can inflict on a society. We are weary of such fundamentalist secularism in any kind of governing role. We also do not seek a governing role for any single church denomination. We recognise the role of the Christian faith in shaping the liberties that our continent enjoys. We affirm that the state needs to acknowledge the rights of religious and cultural minorities and to treat them equitably in public policy. We welcome the diverse faith communities present in Europe. Individuals, communities and organisations must have full freedom of religion and expression of thought. This must be a priority within Europe and in European foreign policy. A Christian-democrat view of government will always have a global perspective. All the earth is God's creation, and God made all humans in his image. This means that Christian-democracy aims to have a foreign and defence policy that works in this spirit. It promotes fair trade as well as peace and protection of the environment. We must not allow the state, business or finance to control the economy. Democratic responsibility requires this. The state should build up the contribution and sense of mutual responsibility of all parties. Economic activity is to serve people rather than dominate them. The full personal, social and ecological implications of national and international market activity need to be recognised and should not be merely a matter of private or accounting calculations that do not recognise these implications. The state must attempt to redress inequitable and unfair patterns of trade and distribution. Christian-democrats emphasise the state's responsibility for justice, right structures and social connectedness, rather than economic performance alone.

Basic themes in Christian-social policy

As Christian-democrats we do not imagine that we possess simple solutions to the problems of Europe. We do however firmly believe that Christianity can make an important contribution to the well-being of our society. For this reason, we commit ourselves to the following seven guiding principles which highlight some basic themes of Christian-social policy:

Justice

Social justice is a fundamental Biblical teaching. That makes it the basis for Christian-social policy.

All men and women are due equal respect and treatment. Men and women have responsibilities to one another and to wider society. Social justice demands an equal regard for all. That implies a special concern for the needs of the poor, refugees, those who suffer and the powerless. It requires us to oppose exploitation and deprivation. It requires also that appropriate resources and opportunities are available. In this way, we meet the basic requirements of all and each person is able to take part in the life of the community. We firmly believe that governments have a special responsibility for those who cannot support themselves in our own countries and abroad. Opposing and eliminating social injustice asks for more action by the government than only to provide just structures. It is also important to stress the need of healthy families, good education and health-care to prevent poverty and social injustice.

Respect for life

God created human beings in his image. The right to live is the most basic of all human rights. It is an intrinsic value of every human being. We especially affirm the fundamental dignity of those who are unborn, infirm, mentally or physically disabled, elderly, or unable to speak for themselves. Such respect for human persons also requires a commitment to maintaining a decent quality of life for all. It requires that our communities meet the needs of all those who, for whatever reason, do not have the essentials of life. Some implications for this policy are promoting care for pregnant women, supporting hospices and prohibiting euthanasia. It is our conviction that cloning of humans and animals is contradictory to respect for life.

Priority for the family

A healthy family life induces the wellbeing of people as relational beings. For that reason, we affirm that the family is the cornerstone of society. It is the place where children should learn responsibility, values and proper ways to live as responsible citizens. We should give families all the space they need to fulfil such responsibilities.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a task for individuals, social and economic groups, and also for those engaged in politics. We must work towards reconciliation and healing at local, national and international levels although we recognise that we will never achieve all such goals in this world. Humility, repentance, patience and forgiveness are political as well as personal values. They are essential in the process of replacing conflict by common understanding. These principles require that we renounce all armaments that are incompatible with the pursuit of just peace.

Active Compassion

God calls human beings to active loving service of others. This is to replace indifference to the distress of others due to passivity, self-concern or ignorance. Such compassionate love inspires an attitude not only of detached justice but also of open-hearted generosity. We all bear the responsibility, individually and corporately, for such service to one another. Governments should seek to motivate individuals, families, charities and other associations to active compassion. The state should prompt and assist the community to meet the fundamental needs of the poor before satisfying the preferences of the rich.

Wise stewardship

Human beings and creation are related. All economic activity involves responsibility before God and for the world that He entrusted to us. We affirm that concern for God's creation is a major part of Christian-social politics.

Creation and environment Locally, nationally and internationally governments need to prevent the over-use of natural resources. We all need to be good stewards of the created world. This means that it must be a priority to achieve a balanced and sustainable environment and economy. Dealing with climate change is one of the greatest international challenges that we face today. We must reduce the use of non-renewable resources. We need to reduce carbon emissions and implement climate-friendly energy resources.

We need to stop destruction of ecosystems in oceans and forests. We need to allow them to heal. We must give priority to real and practical environmental protection measures. We need to develop robust climate and preservation policies.

Economy

God gives economic resources to serve people's needs. He does this to help in developing capacities particularly for justice, co-operation and mutual care. These resources should be used creatively and with responsible concern for others (including future generations) and the environment. Markets are not a law unto themselves. People shape them by their decisions. This means that we need to structure them so that those who conduct economic transactions are fair and do them in good faith. The needs of the community must be in mind. Concentrations of wealth and power erode responsibility and may cause market distortion. We seek an economy where banks, businesses, trade unions, professional groups and government departments work together with greater mutual understanding and public accountability. Economic development is only a means. It should not dominate over social justice and protection of the environment. The primary task of government in relation to the economy, is to oversee the establishment of just structures in all areas of economic activity. This kind of justice includes maintaining a sound currency against inflation or deflation. It encourages wealth creation by gainful employment. Christian-democrat parties discourage gambling and continuing dependency on state welfare provision. This is to encourage and equip all to participate fully in the economy. We need to use our communal and individual resources in a manner that respects the created order of the world.

Empowerment

Sometimes the accumulation of power may be necessary. This may be for the satisfactory performance of certain tasks. Undue power may also encourage patterns of control and domination. For this reason, it is wrong to assign to larger organisations what smaller and local associations can do adequately. We need to call to account those in whom much power is concentrated. Power concentrations may be with individual owners of wealth, professional interest groups, trade unions, multi-national corporations, national governments, or leaders of political blocs. They have great potential for working responsibly or irresponsibly, for or against the common good. They need to be held accountable for the exercise of their power.

To be able to overcome poverty people in Europe and beyond need to be empowered. Poverty often results from circumstances that are beyond the individual's control. They need to be able to participate in the decision-making process. People need to be educated. They need good literacy, numeracy and public services. People need these tools to restore their self-esteem and hope of possibilities. Governments can support individuals and communities in this process. Preventing corruption and discrimination are important in this struggle for the wellbeing of all.

Final statement

We, Christian-democrats will promote our Christian-social values. We will do this in our own continent and beyond. We will try to implement Christian-democratic policies in our local, national and European political institutions. We acknowledge the questions and challenges ahead. We look forward with trust and hope. Our Christian faith gives us a perspective that defies negativism and pessimism. This means that we are able to work in Europe and beyond and share Gods love and so work for a better future.

4.2 ECPM Member and Associates

The following political parties and organizations
are official members of ECPM

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Christian Democratic Union |  Armenia |
| 2. Federal Christian Democrats |  Belgium |
| 3. Belarusian Christian Democracy |  Belarus |
| 4. Bulgarian Christian Coalition |  Bulgaria |
| 5. Christian Democratic Forum |  Bulgaria |
| 6. Estonian Christian Democrats |  Estonia |
| 7. Christian Democratic Movement |  Georgia |
| 8. AUF-partei |  Germany |
| 9. Party of Bible-faithful Christians |  Germany |
| 10. Zentrum |  Germany |
| 11. Christian Democratic Union |  Latvia |
| 12. Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party |  Lithuania |
| 13. Christian Democratic Peoples Party |  Moldova |
| 14. Peoples Party |  Montenegro |
| 15. ChristianUnion |  Netherlands |
| 16. National Peasants Christian Democratic Party |  Romania |
| 17. Union of Bulgarians Banat |  Romania |
| 18. Serbia: the alliance of Romanians from Vojvodina |  Serbia |
| 19. Evangelical Peoples Party |  Switzerland |
| 20. Federal Democratic Union |  Switzerland |
| 21. Christian Democratic Union |  Ukraine |
| 22. Christian People's Alliance |  United Kingdom |
| 23. European Christian Political Youth Network (ECPYN) |  Europe |

[The name of the political parties and organizations are listed in alphabetical order of the countries]

ECPM Associate Organizations and Partners

The following organizations are associated to the ECPM:

- Amical Service (*France*)
- Areopagus Centre for Christian Studies and Contemporary Culture (*Timisoara, Romania*)
- Associazione "Cercasi un Fine" (*Italy*)
- C'axent (*Belgium*)
- Care for Europe (*Belgium*)
- Center for Public Justice (*United States of America*)
- Christian Democratic Association (*Romania*)
- Serbian Christian Democratic Movement (*Serbia*)
- Christian Peoples Unity of Armenia (*Armenia*)
- Crown Companies (*Bulgaria*)
- European Evangelical Alliance (*Belgium*)
- Dignitatis Humanae Institute (*Italy*)
- Institute for ethics and values (*Germany*)
- Jubilee Centre (*United Kingdom*)
- Provita Association for born and unborn branch Bucharest (*Romania*)
- Research Institute ChristianUnion (*Netherlands*)
- Robert Schuman Institute
- Romanian Foundation for Democracy (*Romania*)
- Rule of Law institute (*Bulgaria*)
- Stichting Vormingsactiviteiten Oost-Europa (*Netherlands*)
- Worldteach (*Romania*)

[The Associate Organizations and Partners are listed in alphabetical order of the name]

Collaborators

- ◇ Advocates Europe (Bulgaria)
- ◇ Albanian Initiative for European Values
- ◇ Alliance Defense Fund
- ◇ Alliance for Romanian Families
- ◇ Areopagus: Cluj Napoca, Romania
- ◇ Belgrade Business Initiative: Serbia
- ◇ Berlin Gathering (Germany)
- ◇ Bible Society (UK)
- ◇ Boris Trajkovski Foundation: Macedonia
- ◇ Center for Dialogue and Promotion of European values (Albania)
- ◇ Christian Concern for Our Nation (United Kingdom)
- ◇ Christians in politics network (UK)
- ◇ Christians in Parliament network (UK)
- ◇ H-RAST (Croatia)
- ◇ Civic Initiative for the family and the right for the child (Slovenia)
- ◇ Darul Vietii (Romania)
- ◇ Economic Diplomacy Seminar: Croatia
- ◇ Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast in the Romanian Parliament: Romania
- ◇ Europartners(CBMC)
- ◇ European Gathering (UK)
- ◇ European Human Dignity Watch (Belgium)
- ◇ European Leadership Forum (Hungary)
- ◇ European Prayer Breakfast (Belgium)
- ◇ Haggai Institute
- ◇ Hope for Europe (Hungary)
- ◇ Human Life International (Austria)
- ◇ International Fellowship of Evangelical Students: STEP (Croatia)
- ◇ Life Center International (Croatia)
- ◇ PavelShatev Institute (Macedonia)
- ◇ Philia Ministries (Montenegro)
- ◇ Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (UK)

4.3 Join the ECPM!

Join the ECPM as a party or organisation!

The ECPM invites all like-minded organisations to join the network as member or associate partner. With associate partner organisations the ECPM keeps up with informal relations. The members of the ECPM take active part in the life of the association and pay a yearly membership fee as it is fixed in article 10 of the statutes of the association. The membership of the ECPM is preceded by an affiliation procedure.

Those interested are requested to complete the form on the website and send the original to the secretariat by post.

Please note, that the application form must be signed by the president of the organisation! The secretariat will contact you after the receipt of the application and it will give you detailed information about the application process.

Join the ECPM from EU countries

The ECPM welcomes individual MPs and provincial councillors from EU countries as members. As individual politician you can be a full member and participate actively in the movement. Individual members can register by completing the application form. The secretariat is happy to send you this form and contact you for detailed information about the application process.

Join the ECPM as an individual “Friend of ECPM”

Individuals can also become member of the ECPM for a minimum donation of 10 EUR. Friends of the ECPM receive the e-newsletter and other mailings and are welcome to participate in ECPM activities.



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YEARBOOK

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