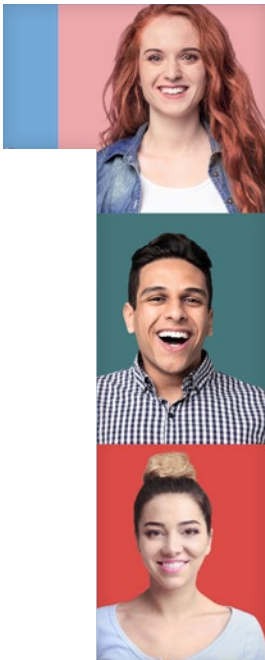




EP ELECTIONS 2019
Vote Christian!



Yearbook 2019



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‘It is our vision to work together with you to build a Christian political movement that can bridge personal and political differences to serve the people of our nations and continents. In this, we are inspired by the teachings, principles and lifestyle of Jesus Christ that formed the Christian heritage on which Europe is based.’

WHO WE ARE

The European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) is the only explicitly Christian European political party.

We are genuinely anchored in the political tradition that contributed significantly to the founding of the EU: Christian Democracy.

Our goal is to fill the gap in the European political landscape by re-establishing Christian Democracy as a viable political alternative in Europe, with a particular emphasis on a Christian relational worldview.

Our movement brings together over 50 Christian-Democratic political parties, NGOs, think-tanks and individual politicians from over 20 countries within the EU and beyond.

OUR VALUES

An Economy that Works for People and Planet

The economy is about life. The purpose of all economic activity is to support life and advance wellbeing for all. We believe that initiative and ownership empower people. We encourage the development of small and medium-sized companies and a focus on improvement of the investment climate for innovative entrepreneurs. ECPM believes that globalisation has many positive aspects but is not by definition a good development. We are critical of international trade agreements like CETA and TTIP, as we believe that they disempower people and sometimes even countries, merely for the benefit of multinationals and the world of international finance. The principles of free trade and an open-market economy are still very important for Europe’s economies; however, there need to be checks and balances in the system to keep it sustainable. A growing world population and a growing world economy have consequences for our planet. If we want to leave this planet in good shape for our children and grandchildren, then we must take responsibility now. This means that the EU and its Members need to take action now to reduce pollution and CO2 emissions and to invest in sustainable energy sources.

A Europe of Human Dignity

Human dignity expresses the intrinsic value of every human being. We believe this universal principle rests on the human being as created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, life should be protected from conception to natural death. The protection of human dignity should be a priority above individual freedom. ECPM believes that a vibrant and positive Europe should celebrate and promote life.

Because countries should have autonomy on these topics, as laid down by the principle of subsidiarity, ECPM believes that the European Institutions should refrain from openly promoting any specific view on this matter. Sadly enough, the European Institutions often promote and fund an anti-life view. ECPM calls for a more modest and objective stance on this issue, especially in relation to the funding of NGOs regarding this subject.

Healthy Families and Healthy Marriages

Healthy families are the basis for thriving societies. We believe that stable, loving relationships between parents are crucial for the wellbeing of their children. Marriage is the best guarantee for enduring relationships. ECPM recognises the family as the most important social unit, preceding the state and any other community or group. ECPM calls on the European Union to respect the sovereignty of the family, based on marriage between one man and one woman. ECPM is also weary of the political focus on the ‘autonomous individual’ as promoted by secular ideologies. We believe that the quality of life of a human being depends on the quality of his relationships with others. People are always connected through relationships, and the strongest and earliest connection in life is the family.

Freedom, Security and Stability

Real freedom of faith, conscience and expression only becomes visible through relationships with those who feel, think or act differently. ECPM believes that extreme political correctness is a danger to real freedom and real plurality. In this sense, there must be a fundamental freedom to disagree with the view of the majority on any subject. In order to win back support for a different and better EU, we need a more realistic and constructive rhetoric.

ECPM is also worried by the lack of freedom of religion in many parts of the world. This is clear to see in Islamic countries, but also in countries like India, Pakistan, North Korea and China.

The European Union and its Members should promote a culture of freedom and actively support those who defend and promote freedom in their country or region.

Regarding the rise of extremist Islamic groups like ISIS, it is the view of ECPM that this organisation has proven to be a direct threat to European security, and therefore the EU and its Members should take action to completely remove ISIS from Syria, Iraq and any other places where it might resurge.

Preserving Christian Culture & Heritage

We believe that Christian culture is embedded with fundamental freedoms that are benefiting for European societies. The erosion of Christian culture and heritage in Europe will lead to more division, violence and insecurity. History has shown what happens in societies that (try to) abolish religion. A culture that always sees life as God-given will always value life and human dignity.

Europe has been shaped by Christianity and has been a Christian continent for over a millennium. Without any exception, all EU members were already Christian before becoming a nation state. The majority of the founding fathers of the EU were Christians.

Reforming the European Union

The European Union needs serious reform, not only technically but also spiritually. We believe that a European Union that is less directive and more facilitatory will be more beneficial for EU citizens and will form an effective narrative against destructive far-right sentiments.

The European Union must start to under-promise and over-deliver instead of doing the exact opposite. To many, the EU has become a problem-causer instead of a problem-solver. This view might not do justice to reality, but it does stick in the minds of many citizens.

This means more freedom for Member States and a stronger focus of the EU on key matters such as food safety, energy safety, fair competition and cross-border problems like immigration, rapid climate change, security and terrorism.

We believe that the EU should be proud of its Christian roots and that Christian culture and heritage should be preserved. Key aspects of this culture are freedom, love, truth, reconciliation and respect for life. Europe has become a diverse continent, and it can only remain so if everyone respects each other's views and faiths. For this reason, we are weary of secular anti-religious ideologies that want to remove the heritage of Christian thinking and play down its relevance. For the same reason, we are opposing EU membership for Turkey, which has a different cultural background and different values.

Fighting Modern Slavery

Human trafficking is an ultimately dehumanising act that reduces people to trade objects. It distorts relationships and severely hurts people, making it a difficult process to re-establish new healthy relationships. A majority of the victims are used for sexual exploitation. Since human trafficking is a cross-border crime, combating it requires international cooperation.

ECPM strongly favours the Nordic model that criminalises the client as the effective way to stop human trafficking and prostitution. This should go hand in hand with exit programmes for survivors.

Trafficking for labour exploitation continues to be on the rise. This crime should be combated at all levels of the supply chain. The EU should encourage the member states to contribute to the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery (GFEMS) that funds anti-slavery programs in countries with the highest prevalence of trafficking and forced labor.

Foreword by the ECPM President

Looking back and reflecting on all the work and events in 2019 I can only say that I am grateful for God's provision and faithfulness to all of us.

It has been a challenging and busy year, marked especially by the campaign for the European Parliament elections. We had twelve candidates running in eight member countries in a campaign based on the slogan *Strong Values, Strong Nations, Strong Europe*. What we understand by this motto is detailed in the seven spearheads which you saw listed on the previous page. They are the main points we as ECPM see as necessary for a functional EU, one which stays true to the values upon which it was established. We truly believe that people and families whose lives are based on the teachings of Jesus form healthy, strong nations which then come together in the European institutions to work together towards a just, peaceful and prosperous Europe.

Despite this, we are thankful for the re-election of Dutch MEP Peter van Dalen (Christian Union), of the newly elected Dutch MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen (Dutch Reformed Party) and we have warmly welcomed MEP Helmut Geuking and his party- Familien Partei from Germany- as new members. A few other parties have also joined our political family this year.

The campaign has provided our members with the opportunity to share our message with many people. On election day, the ECPM candidates received many more votes than in the previous election, which showed us that a large amount of people resonate with our values. However, due to a much higher turnout and other challenges, we now have fewer seats in the European Parliament than in the previous mandate.

As you will see in the following pages of this yearbook, these three members of the EP are hard at work promoting the Christian values that animate us all. They spoke passionately in the plenaries of the EP on the persecution and harassment of Christians and the erosion of human rights in countries like Algeria, Turkey and Burkina Faso. We all condemned Turkey's illegal invasion into NE Syria, and we remain worried about the fate of Kurds, Christians and other minorities in that area. Our MEPs worked tirelessly in bringing this to the attention of the European institutions, the media and the world, every chance they had. We rejoiced to see the fruits of some of this work: Asia Bibi was freed from prison in Pakistan where she had been imprisoned for her faith. Further in our defense of the Freedom of Religion or Belief, we organized meetings and conferences with experts on the matter of labeling Israeli goods originating from disputed territories and the BDS laws. Some of our members visited Israel and we all tried to get a better understanding of this issue. We are also concerned to notice the sharp rise in antisemitic incidents in Europe this past year and our MEPs are taking part in a larger effort to drastically change this antisemitic attitude in Europe.

Another important topic we focused on was fighting modern slavery. We organized meetings and events in Romania, The Netherlands and Serbia where we heard from experts, NGO representatives, legal authorities and survivors what the current challenges are in combating this form of exploitation. While prevention remains a key aspect, we want to start getting involved in the reintegration of human trafficking survivors through comprehensive exit programs. In the coming year we are looking at developing concrete policy proposals in this area.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention a major loss the ECPM family suffered this year: our good friend and colleague, member of the ECPM Advisory Council Vladimir Plămădeală passed away this year. He was a young, intelligent man, a vibrant follower of Jesus who was passionate about shining the light of God in a dark world. He witnessed through his life and his suffering to the power and love of Christ and he will be dearly missed.

I would like to end by highlighting one more special event we were involved in. This year we co-organized the Renewing Our Minds (ROM) gathering celebrating their 20th anniversary. More than 200 young leaders from the Balkans came together to talk about peace and reconciliation and to celebrate two decades of bridge-building. This is the next generation, the standard-bearers in the years to come. The same God who provided for us, who lead us into doing his good work is active and alive and raising a new generation for His glory. I am deeply encouraged by that and I wish the same to all of you who read this yearbook.

"I thank God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this: that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:3-6)

May God richly bless you!

Branislav Škripek
ECPM President

Reflections on 2019

Some of the main topics in European (and world) politics in 2019 were environmental issues and climate change. The European Union, for example, appointed a special commissioner for climate change who came up with a Green Deal for Europe. Without a doubt, these topics will be front and center again in 2020.

However, like in other instances, we witnessed this issue become radicalized, with political (far) left and (far) right opposing each other, using it to promote certain political agendas. Like with any other matter, as Christians, we should look at the Scriptures for guidance. What is humankind's responsibility towards God's Creation?

Opening the Bible, the first thing we notice is that God created the heaven and the earth, with forests, mountains, oceans, and their rich life and that "it was all good" (Gen.1). Looking up and around us and knowing who the source and Creator of it all is, we can join the prophet in exclaiming:



"Blessed be Your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you." (Nehemiah 9:6)

At last, God created the man and established him in the Garden of Eden as a steward, "to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15). The man was also charged with a special task of naming all living creatures (Genesis 1:19-20).



We see that there is a special relationship between God, humankind and the creation. God is the Maker and Ruler over the heavens and earth, and we are assigned to be good stewards/administrators of His creation; all in collaboration with God who gives life and brings it to fruition. Whatever is one's view on the climate change issue, God's Word instructs us to be responsible for God's creation.

However, the fall of man brought selfishness into the world. Humans have tried to take over the position of the Creator. Consequently, this affected the way we treat the environment. We deplete our natural resources, use plastic excessively, and pollute the air, rivers and oceans. As a result, the creation is being destroyed for our own gain.

Since wise stewardship is a Biblical assignment, we believe that in all our economic policies we should consider the impact we have on God's creation. Although EU member states are sovereign and have priorities of their own, we believe that a lot can be done at the EU level; we can be a driving force to jointly achieve a sustainable Europe. For instance, the EU can allocate funds to environmental research and innovation and create incentives for sustainable businesses. We should be careful that the EU does not use the climate crisis as a tool to undermine the sovereignty of the Member States and violate the subsidiarity principle. This does not, however, abolish our responsibility as caretakers of the creation, so a good balance should be found.

Therefore, let us remember that each of us and the world around us is created by God. Let us be good stewards, managing well whatever is entrusted to us: our families, jobs, studies, work, our countries, as well as the environment we were placed in to enjoy and care for, all in service and honor of our Creator.

Auke Minnema,
General Director

Leo van Doesburg,
Director for European
Affairs and Policy Advising

Advisory Council report

The Advisory Council is the consultative group to both ECPM Board and its members. It was established in 2013 and it can propose topics for the General Assembly and the board. It checks the budget and the annual financial results. New board members are discussed in the AC before they are accepted in the General Assembly. The AC also checks and amends the program and statutes in its two annual meetings.

This year European Parliament elections were held which made 2019 a crucial year for ECPM. Therefore, the AC had the first meeting of the year immediately afterwards to discuss the results and the way forward. This meeting took place on 21 June, in connection with the GA in Chişinău (Moldova).

The AC came together for the second time on 3 October in Bucharest (Romania). Before this meeting the members of the Council had been invited to the Romanian Prayer Breakfast by our member Florica Cherecheş, MP. At our meeting we discussed the GA following in December and the strategy document the ECPM leadership had prepared for the 2019-2024 mandate and beyond.

Our member Vladimir Plămădeală (Moldova) who had been seriously ill passed away in July. We miss a good friend and a committed Christian. Dima Bluashvili (Georgia) had to leave the AC because he rotated off the ECPYouth board. Hanna Stretovich (Ukraine) became the new youth representative. For that reason, Volodymyr Stretovich, her father, left the AC; he wanted to make way for the next generation, represented by his daughter. We are grateful for his service on the AC and for what he did for ECPM.

Heiner Studer
President of the
Advisory Council



IN MEMORIAM

We take this space to remember our good friend and colleague, Vlad Plămădeală, who has passed from this life to be with our Lord. His life made such a difference and we will forever be grateful for his friendship. His faith and endurance were an inspiration for us all.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:38-39)



Introduction

In this yearbook you will find summaries of the events ECPM organized in 2019 as a sole organizer or in collaboration with our party members and MEPs.

It had been a busy year for all of us, event-wise. The first part of the year was dominated by the EP elections and the campaign. The ECPM staff and board members have been attending our candidates' events all over Europe and have been supporting and contributing in numerous ways, as you will see in this document. We are impressed and inspired by the wonderful policy ideas we have seen and heard from our candidates, we are extremely proud of them and their hard-work and we feel immense gratitude for the voters, the fans, the volunteers who made it all possible.

The rest of the year was spent refining the vision ECPM has for the next EP mandate and the actions we are taking in the short and long term. We met with several professionals, held a leadership retreat where we brainstormed further and together learned how to communicate our values effectively and with dignity.

We hope you enjoy reading through this yearbook, that you find it valuable and are inspired to join us in the work of defending Christian values in European politics.





1st Quarter



9 February, The Netherlands

Give Faith A Vote

Organizers:

CU*, ECPM

Speakers:

Gert-Jan Segers, MP, CU Leader
Peter van Dalen, MEP
George Rukhadze, ECPM vice-president



20 February, Brussels

ECPM Campaign Launch

The European Christian Political Movement launched its campaign for the 2019 European elections on the 20th of February at Marriott Hotel Grand Place in Brussels. All the MEPs* and candidates we represented were present and the campaign manifesto was signed by everyone.

It was encouraging to hear passionate speeches from the candidates and current members ready to fight for the values that unite us all and which give Europe its strength. As the only party in the EU Parliament explicitly Christian, we represent a healthy and strong alternative that voters all over Europe can choose with confidence every time.

The CU Congress was a great opportunity to highlight once again the important achievements of Christians in politics. The CU party leader, Gert-Jan Segers, has emphasized the importance of defending the vulnerable and being the voice of the powerless, celebrating the freeing of Asia Bibi and working on the protection of the refugee children.

He once again advocated for a realistic approach when it comes to practicing Christian values in politics and forming coalitions and collaborating, a point later illustrated by George Rukhadze in his speech. He showed that a stick by itself can easily be broken, while a bunch of sticks together are strong and cannot easily be broken.

*CU- ChristenUnie (Christian Union)



*MEP- Member of European Parliament

18 March, Germany

Solidarity with Kurds and Yazidis- involving the minorities in the European elections

Organizers:

Bündnis C, ECPM

Speakers:

Karin Heepen, Bündnis C Chairwoman

Arne Gericke, MEP* (2014-2019)

Johannes de Jong, Sallux ECPM Foundation

On the anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Afrin, ECPM and its member party Bündnis C showed solidarity with the Yazidi and Kurdish communities at an event in Celle, Germany. Chairwoman Heepen invited the Kurdish politicians to bring the situation in NE Syria and Iraq to the attention of human rights organizations, NGOs and the European Parliament.

Bündnis C also called for the German government to stop selling arms to Turkey as long as the country continues its policy of aggression and oppression.

Johannes de Jong encouraged people to go vote for politicians who support a culture of liberty, human rights and self-determination in the Middle East.



*MEP- Member of European Parliament

24 March, Poland

National March for Life

Organizers:

ECPM, March for Life committee

Speakers:

Marek Jurek, MEP* (2014-2019)

Ladislav Ilčić, ECPM board member



The National March for Life, an event supported by ECPM, took place in Warsaw and approximately 20,000 people took part in it. The march was preceded by a press conference in the Polish Parliament. The participants of the march were addressed by, among others, the president of Poland Andrzej Duda. During the march, Marek Jurek, MEP (2014-2019) and initiator of the march and Ladislav Ilčić, chairman of the Croatian party Hrast, represented ECPM.

The purpose of the event was to highlight the protection and value of life, family rights, with a focus on the parents' right to decide their children's education. The march was part of the National Life Day

celebration. The event received a great deal of political and media attention; it was featured in the main news outlets (TV and radio stations) in Poland.

*MEP- Member of European Parliament

The Future of Croatian and European Societies-educational seminars

Organizers:

ECPM, Hrast

Speakers:

Ladislav Ilčić, ECPM board member
Marek Jurek, MEP* (2014-2019)
Don Ceder, Amsterdam city councilor
Hrvoje Zekanović, MP
Ruža Tomašić, MEP

The series of educational conferences was organized throughout 13 Croatian cities around the themes of economical sustainability and EU reform. The public was informed about how each person can get involved in local and even European politics and exert influence over policies regarding youth employment, the healthcare and pension systems etc. Audience was comprised of journalists, Hrast sympathizers and members of the general public.



* MEP- Member of European Parliament



2nd Quarter

11 April, Belgium

Towards a Europe of Stakeholder Nations. A Positive Case for EU Reform

Organizers:
ECPM

Speakers:

David Lee, author Confederal Europe
Ladislav Ilčić, ECPM board member
Ivan Grech Mintoff, Alleanza Bidla
George Rukhadze, ECPM vice-president
Peter Broz, Kresfanská únia
Gabriela Urbanova, Sallux ECPM Foundation

The European Christian Political Movement in collaboration with Sallux, hosted a panel discussion during which a case for reforming the EU was made. Rather than heading towards an EU super state, it was argued by the speakers on the panel that returning more autonomy and control to the member states would be a much more sustainable and equitable way of governing. The event was opened by host, ECPM President and MEP Branislav Škripek (Slovakia) who expressed hope that more candidates who share Christian values will enter the EP in the next term.

Authors of the Sallux publication Confederal Europe David Lee and Paul Mills offered a confederal model of organizing the European Union, consistent with its shared Christian heritage and the vision of the Treaty of Rome and supporting the principles of subsidiarity and coordinated policies.



This model relies heavily on institutional relationships that exist between the EU and member states, between the nations in the Eurozone and those created among corporations, banks and financial markets.

EP candidates Ladislav Ilčić (Croatia), Ivan Mintoff (Malta) and Peter Broz (Slovakia) further elaborated on the idea of a union with decentralized power centers where relationships are based on cooperation rather than control.

EP- European Parliament

18 April, France

Freedom of Speech in Turkey?

Organizers:

ECPM, European Post

Speakers:

Abdullah Bozkurt, journalist & author
Peter van Dalen, MEP*
Marco Gombacci, European Post editor

Peter van Dalen, MEP hosted an ECPM and European Post event where we were honored to have as guest Abdullah Bozkurt, former Istanbul Bureau Chief of Today's Zaman and publisher of Muhabir News. He and European Post editor-in-chief, Marco Gombacci, spoke about the situation of the press in Turkey and the continuous erosion of fundamental freedoms there.

Mr. Bozkurt reminded us of the tragic day for the freedom of speech when 131 media outlets were closed in one day in Turkey and that hundreds of journalists still languish in Turkish prisons without due process. Erdogan has systematically squashed dissent at every level in Turkey: he has jailed professors, artists, politicians and businessmen and has even replaced secular army generals with Islamists who are faithful to him, removing this way any check on his power.



Marco Gombacci also contributed his impressions from his trips in the region and Rima Tuzun, representative for the European Syriac Union, had some pertinent comments.

* MEP- Member of European Parliament



22 & 29 April, Germany

Solidarity with Kurds and Yazidis in Germany and the Middle East

Organizers:

ECPM, Bündnis C

Speakers:

Jacques Bazen, ECPM board member

Karin Heepen, Bündnis C Chairwoman

Arne Gericke, MEP (2014-2019)

On Easter Saturday (22 April) and on 29 April, Bündnis C together with ECPM were invited to join the Kurdish and Yazidi communities in their celebrations; leaders from the communities, associations and media representatives were also present.

Jacques Bazen presented the ECPM's foreign policy focusing on a culture of freedom in the Middle East by working with the free democratic forces in the region and he encouraged those in the audience to vote for the Bündnis C candidates at the European elections.

The leaders of Bündnis C- chairwoman Heepen and Arne Gericke- reassured those present of their solidarity with the Kurds and Yazidis in Syria and Iraq, their families and friends and their fight for freedom and justice, especially since Turkey's invasion of Afrin. Arne Gericke had publicly taken a stand against Turkey's intolerable action as NATO partner. He committed to advocating a consistent EU policy in the European Parliament against Turkey's aggression of Kurds and other ethnic groups in the region.



26 April- 3 May, Slovakia

Bratislava Hanus Days

Organizers:

ECPM, Ladislav Hanus Fellowship

Speakers:

Branislav Škripek, ECPM President

Rod Dreher, author

Prof. John Finnis, Oxford

Obianuju Ekeocha, pro-life activist, Nigeria

Dariusz Karłowicz, St. Nicholas Foundation

ECPM joined the Ladislav Hanus Fellowship in organizing the weeklong annual festival known as Bratislava Hanus Days (BHD). The Fellowship is an organization and network of Christian young professionals and students dedicated to advancing Christian values in modern day Slovakia.

The BHD festival seeks to attract academia, young professionals and the general public and it revolves around themes like philosophy, history, economics, politics and sociology.

This year's lectures and discussions revolved around the crisis in European democracy and the low level of influence people can exert on European politics. Branislav Škripek reminded everyone that Christian values are at the foundation of the EU and that we should keep promoting them to remain so. He encouraged everyone to keep informed and to vote for candidates who make Christian-democratic values the center of their political program.



April-May, Slovakia

Fellowship Breakfast Series

Organizers:

ECPM, Elevate s.r.o.

Speakers:

Branislav Škripek, ECPM President
Branislav Bratko, Elevate Director



In collaboration with Elevate s.r.o., Slovakia, the ECPM has organized a series of meetings focusing on family policies and human dignity issues current in European and Slovakian politics. Elevate s.r.o. is a company based in Slovakia whose main activities are business development/ support and language services. The attendants were local politicians, non-profit representatives, youth organizations leaders, school directors, entrepreneurs and local pastors. The work of ECPM was presented and President Škripek answered questions and encouraged everyone to become informed and support candidates at national and European level who represent their values.

11 May, Germany

My Europe, Your Europe

Organizers:
ECPM, Bündnis C

Speakers:

Arne Gericke, MEP* (2014-2019)
Karin Heepen, Bündnis C Chairwoman
Daniel Kaluppner, pastor
Amelie Himmelreich, pastor



ECPM together with its member party Bündnis C organized an event at the Immanuel Gemeinde in Nürnberg, attended by 150 young people. The event was opened by Lefteris Kaloterakis on behalf of ECPM, followed by a roundtable discussion on human dignity and freedom of religion and belief with the participation of ECPM MEP and candidate for the European elections Arne Gericke and candidate Karin Heepen.

Special reference was made to the case of Asia Bibi, imprisoned in Pakistan for her faith. Karin Heepen spoke on the importance of collaboration of Christians on all levels of society in order to achieve change. She said she "dreams of a Europe as the founding fathers envisioned it".

Other speakers were Daniel Kaluppner (Pastor ICF Nürnberg), Amelie Himmelreich (church planter and teacher) as well as the leader of Parakaleo e.V. Nürnberg. After the roundtable, worship group *Alive Worship* led everyone in a time of praise and worship.

*MEP- Member of European Parliament

8 and 14 May, Croatia

Strong Values, Strong Nations, Strong Europe

Organizers:
Hrast, ECPM

Speakers:

Ladislav Ilčić, Hrast President/ ECPM board member
Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director for European Affairs
Kristina Gogić, international human rights expert
Gen. Željko Sačić
Hrvoje Zekanović, MP*
Ruža Tomašić, MEP**

ECPM together with Hrast party held a conference at the Scheier Palace in Čakovec, Croatia where speakers presented the Christian Conservative approach for reforming the EU. Ladislav Ilčić, president of the party Hrast and ECPM board member, emphasized at the beginning that history clearly shows that no society has progressed without a clear identity and value system and, in the same way, that no political option that does not have a value system can be effective.



*MP- Member of Parliament

**MEP- Member of European Parliament

16 May, Germany

The Chance of Christian Renewal in Politics and Society

Organizers:

ECPM, Bündnis C

Speakers:

George Rukhadze, ECPM vice-president

Karin Heepen, Bündnis C Chairwoman

Arne Gericke, MEP (2014-2019)

Uwe Heimowski, DEA representative to the German Bundestag

Josias Terschüren, 27 January Initiative

Johannes Holmer, pastor and local politician

ECPM together with Bündnis C hosted a panel discussion in Berlin during which the role of Christians in politics was explored.

The speakers mentioned the core values which unite us all and proposed strategies for strengthening the relationships between like-minded politicians and NGOs in Europe in order to increase our influence. The audience was encouraged to vote for Christian values in the upcoming election.



17 May, Germany

Economy and the Welfare State- What's Next for Europe?

Organizers:

Bündnis C, ECPM

Speakers:

Arne Gericke, MEP* (2014-2019)

Karin Heepen, Bündnis C Chairwoman

Jacques Bazan, ECPM board member

Hermann Binkert, Insa-Consulere

Rainer Lohfeld, Leuchtturm Akquise

A weakening economy, overburdened pension fund, health and social security systems, a shortage of young people and a backlog of investments: innovative solutions are needed to maintain our economic strength and social peace.

The speakers presented Christian-based alternatives for our economic and social systems and discussed a basic income and family-friendly corporate culture. The event was moderated by Michael Ragg, Ragg's Domspatz agency.



* MEP- Member of European Parliament

17 May, Latvia

Freedom of Education in Europe

Organizers:

ECPM, Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība

Speakers:

Valeriu Ghilețchi, ECPM board member
Inga Bite, Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība leader
Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director for European Affairs

EP candidate Inga Bite from the Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība (Latvian Alliance of Regions), in collaboration with ECPM, organized an event on the state of freedom of education in Latvia and Europe.

On behalf of ECPM, board member MP Valeriu Ghilețchi (Moldova) and the Director for European Affairs, Leo van Doesburg, participated to the discussion.



18 May, The Netherlands

The Impact of Christians in Politics

Organizers:

ECPM, SGP

Speakers:

Bert-Jan Ruissen, MEP**
Kees van der Staaij, SGP* Party Leader
George Rukhadze, ECPM vice-president

ECPM came together with SGP for the annual party congress, as well as to discuss the impact of Christians in politics at a Dutch and European level in a subsequent conference.

Bert-Jan Ruissen, the SGP candidate for the EP elections, spoke on the values of SGP and how he plans to fight for them once elected to the European Parliament. He reminded everyone of the principle of subsidiarity and that power should be returned once again to the member states, especially when it comes to the right to initiative which at the moment resides with the European Commission.

Ruissen also addressed the issue of persecuted Christians worldwide, encouraged everyone present to pray for them and suggested that future trade agreements between EU and countries with a record of disrespecting human rights and religious freedoms should include clear protections for Christians and that economical aid should be tied to these conditions.



* SGP- Dutch Reformed Party

** MEP- Member of European Parliament

20 May, The Netherlands

The Meaning of Christians in the European Parliament

Organizers:
ECPM, SGP/CU*

Speakers:
Auke Minnema, ECPM General Director
Peter van Dalen, MEP**
Bert-Jan Ruissen, MEP**

ECPM in cooperation with the local branches of ChristenUnie and SGP organized a campaign night in the province of Zeeland, which had been previously advertised in local and regional newspapers. After the main speakers had presented the work and platform of ECPM and SGP/CU, a representative of the youth branch also had a word on relevant EU issues for young people. The event ended with a Q&A session where EP candidates answered audience questions about the EU and its institutions.



22 May, The Netherlands

Vote Christian! youth event and campaign wrap-up

Organizers:
ECPM, SGP/CU* Youth

Speakers:
Bert-Jan Ruissen, MEP**
Klariska ten Napel, ECPYouth President
Ardjan Boersma (former ECPYouth board member)

We ended the campaign joining the youth of SGP and CU in Barneveld, The Netherlands. The speakers emphasized the importance of getting people interested and enthusiastic about voting for strong Christian values and participating in the process of decentralizing Europe and increasing the role of the member states.

George Rukhadze, vice-president of ECPM and campaign manager, checked in via Skype with a few of our candidates for the EP elections: Arne Gericke (Bündnis C), Branislav Škripek (Kresťanská únia) and Ladislav Ilčić (Hrast) who were still busy campaigning until the last minute. He thanked everyone for their hard work during the campaign and renewed the encouragement of going out to vote.



*SGP- Dutch Reformed Party ; CU- Christian Union (NL)
**MEP- Member of European Parliament

23 May, Portugal

North & South: Reforming the Two-level System of the EU

Organizers:
 ECPM, IPL*

Speakers:

Gonçalo da Câmara Pereira, IPL President
Prof. André Ventura, Coalition BASTA/CHEGA
Prof. Abel de Lacerda Botelho, Lusiana Foundation President

ECPM and IPL organized a dinner followed by a discussion regarding the two different levels existing informally in the European Union. Everything from food to cars to wages seems to be different in Northern countries compared to the Southern countries, the latter ones being poorer, enjoying less

investment, a lesser quality in products and a lower standard of living. Several possibilities of addressing this systemic inequality were discussed and people present were encouraged to vote for the candidates who would make EU reform a priority in their mandate.

*IPL- Instituto do Pensamento Lusitano



20-24 May, Italy

Changing the Story

Organizers:
 ECPM, European Freedom Network

Speakers:

Helen Sworn, EFN Advisory board member
Miki Kaberovic
Dr. Glenn Miles
Auke Minnema, ECPM General Director



The 2019 European Freedom Network Bridge Conference was held in Pescara, Italy. The conference was attended by 162 individuals, from 75 organizations mostly based in Europe, but there were also some visitors from American NGOs.

The topic focused on reframing the story that is commonly associated with high-risk populations like Roma gypsies or African refugees, people in danger of being trafficked or exploited.

The European Freedom Network is a Christian organization focused on connecting NGOs, churches and governments across Europe in order to work together effectively to prevent and combat human trafficking and commercial exploitation of women, men and children and to seek the restoration of its victims.

The speakers addressed every aspect of the problem: the situation of the victims and the factors that cause their victimization, the policymakers and the legislation as well as the resources available to fight human trafficking. Particular attention was given to creating employment opportunities and developing skills for survivors of human trafficking.



18 June, Brussels

Life is Beautiful- art exhibit

Organizers:

ECPM, office of MEP Branislav Škripek

Speakers:

Branislav Škripek, ECPM president

Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director for European Affairs



21 June, Moldova

18th General Assembly

We met as an assembly to review the results of the election, review the financials and discuss the course of action moving forward. The Advisory Council provided great encouragement and advice to all present. Three new party members and two associates were officially welcomed into the party.

We were honored to be able to host the artwork of feet artist Danka Pekarovičová in the European Parliament. She is a talented woman who paints with her feet, expressing not only her feelings and moods but also her Christian faith through her paintings. It was beautiful to see the joy and hope in Danka's work and served as a reminder of the wonderful ways God can use people and art to speak to us.

The exhibit was meant to raise awareness about artists with special abilities and to promote a more diverse and inclusive cultural sector for them. ECPM President Branislav Škripek and Director for European Affairs, Leo van Doesburg spoke at the event praising the artist and highlighting the special place people with disabilities should have in our communities.



22 June, Moldova

Emigration: Following Your Dream but What If It's a Nightmare?

Organizers:
ECPM

Speakers:
Bert- Jan Ruissen, MEP
Adrian Merka, President of UDSCR*
Valeriu Ghilețchi, ECPM board member

At the conference following our General Assembly we focused on the phenomenon of emigration, where people from Eastern European countries leave towards Western Europe in search for economic opportunity and a better life.

We discussed the consequences of these choices for the émigrés, their families, as well as the receiving countries.



*UDSCR: Uniunea Democrată a Slovacilor și Cehilor din România



3RD QUARTER

Q3

3rd Quarter



18-22 July, Georgia

ECPYouth International Summer School

Organizers:

ECPYouth, ECPM, VOE/SGP*

Speakers:

Dr. Martin Kugler

George Rukhadze, ECPM vice-president

Wilco Kodde, VOE/SGP representative

ECPYouth held its International Summer school in the old capital of Georgia (Sakartvelo) on the topic of misinformation: *Tell the Truth: How to Deal with Fake News*. There were 40 participants from many different European countries who came together to learn, meet and be inspired. They studied the effect of fake news in Georgia: there were many attempts by foreign regimes to direct political developments through media in the country.

The summer school was followed by the ECPYouth General Assembly on Saturday, when a report prepared by the working group on fake news was discussed and adopted. It elaborates on defining fake news, seeks its causes and suggests ways to fight it. You can find the report in the annex. During this summer school ECPYouth board members Blazej Duber and Dimitri Bluashvili rotated off and Magdalena Vakulova from Slovakia was welcomed as a new addition.



*VOE/SGP- Vormingsactiviteiten Oost-Europa (Eastern Europe Training Activities Foundation of the Dutch Reformed Political Party)

25-27 July, Moldova

Christian Values in Democratic Governance summer school

Organizers:

ECPM, VOE/SGP*, AIC**

Speakers:

Titus Corlăţean, former Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs

Valeriu Ghileţchi, AIC President

Ghenadie Vaculovschi, journalist

Stanislav Ghileţchi, AIC Executive Director

Eugen Ghileţchi, Economic Analyst

Maria van Oost, ECPM/VOE representative

Adriaan Otte, VOE/SGP representative.

The purpose of the three-day event organized in Vadul lui Vodă, Moldova was to provide advice and knowledge on public policy theories, concepts and methodologies and to train young Christian leaders to apply the Judeo-Christian moral tradition to critical issues of public policy. The summer school offered its participants diverse approaches, research methods, case studies, a round table and working group sessions.



*VOE/SGP- Vormingsactiviteiten Oost-Europa (Eastern Europe Training Activities Foundation of the Dutch Reformed Political Party)

**AIC- Academia pentru Integritate in Conducere (Academy for Integrity in Leadership)

25 July- 5 August, North Macedonia

Renewing Our Minds- 20-Year Anniversary

Organizers:
ROM, ECPM

Speakers:

- Tihomir Kukolja**, ROM
- Bojan Ruvarac**, ROM President
- Leo van Doesburg**, ECPM Director for European Affairs
- Jim Teall**, conflict resolution expert
- Jack Fallow**, Globis Mediation Director
- Beryl McNamee**
- Stevo Dereta**, ROM founder
- Justin Kagin**, EDI* Director
- Martha Weiss**, Equipping the Next Generation



The Renewing Our Minds (ROM) project was born in Croatia in 1999, in the aftermath of the 90s post-Yugoslavian war that called for the education of young generations of leaders in the areas of peace building, reconciliation, and leadership development through service, modeled by the person of Jesus. The organizers believed that the teachings and example of Jesus would best equip the young, emerging leaders of the Balkans for leadership in the challenging environments and circumstances.

Tihomir Kukolja, who has been leading the initiative faithfully for the two decades, has passed the baton on to Bojan Ruvarac, a leader in his own right.

At the end of the ROM anniversary gathering, awards were given to a group of leaders and organizations who have over the years served the ROM community or contributed significantly and consistently to its development. On behalf of ECPM the award trophy was received by Leo van Doesburg.

*EDI- Economic Diplomacy and Integrity

24- 26 August, Austria

ECPM Leadership Retreat 2019

Organizers:
ECPM

Speakers:

- Yvonne Koopman-Snep**, journalist
- Gerard Pontier**, APAO coach
- Tonio Fenech**, Catholic Voices Malta



ECPM members and board members, as well as the staff have enjoyed a few days of relaxation and learning at this year's leadership retreat in Austria.

On the first day of the retreat we learned from Mrs. Yvonne Koopman-Snep a few practical communication tips when being interviewed or, in general, when interacting with the media.

On the second day, Gerard Pontier, executive coach and trainer (Advancing People And Organizations), has helped us identify and deal with conflict effectively and he equipped us with a lot of knowledge in order to be a well-functioning organization.

On the last day of the retreat we had Tonio Fenech from Catholic Voices in Malta speak on the framing and re-framing methodology one could employ when having to answer difficult questions or when having a debate on a controversial topic. We began each day in meditation and prayer and ended it reflecting on the purpose and message ECPM should put forward in European politics in the next parliamentary term.

24 September, Romania

Promoting Christian Values in Romanian Society and Europe

Organizers:

ECPM, Prodocens Media, Evangelical Alliance, Romanian Parliament prayer group

Speakers:

Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director for European Affairs

Alexandra Nadane, Romania For Life

Ana-Corina Sacrieru, Platform Together

Cristina Olariu, RVE*

Cătălin Vasile, Prodocens Media

Prodocens Media, together with the Evangelical Alliance, the Romanian Parliament Prayer Group and ECPM organized a conference in Bucharest focusing on empowering Christians in Romania to articulate and advance Christian- Democratic values in politics, media and the society in general.



*RVE- Radio Vocea Evangheliei (Voice of the Gospel Radio)

24 September, Romania

Prodocens Media Platform Launch

Organizers:

ECPM, Prodocens Media

In the second part of the day, hundreds of people came together to attend the launch of Prodocens Media. Leaders from across Christian denominations were present, and each spoke and praised the media initiative.

On behalf of ECPM, Leo van Doesburg brought a word of greeting and encouragement. The event was picked up by several other networks and widely broadcast in Romania.



29 September, Portugal

Climate Crisis: What Should a Christian Do About It?

Organizers:

ECPM, Instituto Do Pensamento Lusitano

Speakers:

Marcial Felgueiras, A Rocha Portugal Director
Adriana Rus, ECPM Communications Officer

ECPM in collaboration with the Institute for Lusitan Thought (Instituto Do Pensamento Lusitano) has organized an event on the pressing topic of the climate crisis in Lisbon, Portugal. Our ECPM values were presented, including our commitment to be good stewards of God's creation in our care, as we believe we are called to do.

Our main speaker was the Executive Director for A Rocha Portugal, Marcial Felgueiras, who reminded us of our identity and responsibility as Christians on this Earth and shared with us a booklet of practical things each of us can do at home in order to show more respect and care for the environment.



4TH QUARTER



4th Quarter

18- 19 October, Serbia

Circle of Support: Anti-Human Trafficking Conference

Organizers:

ECPM, Sloboda Nema Cenu, Opens2019, Red Cross Serbia, FICDD*/ ChristenUnie, IFES** Serbia

Speakers:

Dobriša Marković, Sloboda Nema Cenu

Samuil Petrovski, IFES Serbia

Adriana Rus, ECPM representative

Mitar Djuraskovic, National Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Slobodan Josimovic, Deputy Prosecutor at the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Novi Sad

Olivera Pejak Prokes, Judge of the Court of Appeal

Djordje Dozganic, Center for Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings

Dr Nada Padejski Shekerovic, Safe Women's House

Andrijana Radojic, NGO ATHENS

Rade Stanojčić, Expert Associate at the Red Cross of Novi Sad

Nenad Draskovic, Local Team for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Novi Sad

Ilija Djukanovic, City Council Member in charge of Social Welfare and Health, Subotica

Ivana Peric, Shelter for children, Novi Sad

Fighting any form of modern slavery is one of ECPM's core values and we are glad to have been able to collaborate with various NGOs for this event which drew national media attention in Serbia.

There were over 100 participants who attended the four panels on the first day and the workshops on the second one.

* FICDD- Foundation for International Christian Democratic Development

** IFES- International Fellowship of Exchange Students



20 October, Romania

ROM/EDI Strategy Meeting

Organizers:

ECPM, Mihaela Kovacs (ROM/EDI)

Speakers:

Leo van Doesburg, ECPM

Director for European Affairs

Mihaela Kovacs, ROM/EDI representative

ECPM's Director for European Affairs, Leo van Doesburg, participated in the ROM/ EDI* strategy meeting in Romania. ROM gatherings are annual events, sponsored by ECPM, that focus on reconciliation in the Balkans and equipping young leaders and professionals. This was a meeting with Romanian participants who presented current projects and explored ways of further collaboration. Several participants shared the projects they are involved in and how ROM influenced them.



*ROM- Renewing Our Minds

*EDI- Economic Diplomacy and Integrity



30 Nov- 1 Dec, Italy

To Caesar and to God: Church and Politics

Organizers:

ECPM, Magna Carta

Speakers:

Ladislav Ilčić, ECPM board member

Gaetano Quagliariello, Magna Carta President

Eugenia Roccella, journalist and former MP

Prof. Eugenio Capozzi, Suor Orsola Benincasa University

Sandro Magister, Vatican Journalist

The two-day conference organized in Anagni, Italy by Magna Carta Foundation and ECPM, brought together professors, current and former members of the Italian Parliament, theologians and journalists.

The conference was dedicated to studying the relations between the Church and State during the last three pontificates. Following the substantive presentations in which the three pontiffs were compared, a debate followed in which 40 people had the opportunity to present their views on the matter.

On behalf of ECPM, board member Ladislav Ilčić presented our message of encouragement for an active involvement in politics on the part of every Christian.



5 December, Brussels

19th General Assembly

ECPM held its second General Assembly of 2019 in the EP in Brussels. During the assembly, two resolutions were discussed: the first, on euthanasia and palliative care in Europe, was tabled by our member party from Spain, Contigo Más, and the second, on the Turkish invasion in NE Syria, was tabled by member party Bündnis C from Germany. The full text for both can be found at the end.

We also looked ahead and discussed strategic ways to make ECPM more visible, more sustainable and more impactful.



EP- European Parliament

6 December, Brussels

Cornerstone Dinner

Organizers:

ECPM, Cornerstone Team

Speakers:

Bojan Ruvarac, Renewing Our Minds director
Miriam Lexmann, MEP*
Klariska ten Napel, ECPYouth President

Hosted by Lefteris Kaloterakis and Haven Hightower, the annual Cornerstone dinner counted around 90 young professionals who came together in Brussels to network and encourage each other around the theme of reconciliation. The speakers shared personal testimonies which reminded us that a Christian's calling is to be a peacemaker and a bridge-builder. We were also eased into the holiday spirit by Andrei Marta's talented renditions of traditional Christmas songs.



*MEP- Member of European Parliament

9-10 December, Jerusalem

Israel Chairman's Conference

Organizers:

ECPM, IAF*

Speakers:

Josh Reinstein, IAF President
Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister
Prof. Eugene Kontorovich, Kohelet Policy Forum
Yair Lapid, member of Knesset

A delegation consisting of ECPM President Branislav Škripek and former ECPM presidents Peeter Võsu and Peter Östman, MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen, MP Joël Voordewind (Netherlands), MP Marek Krajčí (Slovakia) and Leo van Doesburg (ECPM Director for European Affairs) attended the Chairman's Conference organized yearly by ECPM and IAF, in order to get more insight into the current challenges Israel faces. The IAF is connected to the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus.



*IAF- Israel Allies Foundation

11 December, Brussels

Empowering EU-Israel Trade Relations

Organizers:
ECPM/ ECR*

Speakers:

- Cristian Terhes**, MEP**
- Lukas Mandl**, MEP**
- Branislav Škripek**, ECPM President
- Aharon Leshno- Yaar**, Ambassador of Israel to the EU
- Josh Reinstein**, Israel Allies Foundation
- Prof. Eugene Kontorovich**, Kohelet Policy Forum
- Alan Clemmons**, South Carolina Representative
- Jenny Aharon**, Golden Gate Director of Public Affairs



One of the last events of 2019 organized by ECPM was a well-attended conference on the trade relations between EU and Israel and in particular on the Association Agreement and the recent European Court of Justice's decision regarding labeling of products originating from the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. The panel, chaired by ECPM MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen and ECPM Director for European Affairs Leo van Doesburg, argued that the Court's decision was discriminatory and anti-Semitic since it only targeted Jewish products from the

disputed territories and that similar circumstances are present in other countries which trade with the EU but where this rule does not apply. Moreover, this labeling decision affects creation of jobs in the area as well as the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. In the evening, ECPM together with organization *Pillar of Fire*, organized a dinner with the speakers and the Dutch participants to further discuss the economic relations between EU and Israel.

*ECR- European Conservatives and Reformists
**MEP- Member of European Parliament

13 December, Moldova

Political Training in Moldova

Organizers:
ECPM, AIC*, FICDD**

Speakers:

- Robert Sighiartau**, MP
- Valeriu Ghilețchi**, ECPM board member & AIC President

The Academy for Integrity in Leadership (AIC) held its final edition of the Political Training Program (PTP). The PTP 2019 series of trainings took place in eight different cities in Moldova. At the end of the year, a final conference was organized in Chisinau.

The main objective of the PTP is to contribute to the creation of a network among Evangelical Christians in order to amplify their impact and to train them (in particular the youth) regarding the need to be involved in the public arena at the national or local level.

The purpose of the PTP is to build on the larger scope of the AIC, namely: equipping young Christians with the tools to become an effective voice positively impacting the society. The program also intends to prepare recently elected Christians to address issues faced by their communities, and to train young people to monitor the activity of newly elected officials.



*AIC- Academia pentru Integritate in Conducere (Academy for Integrity in Leadership)
**FICDD- Foundation for International Christian Democratic Development



Feb- Nov. 2019, Ukraine

School of Civic Activity- series of seminars

Organizers:

ECPM, FICDD/CU*, FDA**

Speakers:

Erik van Dijk, FICDD/ CU

Anna Masna, Ukrainian Student Association

Oksana Horkusha, PhD. Institute of Philosophy

Yuriy Mindyuk, FDA Board chairman

Valeriy Maidanyuk, journalist

Vladyslav Vasyl, co-founder of the National Conservative Movement of Ukraine

The series of conferences aimed to educate and train local and regional leaders on methods to promote and defend democratic values in the Ukrainian society.

The first seminar in June focused on the concept of a socially responsible market economy, on the political landscape in Europe post EP elections and the place for Christian values in the modern society.

The second seminar held in August revolved around the ideas of Christian Democracy at the core of the EU and their adaptation to the Ukrainian reality. Participants represented various NGOs, independent media, bloggers etc.

During the third installment of the School of Civic Activity the speakers focused on the judicial system and corruption in Ukraine. The call for reform has been heard in the country and it was mentioned in the seminars that the public has a responsibility to get involved and hold authorities accountable, be part of a network of civic initiatives and always scrutinize statements made in the media. The final seminar in the series addressed misinformation and fake news and offered tools to identify and fight against dirty tricks and media attacks.

*FICDD/CU: Foundation for International Christian Democratic Development/ ChristenUnie

**FDA- Foundation for Democracy Assistance

ECPYouth

It was another busy and fruitful year for the youth branch of ECPM. They started the year off with a General Assembly in The Netherlands (March) where they established their priorities and projects for 2019. In addition, a new member organization was welcomed into the ECPY family, namely the Academy for Integrity in Leadership (AIC) from Moldova.

They also hosted a political café meeting where ECPY President Klariska ten Napel (CU) met with Bert-Jan Ruissen, MEP and Jimmy Bastings (CDA) to discuss and debate the future of the European Union and the young Christians' place in it. The subject of freedom of expression vs. the danger of fake news was brought up and how that might impact elections.

Their Working Group Politics had dedicated the first part of the year to conduct extensive research on the topic of fake news and disinformation which prompted the Tell the Truth campaign.

During the International Summer School in Georgia which

revolved around the same topic, the working group presented a report which included concrete policy solutions on how to deal with fake news. At the General Assembly following the summer school, another two members rotated off the board (Błażej Duber and Dima Blushvili) while they received a new addition: Magdalena Vakulova. Hanna Stretovych became their representative on the ECPM Advisory Council.



ECPYouth also got involved in the 2019 EP elections enthusiastically by participating in events, campaigning on social media and locally, in person. Błażej Duber joined ECPM and Bündnis C at their campaign event in Nürnberg, Germany, while Floris Wagenaar, ECPY Secretary represented ECPY at one of the campaign events ECPM held in Croatia in collaboration with Hrast.

One of the main events ECPYouth participated in this year was a two-part study visit to the Middle East in October.

They partnered with SHEMA Institute and local youth from Israel to learn about sustainable business models which employ both Jews and Palestinians and to witness ways in which the two can coexist. Then, they went on a visit to Jordan which was part of a larger program that equips young Christians to become responsible citizens of their own countries.





ECP Youth Fake News Report – summary

Relevance to Christian politics

Fake news and attempts at disinformation are clear examples of lying and deceiving people. This has only gotten easier with the way we spread and consume news. With this, however, people develop views, and people act on information they have. Fake news is also a larger tool of political manipulation, as we have seen in elections being hindered by fake news and targeting of voters. It is important that Christian politics stand for the truth and against treacherous and deceiving influences. There are countless Bible verses that remind us to both value the truth and honesty as a concept, and to practice that by being truthful and upright ourselves.

Typology

There is outright propaganda, which is fake news in an overt manner and related to a clear political goal. News fabrication and alteration is making up news stories that didn't happen or misrepresenting the facts of another news article. The difference between propaganda and fake news is that the latter is neither overt, nor clearly connected to a political goal; on the contrary, the attempt is to keep that hidden. Lastly, there is satire and parody, that is never intended as fake news and is arguably a weaker case but can occasionally be mistaken as such. This is therefore not fake news in its intention, but in reception.

Effects of fake news

As a business model it works similarly to online news in that it is being spread by social media and blogs, gaining popularity faster, leading to a viral effect, and establishing a clickbait incentive. In elections, fake news can influence candidates, voters and voters' choices. This can be done through influencing the image of candidates for better or worse, changing people's motivation to vote and thereby influencing turnout. This works closely together with targeted advertising. For public discussions, fake news muddles the waters of what is factual, decreases the trust we have, and our ability to have factual discussions with each other. This goes together with hyper-partisan news consumption fragmenting us socially. For the journalism industry, fake news undermines trust in institutions, yet there's also an opportunity for journalism and fake news to diverge, the journalism industry distinguishing itself in research quality and thoroughness.

Countering fake news

There are multiple ways of going about this which boil down to mainly two approaches: removing/suppressing the information altogether or equipping people to see it and distinguish it. For the former, we can hold tech companies or individual authors liable or have government agencies or courts remove fake news. The criticism here is that this can be a slippery slope and will likely end up hindering freedom of expression. The other initiatives focus on the education of the receiver and increasing her/his media literacy or counts on people's reporting and/or AI to screen for fake news and simply make people aware.

Propagation of fake news

There is a process through which (dis)information goes: from information sources it traces the signal through the initial medium, to the platforms it's shared on, to the receiver's person. At the outset, fake news is written and disguised as news or satire and it is spread as such. At the receiver's end, there are important factors which contribute to how it is perceived: media literacy, speed of reading, familiarity with and reliability of sources—they can increase or decrease cognitive ability to discover fake news. "Echo chambers" where people read their own political colour of news makes it easier to cater to that and changes how people read and confirm or reject information. Increased use of online media has led to news spreading much faster and to a multiplicity of channels in which there is a low barrier for legitimizing sources, which leads in turn to an even easier spreading of fake news than when the reader makes the effort to find a newspaper or radio station that is trustworthy.

Possible excesses of anti-fake news efforts

Freedom of expression is inextricably linked with functioning democracies. Fake news abuses this freedom and anti-fake news efforts have to tackle the issue without affecting freedom of expression. This has proven difficult and may see self-censoring or actual censoring of others. The matter of who decides what is right or wrong is also a difficult one to establish; it might be used incorrectly in practice and it is a significant power to give away to governments or courts.



Declaration of the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) MEPs regarding situation of freedoms in Algeria

Strasbourg, France, November 28, 2019- Our ECPM Members Bert-Jan Ruissen and Peter van Dalen were among the initiators of the resolution regarding the situation of freedoms in Algeria that was debated and voted on in the European Parliament today. The following declaration was adopted today, during the ECPM-MEPs meeting in Strasbourg, France, following the European Parliament plenary in which the current situation in Algeria was presented and several resolutions from various EP groups were introduced. The ECPM Members of Parliament are part of ECR, as well as EPP, groups and, in addition to the resolutions introduced, also declare the following:

WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY

We, as ECPM Members of Parliament, are alarmed at the reports coming out of Algeria in the past months regarding the harsh restrictions of the freedom of assembly, association and freedom of religion or belief. Although the country's (revised) Constitution guarantees these freedoms, the government has been slow to create laws which would implement them, giving way to local and central authorities to discriminate against and harass religious minorities, Christians in particular.

This year alone, 12 churches have been closed and, in some cases, the pastor and members were beaten up by the authorities. This is a gross violation of human rights and freedom of assembly as well as freedom of religion, and as such, we ask these churches be immediately reopened and restored to their full status.

We are concerned to hear that new converts to Christianity are being seriously harassed by members of their own community, by their own family and neighbors, in many cases. Since marrying a non-Muslim is against the law, oftentimes Christians are forced to divorce, lose custody of their children or are excluded from inheritance.

We stand in solidarity with those persecuted Christians who are arrested, standing trial or imprisoned for their faith. We urge Algeria to abolish blasphemy laws as they are deeply incompatible with a democracy and violate the freedom of religion or belief. We also call for the immediate release and canceling of charges for the Christians (i.e. Amzigh) imprisoned for their faith.

We are reminding Algeria of its obligations at national and international level to protect freedom of association and freedom of religion or belief; we reaffirm that these are universal human rights that need to be protected for everyone; and we strongly condemn all forms of violence, intimidation and discrimination that impair the right to have or not to have, or to adopt, a religion of one's choice, including the use of threats, physical force or penal sanctions to compel believers or non-believers to renounce their religion or to convert.

Brussels, October 10, 2019

The ECPM calls for a no-fly zone over North-East Syria and reconsidering Turkey's membership in NATO

THEIR SACRIFICE MADE EUROPE SAFER.

Following the withdrawal of US troops from North-Eastern Syria on Sunday, the Turkish army began a military incursion, called Spring of Peace Operation, attacking an area inhabited by Kurds, Yezidis, Syrians, Turks, etc. Turkey launched airstrikes and started a ground offensive on Wednesday, a move criticized by the entire international community.

There are several reasons this area in NE Syria is of extreme importance and why its attack by the Turkish army is misguided and downright illegal. First, we should never forget that the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) were significant allies of the US and European forces in the fight against ISIS, losing thousands of their own people. Their sacrifice made Europe safer. The withdrawal of US troops and Europe's less than forceful condemnation represents a betrayal of our allies and provides material for ISIS recruitment.

Secondly, the attack on the area means the SDF will no longer be able to properly guard the thousands of ISIS fighters and families that are held in custody. As most of them are being kept next to the Iraqi border, it is likely they would escape to an already chaotic Iraq. This would lead to destabilization of the area, a resurgence of ISIS and a serious threat to Europe.

Thirdly, the self-administration of NE Syria is seen as an emergent democratic form of government: various ethnicities and religions (Christian, Muslim etc.) working together and respecting each other, implementing freedom of religion measures and equality for women. These actions and developments are what is essential to stem terrorism from returning in the long run. Previous experience of the Turkish operation in Afrin in 2018 tells us Turkey will drive away the Christians in the area and destroy the churches. News reports from yesterday and today are already confirming people are starting to flee the area, leading to yet another humanitarian disaster.

Finally, this military incursion represents an attack on another sovereign country and its territory: Syria, which is a grave violation of international law. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE and other countries from the Arab League have condemned Turkey's actions as illegal under the international law.

Given all these facts, ECPM urges the EU and NATO take immediate, swift measures to stop the Turkish invasion of the North-East Syrian territory. Protection of the civilians in the area is of utmost importance and therefore we call for a no-fly zone be established as soon as possible.

In addition to this, if Turkey does not immediately cease military operations in this area, its membership in NATO should be reconsidered. The purpose of this organization is maintaining the peace at a world level, so it cannot continue to have among its members a country which blatantly violates international law, human rights, freedom of press and freedom of religion.

September 18, 2019

ECPM MEPs Statement on Brexit

The European Parliament met today in Strasbourg to debate and vote on a resolution to extend the deadline for UK to leave the EU. It passed, after a lively debate.

Our MEPs are in favor of the resolution and issued the following statement on the matter:

"We regret that the UK chose to leave the EU. We as ECPM MEPs believe that it will harm the UK and its relations with the EU. It is harmful for many EU citizens in the UK and British citizens in the EU.

Since a 'No Deal Brexit' would harm so many people and their businesses, both the UK and EU should try their utmost to avoid such an outcome while respecting the democratically established rules for the Common Market. We do not believe that the EU should close the door for the UK to remain in the EU. The EU will therefore need to consider a UK request for extension of the article 50 procedure very seriously.

However, the EU cannot extend the article 50 deadline beyond 31 October without any sign of development in the UK towards a resolution of the current political deadlock between government and parliament. If, however, the UK decided to adopt an agreement with the EU or hold a new referendum or call elections soon after 31 October, the EU would need to extend the deadline beyond 31 October.

Any of these developments would allow the UK to resolve the political deadlock in a democratic and responsible way and the EU would need to act accordingly and extend the deadline.

The EU maintains a universal duty to uphold human dignity and democracy for all its citizens and has therefore the duty to uphold the common good for the citizens of the EU 27 as well as for those in the UK."

Tabled by **Contigo Más, Spain**

Resolution against legalisation of euthanasia and assisted suicide, supporting universal palliative health care

01

Considering that all persons, irrespective of age, sex, state of health or disease, level of personal autonomy or dependence, possess an inherent and identical personal dignity and the human rights that are inherent in that dignity;

02

Considering that this dignity of a personal nature of the human being and the sacredness of human life have their transcendent basis in our universal condition of being creatures, created in the image and likeness of God;

03

Whereas all human life is valuable, inviolable and non-disposable, because each human life has an intrinsic value, regardless of the conditions of health, autonomy or dependence, degree of consciousness and the value recognized by the person, his environment, society or the legal system;

04

Considering that every sick human being has the right to health care to receive all available care to enhance his or her state of health and physical well-being and, if he or she so requests, to receive psychological, religious and spiritual care;

05

Considering that individual human freedom, which entails the autonomy to be informed and to be able to choose between the appropriate medical treatments available to treat a disease and to stop them, even at the risk of one's own life, in certain circumstances, must be respected;

06

Considering that it is the ethical and deontological duty of health professionals to respect the autonomy of their patients, to treat them appropriately in accordance with the Hippocratic oath, curing the disease when possible; and alleviating pain and discomfort when healing of the disease is not possible;

07

Whereas the right of patients to information and to participate in decisions affecting their health and medical treatment offered to them in the clinical setting, including the right to express their preferences and criteria in advance in legal advance directives, should be guaranteed;

08

Considering that it is never lawful, from a moral and deontological point of view, to perform therapeutic or medical stubbornness, consisting of putting or not suspending medical treatments or vital support for people who are kept alive artificially in situations of incurable and irreversible illness, when the medical-surgical treatment or the mechanical support or vital medicine will definitively not help the person to recover;

09 Considering it is never legitimate to suppress a human life as the means of eradicating pain or ending a situation of painful dependence;

10 Considering that suicide, aid or aid necessary to commit suicide and euthanasia, even with the consent of the person who dies, are gravely immoral because they violate the basic good of human life;

11 Considering that nutrition, hydration, whatever the way in which they are administered, are not medical treatments or artificial vital support, but are part of the basic care due, which must be maintained;

12 Considering, finally, that there is no right to death, no right to seek suicide assistance, no right to euthanasic death, and that, on the other hand, all people have the right to live, to receive the health care and treatment indicated during the illness and in the dying process; to receive palliative care that limits physical pain and moral suffering, including palliative sedation of refractory symptoms;

WE _____
PROPOSE

13 The immediate repeal of all national laws and supranational regulations that authorize or promote euthanasia or suicide assistance, so that both behaviors are prohibited by law, as well as the withdrawal of basic care and fierce or therapeutic obstinacy.

14 Promote regulations in every nation that guarantee the right to live, from conception to natural death; the universal right to healthcare; respect for the autonomy of patients manifested in informed consent to receive and refuse treatment; and the universal right to receive health care and palliative care as well as religious or spiritual assistance to those who request it.

Tabled by Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland, Germany

Resolution on the Turkish invasion of north-east Syria

01

On the occasion of the third invasion of the Turkish army in Northern Syria east of the Euphrates since 9 October 2019;

02

Recalling the first two wars of Turkey in the summer of 2016 and early 2018, in which Turkey had already taken control of large areas of northern Syria west of the Euphrates and had largely expelled, expropriated or murdered the indigenous population of Al-Bab, Jarablus and Afrin;

03

Rejecting Turkey's intention to ethnically clean up a 30-40 km wide security zone along the Syrian border from Kurds and forcibly resettle Syrian refugees from Turkey in the area;

04

Pointing out that since 2014 under Kurdish leadership the democratic Self-Administration North-East Syria (SANES) with the participation of all ethnic and religious groups has been established, where since then 4 million Kurds and Yazidi, Arabs and Alevis, Christian Assyrians, Aramaeans and converts, Armenians and Turkmen live and work together largely peacefully and thus have laid the foundation for a democratic Syria;

05

Reminding that the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) under the leadership of the Kurdish YPG fighters and with the support of the US defence troops defeated the Islamic State (IS) in North-East Syria and thus 10,000 fallen, mostly Kurdish fighters contributed to security in Europe;

06

With regard to the decision of the Court of the European Union of 15 November 2018 that the inclusion of the PKK in the EU terror list 2014-2017 was illegal, and various rulings of the Supreme Court in Belgium that the PKK is not a terrorist organisation but part of an internal conflict in Turkey;

07

Underlining that Turkey cannot assert any security interests for the invasion of North-East Syria because the YPG did not attack Turkey from the territory governed by SANES and Turkey therefore cannot invoke a *casus foederis* of mutual defence under Article 5 of the NATO Treaty;

08

Warning that with the withdrawal of US troops and advance of the Assad regime as well as the agreed Russian-Turkish ground patrols to secure the Syrian-Turkish border strip, the EU is losing its geopolitical influence in the region;

09

Warning that Russia's control over North-East Syria may increase Iran's influence and further threaten Israel;

10 Warning also that in the renewed destabilization of Syria and Iraq by Turkish aggression, up to 70,000 IS fighters with their families could be released and get to Europe, who have so far been held captive by the SDF;

11 Deploring the fact that many civilians have already been killed as a result of Turkey's war of aggression and that so far, some 200 000 people have fled from North-East Syria to Iraq or more southern parts of Syria;

12 Appealing that so far neither the EU nor the USA have sufficiently supported SANES and the SDF against the invasion of NATO partner Turkey in violation of international law;

CALLS ON THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL:

13 To take a clear stand against Turkey's attack on a neighbouring country in violation of international law and to demand the complete withdrawal of Turkish troops from Syrian territory;

14 To support the proposal of the German Defence Minister Kramp-Karrenbauer to NATO to establish an international protection zone along the Turkish border;

15 In the event of continued aggression by Turkey against Syria, to cooperate with the US to impose a no-fly zone for Turkish fighters over Syrian airspace;

16 To provide long-term support to the Self-Administration North-East Syria (SANES) in stabilising the region and resettlement of Syrian refugees;

17 To cooperate with the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) for defeat and further dealings with the Islamic State (IS);

This year, we welcomed the following parties and organizations into the ECPM family:

NEW ASSOCIATES



Cristianos en Democracia
Spain



Alternativa Portugal
Portugal

NEW MEMBERS



Kresťanská únia
Slovakia



Contigo Más
Spain



Lithuanian Christian Democrats Party (LKDP)
Lithuania



Familien Partei
Germany

ECPM Board



Branislav Škripek

ECPM President

Country
Slovakia

Employment
Vice-president of
Kresťanská únia,
Slovakia

Political party
Kresťanská únia



George Rukhadze

ECPM Vice-president

Country
Georgia

Employment
CDPP Party
Leader; Lecturer
at Ilia State
University, expert
in Foreign Affairs

Political party
Christian
Democratic People's
Party of Georgia



Jacques Bazen

Board Member

Country
The
Netherlands

Employment
Senior lecturer on
Entrepreneurship
and International
Economics at Saxion
University of Applied
Sciences

Political party
SGP- Dutch
Reformed Party



Valeriu Ghilețchi

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Member of the Parliament, The Netherlands

Political party
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ECPM MEPs

Peter van Dalen

Party
ChristenUnie/SGP

Country
The Netherlands

Website
www.eurofractie.nl / www.petervandalen.eu

Peter van Dalen is a Dutch politician and former civil servant. He is a member of the ChristenUnie party and was formerly a member of the Reformatory Political Federation (RPF), which merged with the Reformed Political League (GPV) to form the ChristenUnie.

At the end of February 2009, van Dalen was designated leader for the 2009 European elections of the Christian Union. During this term, Van Dalen was vice-chairman of the Committee on Transport and Tourism in the European Parliament.



In 2014 van Dalen has been re-elected as member of the European Parliament where he was member of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, Committee on Fisheries and the Delegation for relations with India.

Elected for a third term in 2019, he is vice-chair of the Committee on Fisheries and member of the Subcommittee on Human Rights. He is also part of the Intergroup on Freedom of Religion and Belief.

Bert-Jan Ruissen

Party
ChristenUnie/SGP

Country
The Netherlands

Website
eurofractie.nl

Bert-Jan Ruissen has been working for the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality for 19 years. He has represented The Netherlands in the EU Council in working groups and committees of DG AGRI. Ruissen has been the SGP representative in the city council of Krimpen aan den IJssel, his hometown.

In the European Parliament, he is vice-chair of the delegation for relations with Israel and member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

He believes that Biblical principles are beneficial for the society at large, is critical of the increasing concentration of power in Brussels and is a strong advocate for a well-functioning single market, sustainable agriculture, better relations with Israel and wants to fight modern slavery and oppression.





Helmut Geuking

Party

Familien Partei

Country

Germany

Website

www.familien-partei-europa.eu

Mr. Geuking is an MEP for Germany for the 2019-2024 EP mandate. He spent most of his career fighting for social justice for the elderly and disabled and has been a strong advocate for quality palliative care and support for families caring for their loved ones. In the European Parliament, he is a member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.

He is a defender of family rights, state-subsidized childcare and is working towards making the marketplace a more family-friendly environment.



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**Together we have hope
for a Europe in which
life is valued and
society is blessed with
peace and stability
for the generations
to come.**

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