



2021

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The European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) is the only European political party explicitly promoting Christian values in politics.

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

Our goal is to bridge the gap between extremes in European politics by re-establishing Christian Democracy as a viable political alternative, with an emphasis on the Christian relational worldview.

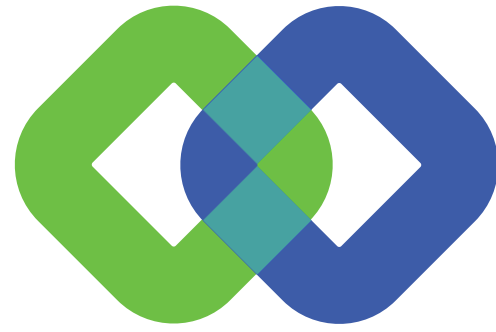
We dream of a Europe where human dignity is protected, where people are free and safe, and where governments serve their citizens.

ECPM acts as a platform for its members and associates: we want everyone to feel elevated, their voice heard and aware of their value. Through our events, trainings and resources, we empower our members with knowledge and connection so that they will effectively and successfully engage in their parliaments and communities and be the voice that influences Europe.

Our movement brings together over 50 Christian- democratic political parties, individual politicians, NGOs and think-tanks from all across Europe.



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Human Dignity

Human dignity expresses the intrinsic value of every human being. It is inviolable and must be respected and protected, as stated in Article 1 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. We believe this universal principle rests on the human being as created in the image and likeness of God and is the cornerstone all the other human rights depend on. Therefore, life should be protected from conception to natural death. ECPM believes that a vibrant and positive Europe should celebrate and promote life. The EU Member States have sole competence over issues like abortion, reproductive care, mental health, palliative care, adoption and disability.



Healthy Families

ECPM sees the family as the most important social entity and the foundation for a thriving society. We call on the European Union to respect the sovereignty of the family, based on the marriage between one man and one woman. Family policy is foremost the responsibility of EU Member States and, according to the principle of subsidiarity, European institutions should not interfere. At national level, we stand for policies promoting parenthood: maternity leave, affordable childcare services and increased flexibility in the workplace for those who want to take care of their children. ECPM also supports programs focused on protecting children and youth, on preventing addiction and violence, and on advocating for children's rights.

Our Values



Relational Economics

We believe the purpose of all economic activity is to support life and advance wellbeing for all- an economy that works for people and planet. We consider the principles of free trade and an open market are essential for Europe's economies, but believe there must be adequate checks and balances in place to protect the environment and address tax evasion. Economic policy needs to be people-centered, not driven solely by financial gains. Processes, contracts and projects need to be transparent, inclusive and democratic and not erode the rule of law. Technology must be developed and used fully respecting human dignity. ECPM believes that wise stewardship of Creation is a biblical mandate and that individuals as well as institutions have a responsibility to care for it.



Fighting Modern Slavery

Modern forms of slavery are dehumanizing, distorting relationships and severely hurting people. Most victims are trapped in forced labor conditions or sex trafficking. Since trafficking is a cross-border crime, combatting it requires international cooperation. ECPM strongly favors the implementation of the 2011/36/ EU Directive and the Nordic model approach in fighting sex trafficking. The Nordic model focuses on criminalizing the client and the trafficker. ECPM also calls for an EU-wide ban on advertising sexual services. EU Member States need to draft and harmonize legislation to eliminate child or forced labor from the supply chains.



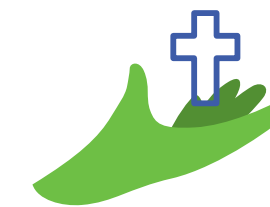
Freedom, Security & Stability

Real freedom of faith, conscience and expression becomes apparent in interactions with those who feel, think or act differently. ECPM believes in the fundamental freedom to disagree with the view of the majority on any subject. We believe that implementing fundamental freedoms in volatile countries around the world would lead to greater stability and development. ECPM recognizes the need to support the security of Israel and its right to exist. We strongly believe that all European military operations should be conducted within NATO and that there is no need for a European army. We encourage increased collaboration between Member States on matters of border security, migration, (cyber)terrorism and organized crime.



Reforming the EU

We consider that the way the European Union works and acts needs to be reformed to enable it to be an instrument of peace and growth. ECPM believes more power and authority should be returned to Member States. Bureaucracy needs to be reduced by reviewing EU agencies and eliminating non-performing or redundant ones. The EU institutions should act more like facilitators and hubs for cooperation on transnational issues. The EU institutions and policies must adhere strictly to the principle of subsidiarity. We advocate for prioritizing EU Neighborhood Policy over EU accession for countries in the EU orbit.



Preserving Christian Heritage & Culture

ECPM acknowledges the Christian roots of the EU Members States and believes there is value in this heritage. Christian values like freedom, solidarity, reconciliation, love, truth and respect for life stand at the foundation of the European Union. We should celebrate and continue to build on these values and oppose secular, anti-religious ideologies. We stand against Turkey becoming an EU member. Our party is concerned about the persecution of Christians worldwide, as well as the persecution of Buddhists and Muslims in some countries. We promote and advocate for freedom of religion or belief as a right for everyone, regardless of their religious beliefs. ECPM also defends the right to conscientious objection and reasonable accommodation as tools that ensure everyone has a right to manifest their religion or belief in public and in private.

Forward by the ECPM President

Dear ECPM members, colleagues, and friends,

At the beginning of each year, we have an opportunity to look back and a motivation to look forward. Søren Kierkegaard, a Danish theologian and philosopher said once: *“Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards”*. By putting together this booklet of activities and updates and taking time to reflect on them here, that is precisely what we are attempting to do.

The main challenge of 2021 continued to be the coronavirus pandemic. Since it started, hundreds of millions have been infected and more than five million died, globally. Behind these numbers are human lives lost, grief and heartbreak that cannot be quantified. We mourn and pray for all those impacted by this pandemic.

But despite this health crisis and many other difficulties we faced this year, we experienced a lot of blessings too, which prompt us to move forward with hope.

We're humbled and grateful for being kept alive. God helped many of us to overcome the virus. All the members of my family, including my wife and I, had to face this serious challenge. By His grace, we and many others recovered and were healed. Speaking of blessings, the altruism and stories of kindness we witnessed in our neighborhoods were touching and inspiring. The dedication of the health workers caring for the ill week after week is heroic and we are thankful for their service.

We continued to be blessed with peace in Europe this year, despite tension rising at the border between Poland and Belarus and the Eastern region of Ukraine being in turmoil again.

Thanks to diplomatic efforts and international cooperation, the border issues were dissolved, and we continue to work and pray for a peaceful resolution in Ukraine.

ECPM organized a timely conference on the conflict in the Middle East as well. It was a discussion based on legal scholarly research criticizing EU's two-state policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The speakers expressed the need for peace in the region and gave examples of peaceful co-existence between Arabs and Jews but acknowledged much more needs to be done. For us, as followers of Jesus, it is important to not just pray for peace, but to also be peacemakers: *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”* (Mathew 5:9 NIV) There have been several changes inside the ECPM. I had the honor to be elected as the new President of the ECPM during the last general assembly.

I am thankful to everyone for the support I received, and also thank Branislav Škripek, my predecessor, for leading well the ECPM in the last four years. During the same assembly, we welcomed two new members on the party board: Leon Meijer and Michal Považan. I pray and hope that these changes will refresh and strengthen our Christian political movement. I am also very grateful for the work of our MEPs. Although many times their voice might sound like “the voice of one crying in the wilderness”, their presence and efforts are vital in the European Parliament, given the fact that ECPM is the only European political party explicitly working on Christian values. Let us continue to pray for our members of national parliaments and European Parliament, for our partners and associates, for the members of the board, and for the wonderful staff we have.

It was encouraging to attend the annual European Prayer Breakfast (EPB) co-chaired this year by ECPM MEP Peter van Dalen and by MEP Roberta Metsola. The motto of the EPB *“Let there be light in the darkness”* resonates so much with our calling. We are empowered by Jesus to be the light of the world. The speakers' messages were both challenging and encouraging. It was extraordinary to see God's glory and majesty in both the small particles of our body and in the large, infinite Universe. Listening to them I was overwhelmed by a sense of wonder. The words of King David in Psalm 8 came to mind: *“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that You are mindful of them, human beings that You care for them?”* (Psalm 8:3 NIV)

We do not know what next year will bring, but we can be sure that God will be with us. He will walk with us, alongside us. Many years ago, King George VI of England, the father of Queen Elisabeth, addressed the British commonwealth on New Year's Eve at a moment in history when the whole world stood on the brink of uncertainty. Despondency and uncertainty filled the air and the king himself was seriously ill, unknowingly. In his New Year address, he said: *“I said to the man at the gate of the year, ‘Give me a light that I might walk safely into the unknown’. And he said to me, ‘Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God. It shall be to you safer than the light and better than the known.’”* Let us continue our walk into the uncertain, unknown future of Europe by putting our hand into the hand of God!



Valeriu Ghilețchi
President of the European
Christian Political Movement

Reflections on 2021

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:13-14 NIV)

This year's debates, protests and discussions were oftentimes centered around the theme of freedom. Freedom in today's society is defined as having individual autonomy in absolute terms. All barriers that would limit this individual autonomy should be rejected, so that a person can feel they are truly himself or herself. This is a trend we unfortunately noticed this year in the controversial Matić Report on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the European Parliament.

But how is freedom related to individual autonomy? André Rouvoet, former Vice-

Prime Minister of the Netherlands (Christian Union) once made an analogy of a man who lives on a deserted island. This person has complete individual freedom, no rules and no other people who can limit his freedom. In the absence of fellow citizens, there is nothing that determines the contours of his freedom and also nothing to give his freedom a higher meaning. There is no one whose freedom he should care for or whose freedom affects his own. However, it won't take long before our islander will feel trapped, isolated and powerless.

One cannot really speak about freedom outside the context of relationships. But

then, relationships with others also limit the individual freedom. The Bible teaches us that real freedom comes through our salvation by Jesus Christ. He sets us free from our wrongdoings and restores the relationship with God and through this, our relationships with others. We see freedom as respon(d)sibility: we respond to God's love for us by loving our neighbor. As we are all created in the image and likeness of God, one's freedom should never harm another's human dignity or divide the society and communities we live in.

While the society at large is focused on freedom from anything that can limit personal autonomy, Christians see freedom as an act to love God and others. Because of this conviction, we stand up for the voiceless, unborn, refugees, trafficked or sexually exploited persons, the elderly, poor and disadvantaged persons in our society. To make sure that their voices are heard, and their human rights and dignity are protected.

But let's take this a step further. Let's go beyond advocating for their dignity in public speeches and actually take steps to ensure they find their place again in our society. In the Old Testament, freedom was seen as more than the opposite of slavery. The people of Israel were once slaves in Egypt until God liberated them. They were told to remember this when they dealt with the poor, widows or the strangers in their country. When slaves were freed in the Year of Jubilee, it was written: And when you release them, do not send them away empty-handed. Supply them liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to them as the LORD

your God has blessed you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today. (Deuteronomy 15:13-15 NIV) That is the reason why this year the ECPM focused not only on the fight against modern slavery, but also on the urgent need for reintegration of persons who were trapped in prostitution or are human trafficking survivors.

Freedom is a fundamental value for us as Christians. Freedom from sin and shame in relation to God, and freedom to respond in love toward others. Freedom to stand up for the voiceless, poor and disadvantaged, and freedom for people freed from slavery to start a new life. We are called to the freedom which protects the unborn and the women pressed to terminate their pregnancies. Freedom for someone to act according to their religion or belief, freedom to not act against one's own conscience. We base this servant freedom on the freedom that Jesus Christ gave us through salvation. This is what motivates us and keeps us fighting. Are you in?

Auke Minnema
General Director

Leo van Doesburg
Director of Policy & European Affairs





Advisory Council Report

The Advisory Council (AC) was established by the ECPM General Assembly (GA) on June 7, 2013 and is a consultative group to both ECPM board and its members. It can propose topics for the GA and the board. It also checks the budget and the annual financial results. In addition, the AC checks and amends changes of program and statutes.

Usually, it meets at least two times per year. I would like to thank the ECPM board for appointing me president of the Advisory Council at the beginning of this year. I am honored to serve ECPM in this function, wonderfully represented by Heiner Studer

since its beginning in 2013. It is my hope and prayer that God will continue to guide us in every decision we must take and bless us with love and understanding for each other's differences, reminding us of the common goal that unites us: to preserve and promote Christian values in European politics.

Once again, 2021 proved to be challenging for the AC, given the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Because of the coronavirus restrictions and travel difficulties, the Council was not able to meet in person. In order to prepare for the General Assembly- which took place on May 28 via Zoom- we received

the documents in advance, studied them at home and provided guidance by e-mail. We held a common meeting online on May 19. Fortunately, we could support all the proposals the board submitted to the GA. We also welcomed with great pleasure the new AC members elected by the ECPM board, namely Annelie Enochson and Branislav Škripek, who are valuable additions to the Council.

In addition, we supported the proposal to re-elect the ECPM board members: Jacques Bazen, Ladislav Ilčić, Filip Łajszczak and Valeriu Ghilețchi, and advised the Assembly to re-appoint them.

In preparation for the second GA which took place in hybrid form on October 15 via Zoom and in person, the AC met virtually on September 24. We reviewed together the documents and proposals and was able to provide a positive report and support all the documents presented at the GA.



Even though we could not meet in person this year either, we had a positive and productive time during online meetings and were successful in the goals we had set out. For that we are thankful. Maria van Oost was an excellent secretary all this time and we are grateful for her ongoing support.

We agreed to have the next AC meeting by the end of April 2022. God-willing, the Covid-19 pandemic will be under control by then and we hope to see each other face to face. Looking forward to humbly continuing to be a part of ECPM's work in preserving Christian values in European politics.

Florica Cherecheș

President of the Advisory Council

Introduction

In this yearbook you will find summaries of the events ECPM organized in 2021 either as sole organizer or in partnership with our party members, MEPs and non-governmental organizations.

We are grateful for the opportunity to still organize events—both online and in person. Given the challenges and the new reality we are experiencing, it felt like a privilege to be able to partner on projects big and small all across Europe and to communicate with people interested and passionate about the same Christian values as us. The response and the growth are encouraging and we hope you, who are reading this Yearbook, will be inspired to join us and bring about change in your corner of Europe.

This publication is different from previous years in the sense that we chose to highlight the seven spearheads which are the foundation of our political party. As such, you will notice the events and activities this year are divided into seven categories. Hoping that will better reflect the character of our work and give a broader understanding of the extent we serve our members.

The other novelty you will surely notice is the refreshed logo, an inspiring tagline and, if you use your smartphone to scan any of the QR codes, you will find a new ECPM website as well. We wanted to meet the current needs for engaging and connecting spurred by the limits imposed by the pandemic, but also because we felt ECPM's story and message is strong and relevant; it just needed an improved visual identity. We truly hope you find it useful and uplifting and that it connects with you.

Looking forward to seeing you at one of our future events!

*MEPs- Members of the European Parliament






**Human
Dignity**



World Refugee Day

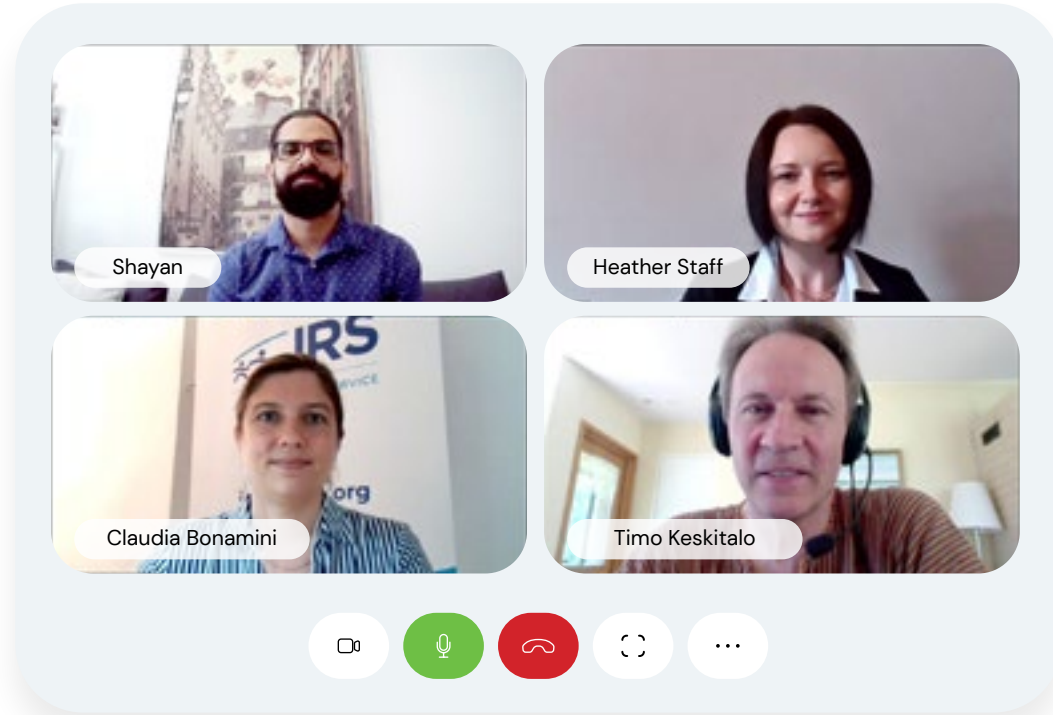
 **Heather Staff**, executive member of Christians on the Left (UK) and policy advisor on asylum and immigration issues


 **Shayan and Donya**, artists, humanitarians and refugee family living in Croatia
Claudia Bonamini, Jesuit Refugee Service policy advisor
Timo Keskitalo, Finnish pastor with experience working among refugees and displaced people

On the occasion of World Refugee Day (June 20), we wanted to take the time and space to highlight the stories and challenges of refugees, their families and of the people helping them. Many times, asylum seekers and refugees are numbers, statistics in a report, labels that people use to categorize, to politicize or to demonize. The goal with this event was to correct that narrative and to bring to the forefront the lived experiences of refugees, to raise awareness about the impact of COVID-19 on the legal process, on the living conditions and on the mental health.


We heard Shayan and Donya's story, refugees from the Middle East who settled in Croatia and the challenges they faced in the process. Shayan shared about their work and advocacy and the way they are paying it forward through their art, music and volunteering.


Ms. Bonamini shared the highlights and main takeaways from the JRS report on the situation of refugees in Europe during COVID-19, the barriers that came up and the different responses each of the EU member states studied had towards the refugees.



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Future Leaders Programme

 **Eilis Mulroy**, Pro Life Campaign Ireland manager

 **Michael Wee**, Anscombe Centre for Bioethics
Dr. Berry Kiely, pro-life pediatrician, co-founder of Doctors for Life Ireland
Stephanie Gray, pro-life communications specialist
Josh Brahm, Equal Rights Institute
Wendy Grace, broadcaster and radio presenter
Dr. Paul Brady BL, lawyer and expert in freedom of conscience matters
Dr. Anne Hope, clinical psychologist
Lynn Coles, Women Hurt organization

We were delighted to partner once again with Pro Life Campaign Ireland in organizing these educational sessions for young professionals interested in learning how to promote a pro-life vision in the public square at national as well as European level.

Over the course of eight weeks, the participants heard from various speakers on the philosophical, legal, and psychological benefits of the pro-life policy and learned how to defend such policies with passion and civility. They specifically learned how to address the issues of euthanasia and abortion from a pro-life perspective. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the course was held over Zoom.





**Healthy
Families**




International Day of Families Celebration

 **Mariska Orban-de Haas**, journalist

To celebrate the International Day of the Families this year, we organized a virtual café chat where we invited people to share their family stories, talk about their time growing up and tell us how they are celebrating this special day. It was a light event with many funny moments but also calls to empathy and to opening up your home for those who are not blessed with a family.


Each speaker talked about the challenges that COVID-19 brought to their family dynamics- like homeschooling or not being able to see their elderly parents. Mrs. Davies credits her parents and the values they instilled in her for her passion towards helping the poor and disadvantaged in society.

Mr. Bărbuț and Mr. Minnema described how they each started cooking and baking more during the pandemic. Mr. Minnema, who has adopted a daughter, spoke about their own special family day celebrating the day they brought their daughter home and about their special traditions to honor his daughter's Chinese heritage.

 **Louise Davies**, Christians on the Left Director
Cornel Bărbuț, FAFCE vice-president
Auke Minnema, ECPM General Director



We had two guests who joined online and spoke about their own families and about their work in the European institutions promoting family-friendly policies.

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Celebrating the International Day of Families with MEP Helmut Geuking

On the International Day of the Families, we stopped by the office of MEP Helmut Geuking to mark the occasion and talk about his work promoting family values in the EP*. It was an inspiration to hear how, over the years he, quietly but tirelessly, advocated for the dignity of the elderly and for quality palliative care. In the public discussions over pandemic recovery funds, Mr. Geuking passionately advocated in the EP for financial aid be given to families with children who were impacted by job loss or pandemic restrictions.

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*EP- European Parliament
2021 Yearbook




Relational Economics



Entrepreneurship in a Pandemic series

Part 1: Solidarity vs. Accountability- EU's role in mitigating the economic crisis caused by COVID19

 **Jacques Bazen**, ECPM board member, Senior lecturer on Entrepreneurship and International Economics at Saxion University of Applied Sciences

 **Bert-Jan Ruissen**, MEP* (ECR**/SGP/ECPM)
Marco Gombacci, Chief Editor at The European Post

Deeply aware of the economic crisis Europe and the rest of the world is facing this year, we decided to organize a series of webinars focusing on the financial instruments the European Union set up in order to mediate the consequences of the crisis.

The two speakers in Part 1 of our series discussed the Recovery Fund (Next Generation EU) which, together with the Multiannual Financial Framework (the long-term budget of the EU), amounts to almost 2 trillion euros over the next few years.

Most of the money that will be made available in the Next Gen EU fund will be raised on the capital markets by the European Union borrowing large amounts of money at low interest rates. The fund will also be fueled by new taxes: a border carbon tax and financial transaction tax.



MEP Ruissen pointed to the fact that this extensive borrowing will create a large debt at the EU level which will be passed on to future generations. As of now, when the interest rates are low, this could be manageable but later on when the rates will increase, repaying the debt might become unsustainable and stifle innovation. The MEP also mentioned the political aspect of this recovery fund, namely that this will make the EU member states more dependent on Brussels and erode the principle of subsidiarity in the long term.

Mr. Gombacci, an Italian journalist living in Brussels and covering European Union news, pointed to the lack of solidarity between the EU member states when the pandemic started and said the recovery fund is absolutely necessary for the hardest hit countries, like Italy, since the member states depend and rely on each other economically.

The severe impact on the SMEs (which represent 90% of EU economy) was readily acknowledged by both speakers and they both agreed they should be helped quickly and effectively. Both guests agreed that the recovery funds should not be mis-used on projects that are not urgent or do not have a real usefulness.

The discussion ended with the speakers answering a few questions from the online audience. Watch the entire discussion by scanning the QR code.




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



Part 2: A Rocky Road to Recovery- How can the SMEs recover economically and how are the governments helping?

 **Peter Östman**, MP* (Finland) and expert on small business

 **Marcelus Suciu**, owner of Marty Restaurants Romania
Carlo de Romanis, owner of restaurants and hotels in Italy, France and Belgium

The second part in the series focused on the specific challenges SMEs** are facing in the different countries and how the recovery initiatives at European or national level are influencing that.

Each speaker took turns describing how the health crisis and the restrictions affected his business: closures, having to let people

go, shrinking the operations etc. They also spoke about the ways they had to re-adjust their operations, eliminate everything that was unnecessary, sell assets etc. just to stay afloat.

Speaking about the support they each received from their national governments, both guests listed the few stop-gap

measures but highlighted that it was insufficient and not robust enough to keep businesses going, nor was it timely. They also mentioned that business sectors which were not so adversely (or at all) affected by the pandemic restrictions received the same amount of grants, which the speakers deemed unfair and a misuse of funds.



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* MP- Member of Parliament
 ** SMEs- Small and Medium Enterprises



Part 3: All in This Together. The Role and Impact of Entrepreneurs in Communities

 **Adriana Rus**, ECPM Communications Officer

 **Vincenzo Bassi**, FAFCE* President
Lars Rise, former Norwegian MP and Langesund Bad hotel owner
Laila Onu, Pentru Voi Foundation Director, Romania

The third installment of the series focused on the role and impact small and medium sized enterprises can have on the communities, an aspect which might be neglected at the EU level when it comes to disbursing the recovery funds.

In addressing the role of SMEs in their communities, Mr. Bassi focused on the family aspect as the example of proto-enterprise. He spoke of the family unit and how that can be a template for good management, how family-owned businesses are much stronger and more resilient in crisis because of the familial bonds that underpin them and how they can be the glue that holds a community together. He also addressed the issue of mental health and loneliness which the pandemic has exacerbated and advocated

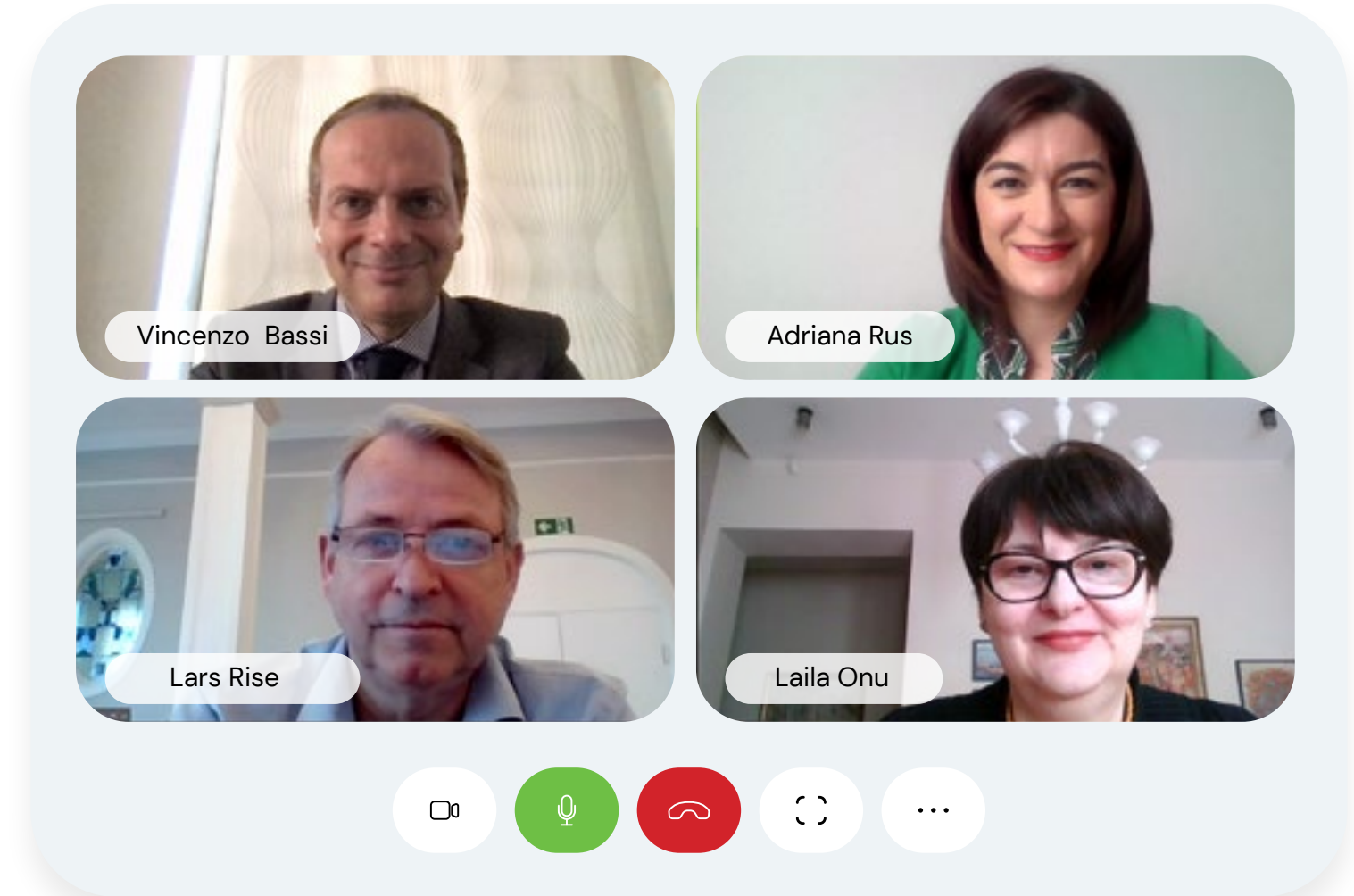
for small or micro enterprises where these people can come together and start something beneficial for everyone involved.

Mr. Rise spoke about his family-owned hotel/resort. It was initially bought and used to gather people together in studying the Bible, to be used as a church building at least partially. Serving people and God continues to be his motivation, even though the building functions now more like a regular hotel. He spoke of the importance of a family managing it as opposed to professional managers doing it; the sense of care and ownership is not the same. He chose to employ people who used to be drug addicts or had a difficult past, based on the idea that employment offers dignity and is the bridge to a better life for people who used to struggle.

The foundation Ms. Onu runs in Romania was started 26 years ago by families who had children or family members suffering from mental challenges or people with special abilities. They serve adults with Down Syndrome and autism, through two main services: day care center and residential services (housing). The foundation has also partnered with companies and private entities for which it provides copy and printing services, as a means to maintain financial sustainability.



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* FAFCE- Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe



Economic and Trade Challenges between Georgia and European Union in the Age of COVID-19



Giorgi Rukhadze, CDPP Chairman, former ECPM Vice-President

Guram Trapaidze, Deputy Minister for Economic Development
Shalva Gurgendidze, Leading Specialist, Ministry of Finance of Georgia

Givi Korinteli, Director of Trade Department, Ministry for Economic Development

Irakli Kipiani, Head of UNM Economic Team

Giorgi Papava, Head Specialist, ISET Georgia

Tato Kipiani, Head of Economic Department, Georgian Strategic Analysis Centre

Joni Karbeli, Director, Georgia's Business Association

Davit Kenchadze, Deputy Director, Georgian Economic Research Centre

Kakha Aladashvili, Deputy Director, Georgia's Exporters Association

Levan Bokuchava, General Director, Small Business Association of Georgia

Giorgi Loria, Director of EU Department, Ministry for Economic Development

Sesili Avshniani, Deputy Director, EU-Georgia Initiative

The current COVID-19 pandemic greatly affected the trade between Georgia and the EU.

Since 2014, when a free trade agreement was concluded between Georgia and the EU, Georgia has been steadily increasing exports to the EU, so that by the beginning of the pandemic, the European Union was finally Georgia's number one trading partner. In 2020, the volume of Georgia's trade fell by 26%, the largest share of that decline being represented by exports to the EU.

The Christian Democratic People's Party-CDPP (ECPM member party) organized this two-day conference to take an in-depth look at the drastic economic downturn and to discuss possible solutions. On the first day, speakers from the relevant departments of the Georgian Ministry for Economy and the Foreign Ministry presented trade figures for 2020 and first quarter of 2021, with the relevant data analysis. It was followed by a panel discussion with representatives of research centers and think-tanks who offered further analysis and presented strategies for recovery. At the end of the first day,

representatives of the business community were able to share their business and trading experiences during 2020.

The second day was dedicated to a wider, geopolitical analysis of the situation, where political leaders voiced their concerns about Georgia's possible increased dependency on the Russian and Turkish markets in the coming years, unless there is a reversal in the current trend. The day ended with a panel of experts and stakeholders who offered possible solutions and made a list of recommendations.





Economics, Diplomacy & Integrity Forum



Dr. Justin Kagin, EDI Founder & Director

Ladislav Ilčić, MEP*

Mihaela Kovacs, Roma coordinator for Sighișoara, President of Beraca

Mihajlo Trajkoski, Project manager at LinkAcross

Robert Maričak, business consultant and investor

Dr. Josip Lucev, expert in political science and economy

Rodoljub Orescanin, Founder and President of Biznisnova Association

Momir Blazek, CEO of MI Design

Dr. Noemi Menes Montes, journalist, consultant on political communication, expert on migration

Tihomir Kukolja, Leadership Focus International director

Economics, Diplomacy and Integrity (EDI) is an initiative designed to support the development of young professionals and students in the areas of politics, economics, and business, based on the life and teachings of Jesus. We believe that the best way to fight against unhealthy rivalry among and within nations is to establish an economic and political community based on the principles and life of Jesus.

The one-week event included lectures, small group sessions, workshops and team building activities. The participants were a diverse demographic group, ranging from people in their twenties to some in their sixties. The forum taught principles like integrity, moral leadership, service to the community, a focus on the poorest and their needs, faith, and transparency which can help combat corruption, selfishness, youth hopelessness,

debilitating unemployment, and abject poverty. The hope is that when participants went home from this summer forum they will end up changing and developing the region, not just in terms of economic growth or political change, but through the creation of a community of leaders committed to good economics and politics and most importantly, to each other and God.



*MEP- Member of European Parliament



**Freedom, Security
& Stability**



The Political Situation in Belarus within the European Context



Heorhi Dzmitruk, co-chairman of the BCD, Belarus
Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director for European Affairs
Aleksey Alekh, initiative Trade Union “2nd Floor”, Warsaw-Minsk
Olga Lisitsa, activist, member of the SPB
Anatoly Shirvel, journalist, blogger, Minsk, Belarus

Valery Matskevich, member of the main staff of the Coordination Council, political strategist
Igor Loban, major, ex-investigator of the Investigative Committee of the Republic of Belarus, BY_POL initiative
Valeriy Weitz, Doctor of Historical Sciences, businessman, “Belarusians in Warsaw” initiative, Poland

The three-day event was organized in Warsaw, Poland in collaboration with BCD-Belarusian Christian Democrats.

The workshops and lectures focused on the pressure and retaliation against protestors in Belarus and possibilities for supporting them from the outside. A large number of Belarusians are forced to live in exile now in neighboring countries like Lithuania, Ukraine or Poland. In addition, the speakers looked at the political and diplomatic pressure attempted by the European Union. Sanctions have been imposed by the European Union on the Lukashenko regime and his proxies but some of the speakers presented examples

of loopholes and schemes the sanctioned people have found to evade the scrutiny. The ECPM Director for European Affairs- Leo van Doesburg- highlighted the fact that the most recent elections were not considered “free and fair” by the international community and the EU and United States have still not officially recognized the results. He also mentioned ways the European Union could further support the fight for democracy in Belarus and commended the protestors for their courage, especially Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya who was awarded the Saharov Prize by the European Parliament.

The hybrid conference featured speakers contributing both online as well as in person.





Changing Security Architecture in the EU Neighborhood and NATO/EU's Response to Russia's Expansionist Policies



Giorgi Rukhadze, CDPP Chairman, former ECPM Vice-President

Levan Pipia, Deputy Minister for Defense

Levan Karteli, Head of EaP Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

Nodar Kharshiladze, Founder, Georgian Strategic Analysis Centre

Anna Digmelashvili, Deputy Director, Georgia NATO Centre

Nona Mchedlishvili, Leading Specialist, Ministry of Reintegration of Georgia

Albert Symonyan, Councilor, Armenian Embassy to Georgia

Giorgi Kashia, Head of Caucasus Department, Ministry of Defense

Zurab Agladze, Head of Department of Defense, Georgian Strategic Analysis

Khatuna Lagazidze, Director of EU Centre

Lasha Dzebisashvili, Dean on EU Department. University of Georgia

Karlo Kaladze, Deputy Rector, Defense Academy of Georgia

The decline in the stability and security of the Eastern Partnership region (Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) raised concerns in NATO and in the European Council. The two-day conference co-organized with the Christian Democratic People's Party- CDPP aimed to gather experts from the defense and security community in the region to discuss Russia's expansionist policies in Ukraine and Georgia, as well as a new defense and security architecture in the wake of the Armenia- Azerbaijan conflict.

On the first day, the various speakers focused on presenting analysis of the current developments in Eastern Ukraine (where Russia continues to have an increased military presence), of Russia's continued aggressive land grab policy in Georgia's occupied territories and of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh after the peace deal was reached.

The second day was dedicated to discussing the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy in the face of regional challenges and its effectiveness. Speakers also focused on EU's response to Russia's expansion in the area and on NATO's response and policy towards aspiring members to the Alliance (Georgia and Ukraine).



Freedom of Expression and Speech- conference series



Ladislav Ilčić, MEP*

Marijan Pavliček, MP** (Hrvatski Suverenisti), Slovakia

Boris Adžić, Hrvatski Suverenisti local branch president

Branislav Škripek, Kresťanská únia leader, Slovakia; former ECPM President

Mladen Barać, Hrvatski Suverenisti, Policy Advisor to MEP Ladislav Ilčić

Together with our member party: Hrast- Movement for a Successful Croatia (now part of the Hrvatski Suverenisti), we organized nine conferences in person and one webinar around one of the fundamental rights that defines our society: the freedom of speech and expression. The events took place in various Croatian cities, drawing a solid attendance and high interest in the subject. The participants showed concern over recent examples where freedom of speech was suppressed or where censorship took place in Croatia. The discussions focused on the social media landscape, on cancel culture and self-censorship. It was underlined that freedom of speech and expression is fundamental to a healthy democracy and one of the foundational Christian values. Speakers emphasized the important role Christians can play in European politics in maintaining a functional, thriving democracy.

Additionally, Hrast launched an ECPM promo video in Croatia, introducing people to our cause and values and encouraging everyone to join us at the national level.

*MEP- Member of European Parliament

**MP- Member of Parliament



Scan to watch the full video



Renewing Our Minds- Ambassadors for a Better World



Bojan Ruvarac, ROM director
Rachel Ruvarac, ROM assistant director
Tihomir Kukolja, former ROM director and Leadership Focus International founder
Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director for European Affairs
Anthony Cordle- ROM advisor; businessman, mentor, consultant
Heather Staff, UKMP advisor on migration issues
Marko Marina, PhD candidate in historical Christianity, University of Zagreb

Laura Radu, Political Assistant at the European Commission Representation in Bucharest
Alan Cutting, former pastor and Samaritan's Purse Raising Families project coordinator
Camilla Bocănială, Polylogos founder and director
Cezarina Glendenning, Church of the Nazarene pastor and Croatia country coordinator
Marko Stupar, former ROM core team member and finance expert
Marina Labrenz, church staff member and member of outreach to brothels



A two-week conference that brought together 45 young leaders and professionals from the Balkans (and beyond) to focus on identity, forgiveness, reconciliation and leadership informed by the teachings of Jesus.

Specific issues covered included: challenges faced by refugees in Europe, human trafficking, the dangers of nationalism, political engagement, development vs. aid as well as a peace negotiation simulation where participants learned about the complex nature of resolving territorial disputes and the importance of listening and understanding the opposite side in any conflict.

The Forum for Leadership and Reconciliation organizes annual gatherings such as this with the aim of fostering reconciliation in the Balkans area. The educational sessions are underpinned by a structure and activities that create relationships and friendships. The Forum and the ROM community strongly believe in the power of friendship and inter-personal relationships as a vital tool in peace-building and national reconciliation.



Scan to watch the full video



EU-Georgia Relations Seven Years After the Association Agreement



George Rukhadze, CDDP Chairman, ECPM former Vice President
Kakha Gogolashvili, Director of European Studies GFSIS
Khatuna Lagazidze, Director of EU Institute
Tornike Sharashenidze, GIPA University Professor
Lasha Dzebisashvili, Dean of the EU Department, University of Georgia

Together with the Christian Democratic People's Party of Georgia (CDPP), we organized this seminar aimed primarily at young people and students of history, political science and/or European Studies.

The seminar was designed to provide detailed information and analysis on EU-Georgia relations to the young participants, on the 7th anniversary of signing the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (AA), as well as to project the future of the partnership. The Association Agreement was meant to foster closer ties and cooperation between Georgia and EU member states in the fields of economy, security, good governance, democracy and people to people contact. The Agreement went into force on July 1, 2014 while its agenda spans until 2024.

In the beginning, Georgia performed well, following the AA agenda efficiently, and the country enjoyed growth and stability brought about by a series of unprecedented reforms undertaken in the 2005-2012 period. From 2016, the implementation started slowing down, and after the 2020 elections, Georgia started backsliding on democracy and good governance.

The speakers focused on short-term and long-term action points Georgia should take in order to get back on track and allow its democracy to mature. While visa-free travel to the EU, trade agreements and educational exchange programs like Erasmus+ are Agreement results Georgians enjoy, this is an inflexion point where a decision must be made whether that is enough, or they want

to get closer to the EU. It was unanimously acknowledged that Georgia is still very far from EU membership, but that every effort must be made to get closer to the Union and its founding principles. In the meantime, the experts present suggested striving for realistic goals such as joining the Schengen area or joining some of the common agreements countries like Switzerland and Norway have with the EU.





Road to Peace. A critical look at EU's two-state policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Bert-Jan Ruissen, MEP*
Leo van Doesburg, Director of Policy & European Affairs

Haim Regev, Israel ambassador to the EU and NATO
Andrew Tucker, Program Director at Thinc.
Mark Pritchard, MP** and Chair of the IAF Caucus in the House of Commons (UK)
Valeriu Ghiletschi, President of the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM)
Sharon Weinstein, Assistant Director Knesset Christian Allies Caucus (Israel)
Matan Kahana, Minister of Religious Services (Israel)
Sharon Haskel, Member of the Knesset and Chair of the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus
Yuli Edelstein, Member of the Knesset (Israel)
 Charlie Weimers, MEP (Sweden)
Gilal Gmaliel, Member of the Knesset (Israel)

Our member of European Parliament– Bert-Jan Ruissen– hosted the annual conference organized by the Israel Allies Foundation, in collaboration with ECPM.

We organized this conference with the goal of clarifying a few aspects of international law pertaining to the land of Israel, the criteria of statehood and self-determination and to discuss what the EU's position vis-a-vis the decades- long conflict has been and what it should be.

The Israeli ambassador emphasized the importance of the Abraham Accords for the Middle East region and urged the EU to not understate their value. It shows Israel is a worthy and stable partner for the Arabic countries around it and that economic and trade relations can blossom. He invited EU to take an active part in these new developments.

Mark Pritchard mentioned the United Kingdom's upcoming enhanced trade deal with Israel and the strengthening of relations between the two countries. He denounced and condemned discriminatory practices such as BDS (Boycott, Divest and Sanctions) and stressed the importance of partnership between Europe and the only democracy in the Middle East.

Sharon Weinstein thanked ECPM and Bert-Jan Ruissen for conducting "faith-based diplomacy: channeling Biblical support for Israel into real political action".

Members of Knesset who sent video messages to the conference criticized an EU member state's decision to label products from disputed territories, reminding everyone that the decision also affects the thousands of Palestinians working in those factories, farms and fields.

The keynote speaker, Andrew Tucker, showed the shaky foundation on which the two-state policy is predicated upon, the ways in which international law concepts have been (mis) used when it came to the territory and the two-state solution, demonstrating that the policy is rather political. He, for instance, showed a few instances where EU statements and positions went against the Oslo accords from the 1990s.



An important criterion for a state to be recognized is the presence of a robust, legitimate government, which Palestine has failed to produce, despite heavy European funding and support.

The conference ended with reactions from the present audience and contributions from those watching online.



Scan to watch the full video

*MEP- Member of European Parliament
 **MP- Member of Parliament



Reforming the European Union

ECPM- PNȚCD Summer School



Cristian Terheș, MEP* and vice-president of PNȚCD
Aurelian Pavelescu, PNȚCD** President
Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director for European Affairs
Eduard Andreev, ECPYouth representative

Almost one hundred people, mostly young adults, participated in the summer school organized by PNȚCD, in cooperation with ECPM.


The training sessions focused on the origins of Christian-Democracy in Europe (lecture presented by Leo van Doesburg), the history of the PNȚCD in Romania (presented by Aurelian Pavelescu), the mission and activities of ECPM (Leo van Doesburg) and it ended with a practical call-to-action by MEP Cristian Terheș who spoke about the next national and European elections, about campaigning, strategy and effective communication.

Both ECPM and PNȚCD are deeply committed to defending and promoting Christian values in Europe and this close cooperation will lead to the strengthening of both parties.



*MEP- Member of European Parliament

**PNȚCD- Partidul Național Țărănesc Creștin Democrat (National Christian- Democrat Peasants' Party)

A person wearing a bright yellow long-sleeved shirt is holding a white, torn-edged sign that reads "NOT FOR SALE" in black, hand-drawn capital letters. The background is a dark, textured wall. A large blue graphic element, consisting of overlapping circles and lines, is overlaid on the left side of the image.

NOT FOR SALE



**Fighting
Modern Slavery**



Bridge Conference 2021



John Cotton Richmond, former US Ambassador-at-large to monitor and combat human trafficking for the US Dept. of State
Valiant Richey, OSCE Special Representative and Coordinator for combating THB*
Adam Kahane, Director at Reos Partners
Lucy McCray, Strategy Director at The Freedom Story
Jason Pope, Rain Collective Executive Director
Helen Sworn, Founder of Chab Dai, a Cambodian organization fighting human trafficking
Leanne Rhodes, EFN Executive Director



Scan to watch the full video

The Bridge conference is European Freedom Network’s annual anti- trafficking conference which gathers advocates, experts, therapists and data researchers/ social scientists from Europe, US and beyond who share best practices, new findings and practical ways

of engagement in the fight against human trafficking. This year’s event counted 309 guests, anti-trafficking experts and ministry leaders from 43 different countries across Europe who gathered online over a 5-day period to address specifically labor trafficking

and the issues around measuring the impact of trafficking. Many of the EFN members are on the front lines, faithfully serving survivors of human trafficking, while others work in prevention and advocacy.

At this year’s conference EFN launched its fourth Don’t Shut Your Eyes campaign video, which focuses on labor trafficking and online exploitation. The campaign premiered on October 18 all around Europe, coinciding with the European Anti-trafficking Day.

*THB- Trafficking in Human Beings



NO PASS- Young People Against Human Trafficking



Olivera Pejak Prokes, judge at the Court of Appeal in Novi Sad; Lecturer at the Justice Academy in the field of domestic law
Milenko Bogdanović, medical doctor, specialist in legal medicine University of Belgrade
Elena Kuzmanović, psychologist for survivors of human trafficking and abuse
Đorđe Dogandžić, specialist at Center for Protection of Victims of Trafficking

Sadija Gicić, social worker (retired)
Milica Kravić & Tamara Srijemac, journalists, authors of the show Woman in a Box
Nataša Kovačev, journalist, member of Journalists Against Violence
Lidija Dordjević, Athens NGO
Lisca van der Eijk, project coordinator FICDD*

Every year, around the European Day against Trafficking in Human Beings (October 18), the Sloboda Nema Cenu (Freedom Has No Price) organization and IFES Serbia hold an annual event for Serbian students to talk about the realities of human trafficking in Europe and Serbia. We were happy to partner with ChristenUnie in sponsoring this event once again, which counted close to one hundred

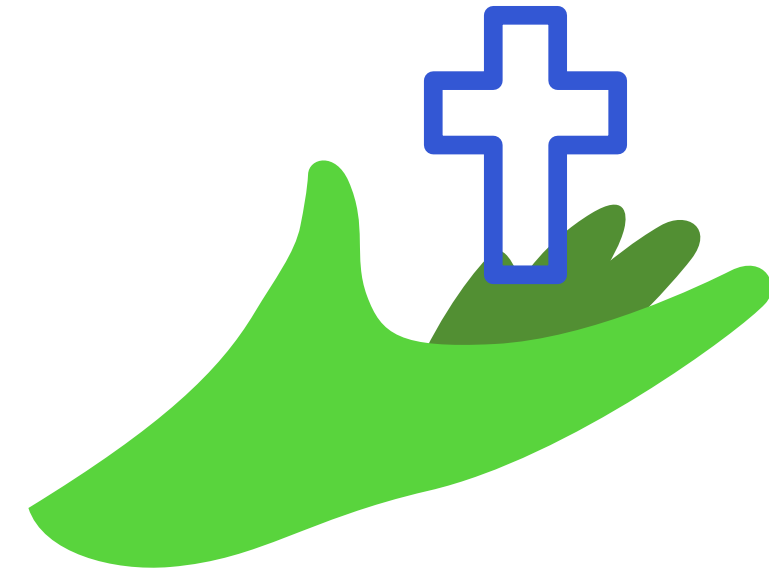
university students interested in acquiring the knowledge and tools for fighting human trafficking.

Over the course of the two days, the students attended lectures and workshops provided by experts in the areas of psychology and counseling, law, medicine, journalism and social work.

They were taught to recognize signs of human trafficking and violence or abuse, to report it correctly without victim-shaming and to approach or counsel survivors with dignity and empathy. As a result of this event, the online campaign “This Shall Not Pass” was born, an initiative of young people who are fighting for human trafficking to end.



*FICDD- Foundation for International Christian Democratic Development



Preserving the Christian Heritage & Culture



Conservative Summit



Boris Kollár, Speaker of the Parliament, Slovakia
Anna Záborská, MP*, Slovakia
Miriám Lexman, MEP** (Slovakia)
Igor Matovič, Minister of Finance, Slovakia
Milan Krajniak, Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Slovakia
Péter Szijjártó, Minister of foreign affairs and trade, Hungary
Bartłomiej Wróblewski, MP, Poland

David Engels, philosopher and historian, Institute for Western Affairs, Belgium
Valeriu Ghilețchi, ECPM President
Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director for European Affairs
Rónán Mullen, member of the Senate, Ireland
John O’Sullivan, President of the Danube Institute (via zoom), UK

Kresťanská únia (Christian Union, Slovakia) organized and held a conservative summit in Bratislava, Slovakia, in collaboration with ECPM. The speakers focused on the history and development of conservatism as political thought in Europe and MP Anna Záborská spoke about the importance of Christian values underpinning our politics. ECPM’s Director for European Affairs- Leo van Doesburg- opened the summit, while ECPM President Valeriu Ghilețchi (Moldova) and ECPM member Senator Ronan Mullen (Ireland) spoke on two different panels.

The goal of the summit was to create the space and background for European conservative figures from culture and politics to come together and reaffirm the

conservative roots and the socio-political principles that derive from them. It was useful for leaders from the church, civil society, academia, business and culture to discuss and share ways to increase cooperation and unity around key issues, in the face of sustained efforts at EU level to push Christian heritage to the margins of society.

Participants were encouraged to show determination and courage in further promoting Christian- democratic values at national levels, as well as at the European level. The panels and lectures focused around issues like national sovereignty, family values, religious freedom, Christian identity, media freedom and cancel culture trends.



*MP- Member of Parliament
 **MEP- Member of European Parliament



Trust and Distrust. Experiences and Lessons from the Coronavirus Crisis



Dr. Mr. C. Zweistra, philosopher, author and teacher

Prof. dr. A. Huijgen, theologian

C.G. van der Staaij, SGP party leader

Dr. J.M. de Man, Associate Professor Nursing Science at the University Medical Center Utrecht

T. de Jong, Risk manager at ING bank

H. F. Sorge, team coordinator at Fruytier Highschool

Dr. H.F. Massink, SGP-International Secretary

H.J. van Schothorst, SGP-International board member

In collaboration with our associate- SGP International- we organized a two-day event featuring lectures and workshops by specialists in economics, media and politics who focused on the idea and level of public trust. In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a sharp increase in misinformation, conspiracy theories or even official statements from public figures which were misleading or contradictory. The speakers presented statistics which showed a worrying decrease in public trust by the general population: distrust in politicians, in public health figures and in media. There is also a general pessimistic view on the state of the economy worldwide.

The first speaker focused on the conspiracy theories around coronavirus, the risks of these conspiracies (it weakens legitimate criticism, it marginalizes the weak, it poisons politics), and the role of social media.

The second speaker focused on lessons for the church: the importance of freedom of religion, liberties for Christians, church as a sacred place. The workshops that followed focused on the economic aspect (a "pilgrim-like" way of consumption), on education (home schooling, how to help students who struggle at home) and healthcare system (lack of resources, overloaded healthcare, investment in healthcare system and long-term plans).

The evening session, followed by a panel discussion, focused on the challenges politicians and the government had to face dealing with the pandemic. It was acknowledged that mistakes were made but that overall, the authorities handled it to the best of their abilities.



Cornerstone Dinner



John Cotton Richmond, former US Ambassador-at-large to monitor and combat human trafficking for the US Dept. of State

Lukas Mandl, MEP*

Pieter Smits, ECPYouth president

The annual Cornerstone dinner took place again in Brussels, after a hiatus last year, caused by the pandemic restrictions. It was jointly organized with the Cornerstone Team, an informal network of young professionals. Nearly fifty young professionals had the opportunity to meet, network, and discuss the ways they can implement Jesus' principles in European politics.

MEP Lukas Mandl shared personal experiences from his work in the European Parliament as well as from his involvement with Parliamentary Prayer Breakfasts across Europe. He underlined several traits of the person and character of Jesus and discussed how these characteristics could be translated into political action and participation in society. Justice, freedom, human dignity, love were values preached and enacted by Jesus and His followers and also the foundation of our democratic societies.

Ambassador Richmond spoke about the importance of knowing your name and who you belong to; of knowing your identity. He exemplified the importance of that for every person, by providing a story from his work with human trafficking survivors where in the process of enslaving and dehumanizing them, their captors changed their names. Once

*MEP- Member of European Parliament

free, the survivors found getting their names back and being called by their real names an essential step in their recovery and reintegration.

Finally, ECPYouth President Pieter Smits presented the youth group's vision and work when it comes to young people's participation in European affairs. The aim of their work is to equip and connect young professionals from all over Europe interested in working and leading in accordance with Christian-Democratic principles. He also informed attendees about the upcoming projects and events of ECPYouth.



ECPM General Assembly- 21st edition

The ECPM 21st General Assembly took place on 28 May 2021, via Zoom.

The first part of the assembly session focused on electing and re-electing board members and Advisory Council members. Jacques Bazen, Filip Łajszczak, Ladislav Ilčić and Valeriu Ghilețchi were re-elected on the ECPM board and Ladislav Ilčić was chosen to serve as interim vice-president until the next General Assembly when the members would decide the future president of ECPM.

Branislav Škripek, former president of ECPM, joined the Advisory Council. Florica Cherecheș became the president of the AC, while Inga Bite began her mandate as vice-president. In addition, Annelie Enochson, former member of the Swedish Parliament, joined the Advisory Council and Peter Östman was re-elected for another term.

In that same first part, ECPM welcomed a new member party: The Academy for Integrity in Leadership from Moldova.

In the second part of the General Assembly, ECPYouth- the youth branch of ECPM- tabled three resolutions, which you can find further ahead in this Yearbook, at the end of the youth section.



ECPM General Assembly- 22nd edition

ECPM held its 22nd general assembly on October 15 in hybrid mode: the ECPM board and staff were in Frankfurt and the members joined on ZOOM.

All ECPM members and associates, as well as affiliated organizations were invited to attend, since we elected the new ECPM President and confirmed two new board members. Valeriu Ghilețchi (AIC) from Moldova was elected President of the ECPM for the next four years and Leon Meijer (ChristenUnie, NL) and Michal Považan (Kresťanská únia, SK) are the new board members.

The General Director- Auke Minnema- presented the financial report for the previous year, the audit results and the vision for next year.

Our Events Manager- Maria van Oost- offered an overview of the ECPM events up to that moment, the outcomes and people reached, as well as projects in the pipeline. At the same time, members were presented the new direction for the visual identity of ECPM: an updated logo and a proposal for a new website, which were launched at the end of the year.





**ECP YOUTH**
EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN POLITICAL YOUTH



Ecpyouth.eu

[Instagram/ ECPYouth](#)

[f/ECPYouth](#) – European Christian Political Youth

Building Back a Better Europe

Relational thinking for a Post-pandemic Europe

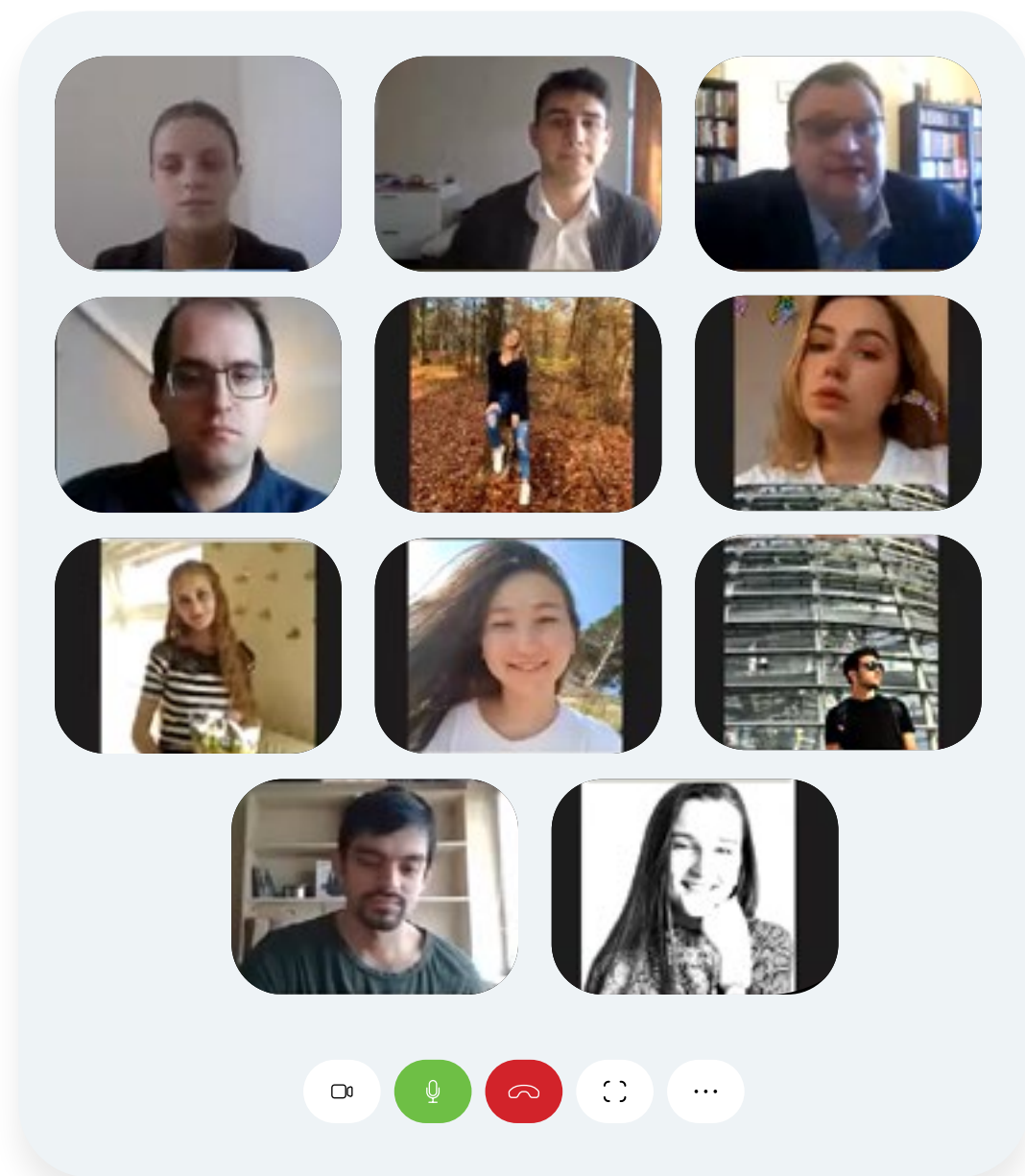


Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director of Policy & European Affairs
Gabriela Urbanová, Director of EU and International Affairs Department at Ministry of Health, Slovakia

ECPYouth decided to open its yearly theme- Building Back a Better Europe- with a workshop on relational thinking for students at a Christian university in Lithuania. This meeting with the students of LCC International University was organized to equip prospective politicians and opinion makers with a biblical, Christian-democratic view on politics. Leo van Doesburg and Gabriela Urbanová shared with International Relations students the relational approach to politics. The participants then discussed how relational thinking can contribute to a better Europe and make lifestyle, economy, and relations more sustainable. After the workshop, 25 students were happy to receive their participation certificates.



Scan to watch the full video



Health: A National or EU Issue?



Klariska ten Napel, President of ECPYouth
Kim van Sparrentak, MEP* (NL)
Ladislav Ilčić, MEP (Croatia)
Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, MEP (Greece)
Vasileios S. Kesidis, Vice-chairman of European Democrat Students, Greece

Through this event ECPYouth explored the tension between EU institutions and national governments in dealing with the pandemic. In addition, the panel discussion was intended to inspire young politicians to get involved in politics, as 3 out of 5 panelists were young professionals in their 30s. The MEPs, who were part of different political groups in the EP, showed an example of a constructive discussion, despite their disagreements on policies. The panel discussion was co-organized with ECPYouth's member organization PerspectieF and live-streamed on Facebook, reaching over two thousand people and getting over eight hundred views.



Scan to watch the full video



*MEP- Member of European Parliament

Christian Changemakers

Equipping the future generation of Christian politicians



Auke Minnema, ECPM General Director
Dr. Henk Stoorvogel, School voor Spreekvaardigheid, NL
Jeff Fountain, The Schuman Centre for European Studies
Philip Powell, training consultant at Jubilee Centre, UK



Christian Changemakers (CCM) is a new, year-long program of ECPYouth, aimed at equipping prospect or current young Christian politicians with necessary tools such as: public speaking, writing, debating, and presentation skills, as well as running a successful campaign. The launch of CCM took place in August 2021 in Kerns, Switzerland, where nine changemakers started their year-long journey hearing about the foundations of Christian-democracy in Europe, meditating over their personal calling, and learning to deliver inspiring speeches. This is an ongoing program, and during the year participants continue to acquire new political skills and to be mentored. To learn more about CCM, visit christianchangemakers.eu



Scan to
visit site

International Summer School

Equipping the future generation of Christian politicians



Jeff Fountain, The Schuman Centre for European Studies
Heiner Studer, Swiss politician, former ECPM Advisory Council president
Peter Balaz, European Investment Bank
Nik Gugger, Member of Parliament, Switzerland
Gabriela Urbanová, Director of EU and International Affairs Department at Ministry of Health, Slovakia
Eppo Bruins, Former Member of Dutch Parliament (ChristenUnie)


ECPYouth's International Summer School was the final event in the yearly theme: Building Back a Better Europe. The summer school took place in Kerns, Switzerland, right after the Christian Changemakers program launch in August 2021. Our speakers- experts in their fields- shared key lessons about economy, health and sustainability from a biblical point of view. During this hybrid event (online + in person), the participants learned more about the concept of relational thinking and how it applies to current political realities. Speakers were members of the Swiss political party EVP, the European Investment Bank, and the like.

Also, during the summer school, ECPYouth had its General Assembly (GA), when members of ECPYouth thanked board members Klariska ten Napel, Jan Henric van Vliet, and Magdalena Vakulova for their faithful serving on the ECPYouth board. At the same time, new board members were voted in: Pieter Smits (ECPYouth president), Veronika Ilievska (Board Member Politics), and Niels Geuking (Board Member Treasurer).



Breaking Multigenerational Chains

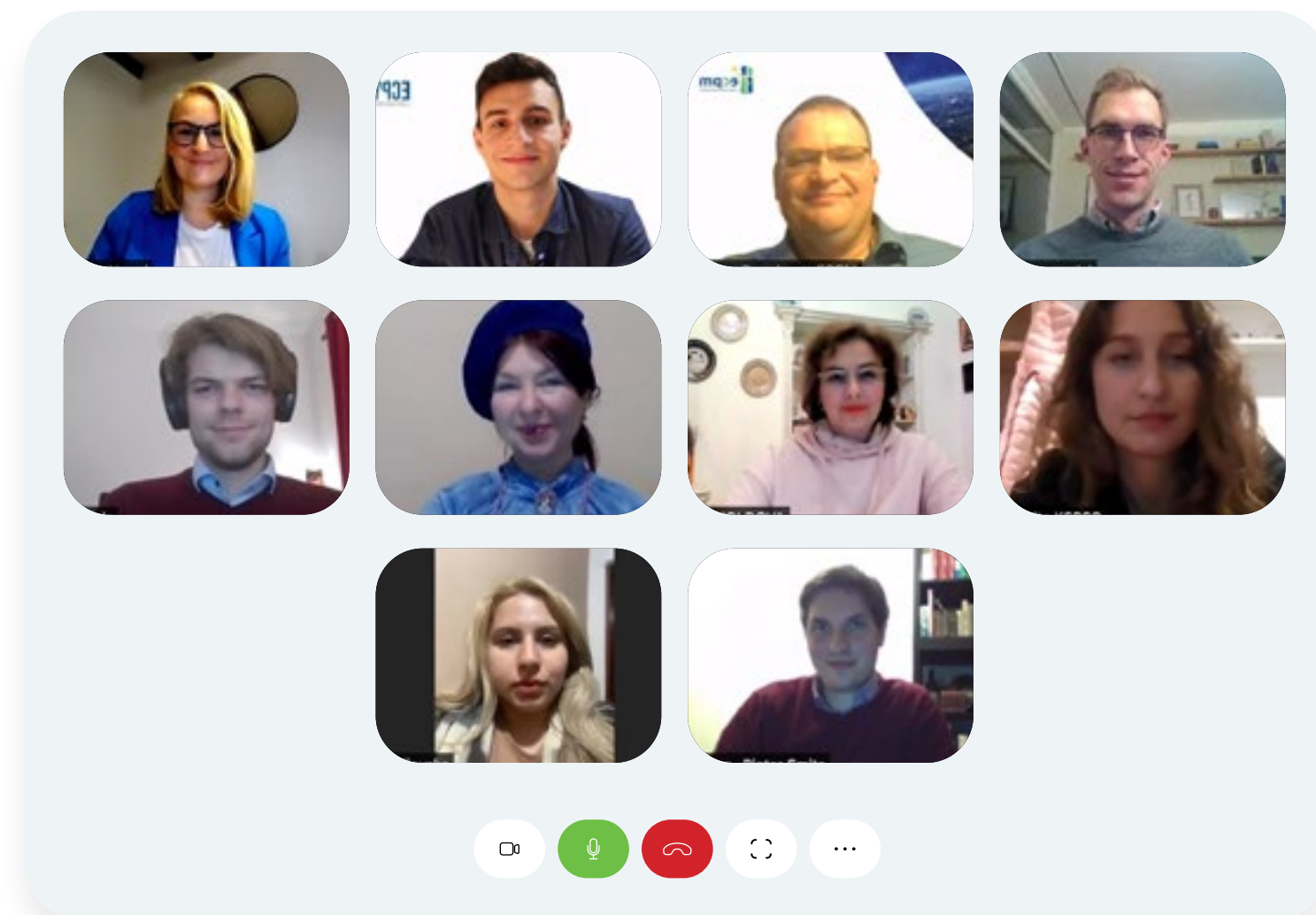
United Against Sex Trafficking in Europe

-  **Aurora Martin**, Romanian National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men
- Frits Rouvoet**, Director of Bright Fame Foundation
- Leo van Doesburg**, ECPM Director of Policy & European Affairs
- Klariska ten Napel**, ChristenUnie (NL), former ECPYouth President

On the European Day Against Human Trafficking, ECPYouth, in collaboration with Womankind for All, organized two online meetings, on October 18th and November 23rd. During the first meeting, the participants learned about the context of human trafficking in Europe: the figures, the demographics of victims, the various forms of trafficking, the relevant agencies and authorities, etc.

During the second meeting, six representatives from Romania, Moldova, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Belgium, and North Macedonia presented the best practices against sex trafficking in their countries. The participants reached the conclusion that criminalizing the sex buyers is the best way to fight trafficking and exploitation and that more needs to be done in terms of reintegration of survivors of trafficking into society. Based on these meetings, ECPYouth is preparing three resolutions to be tabled in the future ECPM general assembly.

* ChristenUnie- Christian Union, The Netherlands





ECPYouth Resolutions

Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence

Digitalisation has become an undividable part of our lives and is progressing at unprecedented speed. Digitalisation is an essential component of the EU's response to the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. As such, the COVID-19 pandemic has made the need to accelerate the digital transition in Europe more pressing. The European Union together with the whole world was from one day to another sentenced to distance education, jobs even family and friends encounters. The undeniable need for technology, high-level cybersecurity, a fully remote job market and better data transfer has been proven. European businesses and citizens alike need an adequate policy framework and appropriate skills and infrastructure to capture the enormous value created by the peak of the digital economy during a global pandemic. Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence can provide for reaching the goals of a greener, sustainable and economically more developed European Union. However, the EU is still far from fully grasping the challenges brought by an abrupt increase in digitalisation. Considering the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) in particular Articles 4(2)(a), 26, 27, 114 and 115 TFEU. Furthermore, Article 173 TFEU with its focus on improving the EU's industrial competitiveness. Articles 179 and 180 TFEU, which are the legal bases for EU and Member State action in the fields of research and technological development.

Stressing the need for opening debates between EU institutions on immediate actions towards improvement of digital sovereignty of the EU and its Member States preserving fundamental freedoms including data protection and privacy, safety and security, Stressing the importance to provide access to distance learning to all groups of society. As well as equal opportunities to achieve digital literacy and access a job market. Support digitalisation of small and medium business in the spirit of fair competition and equal opportunities.

Stressing the need for promotion of the use of digital tools for judicial proceedings on local national levels without undermining fundamental principles such as the independence and impartiality of the courts, Emphasising the awareness and focus on cybersecurity that should be encouraged within the Member States enabling organisation, small business and citizens to protect themselves from cybersecurity threats, Emphasising the need to strengthen the resilience and data security of health system globally used for data storage in the fight of a global pandemic. Accordingly, train and support health care professionals and medical staff in order to achieve equal and easy access to medicine.

Emphasising the immense importance of data protection and data security in relation to public electronic identification, e-health system, green card certificates and globally implemented IT systems.

Supporting the contribution to the development of Artificial Intelligence conditioned on ethical and human-centric approach with emphasis on safety and liability, in particular for autonomous vehicles and IoT products, Emphasising the importance to set out a common EU legal and policy framework for implementation of Artificial Intelligence bedded in the fundamental values.

1. Calls upon the members of the European Parliament of ECPM to table new tailored initiatives with a solution on gaps created by insufficient digital EU sovereignty impacting social disadvantaged groups of society.

2. Calls upon members of the European Parliament of ECPM to vote for digitalisation embedded in fundamental values and human rights, putting human dignity and life first.

3. Calls upon the European Commission and members of European Parliament of ECPM to increase AI and tech awareness through the national and international organisation, trade unions, non-profitable organizations, representatives of the Member States.

4. Calls upon the European Commission and members of European Parliament of ECPM ensure digitalisation of health, regulatory, privacy, data cloud storage, and any other IT systems that are secure, protect personal data, do not discriminate and share fundamental rights and values.



ECPYouth Resolutions

Building sustainable recovery post-pandemic

Considering the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and other UN human rights treaties and instruments, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) and the protocols thereto.

Considering the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Considering the Council of Europe publication of 7 April 2020 entitled 'Respecting democracy, rule of law and human rights in the framework of the COVID-19 sanitary crisis.'

Considering the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).

Considering the Odessa declaration with emphasis on equality, cooperation and sustainability as well as human dignity.

Referring to the imposition of government measures balanced against the fundamental human rights, values and democratic accountability, additional scrutiny of the governments in establishment of the state of emergency providing the national parliaments with added regulatory discretion.

Stressing the importance of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights as they affect the exercise of individuals rights for freedom of movement, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, the right to family life, non-discrimination, privacy, right to work and right to education.

Stressing that steps to be taken for recovery shall consider the basic human rights; where governments actions shall reduce the potential negative impact of such measures on people's lives.

Stressing the need to balance the right of expression with the right to information in pursuance of the fight against disinformation. Providing support to ensure media pluralism, in order to ensure transparency, objective information to diminish disinformation that distorts scientific knowledge about health risks and justifies the legitimacy of the fight against the spread of COVID-19.

Stressing the importance of recovery built on a more sustainable, inclusive and fair economic model based on social and relational market economy, where the environment is respected, digital innovation is put into services, the job market is re-newed and financially aided, whilst basing the recovery phase on basic fundamental rights and values.

Stressing that the recovery plan and funding should be conditional on providing decent jobs, transparency on paying taxes and working towards agreed climate goals through the transition.

1. Calls upon the members of the European Parliament of ECPM to put the values of equality, cooperation and sustainability of the Odessa declaration first in discussing and drafting recovery plans.

2. Calls upon the members of the European Parliament of ECPM to promote sustainable recovery plans with fundamental human rights in the middle with focus on the re-building job market, creating equal opportunities, support and aid education for all social groups, strengthens health care and social infrastructure.

3. Calls upon the members of the European Parliament of ECPM to embed the Sustainable Development Goals in the recovery plans.

4. Calls upon the members of the European Parliament of ECPM to actively engage in dialogues with the national parliaments to help them navigate in recovery plans aimed at transparency, equality and sustainability.

5. Calls upon the members of the European Parliament of ECPM to vouch for access to education and assurance equal access to education for everyone.

6. Calls upon the Member States to respect the right of expression and access to objective information, ensuring personal data protection and make sure that the technology employed to fight the pandemic to be fully in line with the right for privacy and transparency in order to protect data leakage.



ECPYouth Resolutions

Sustainable Europe

Considering the international treaty of the Paris Agreement on climate change with the common goal of reaching green gas emission and sustainable business, social and political actions;

Taking notice of the common democratic values of the EU, the role of the European Parliament and the European Council in the conclusion of the international agreements and division of powers referring to article 3(3) TEFU;

Stressing the human-generated greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel combustion—exacerbated by unsustainable land use such as deforestation—are a leading cause of climate change;

Stressing deforestation and wildfire suppression are making forests more vulnerable to fires and reducing the ability of forests to sequester and store carbon;

Stressing that climate change impacts everyone, already vulnerable populations globally will be disproportionately affected, exacerbating unemployment, displacement, and homelessness;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that European Political Christian youth, in the pursuit of climate justice,

Affirms its support for the development and proliferation of renewable sources of energy and fuel, particularly wind and solar, and

Affirms its support of sustainable land use, forest conservation, and reforestation, and

Affirms where direct restrictions are insufficient, support for a price on climate-damaging substances and practices through a carbon tax and other related disincentives, and

Affirms political and financial incentives for a global industrial refitting of our power infrastructure away from fossil fuels and toward sustainable energy production and storage.

Emphasising the importance of new initiatives on sustainable travel, better and more accessible railroads between European cities, sustainable development, sustainable economics and sustainable relations based on democratic and equal relational values;

Emphasising the Odessa declaration core values which include “dignity and cooperation with organizations, as well as underprivileged groups of society, equality, sustainability and subsidiarity”, these shall be reflected in any new green initiation of the EU, execution of targets set out in the Paris Agreement;

Stressing that Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union makes space for the European Commission, European Parliament and groups of Member States to express their opinion on upholding of the common values;

1. Calls upon the members of the European Parliament of ECPM and Member organisations of ECPM to promote common democratic and equal values in the conclusion of international agreements that contain a provision on sustainable development and climate goals;

2. Calls upon the members of the European Parliament to call upon the Members of the European Council, expert committees and representatives of the Member States and Member organizations of ECPM to implement new initiatives on sustainable travel, and better and more accessible railroads between European cities, held meetings and encounters online in order to restrict unnecessary travels, supported initiation of the Member States and international organisation on the promotion of “green travel”, and set an example;

3. Calls upon the members of the European Parliament of the ECPM to consider the core Odessa values in transition to a carbon-free environment;

4. Calls upon the member of the European Parliament of ECPM to remember the underprivileged groups of society who are dependent on carbon production industry and create equivalent job position or other life providing alternatives;

5. Calls upon the members of the European Parliament of ECPM to democratic, European and Christian values in the dialogues with the European Commission on the persuasion of the “green goals”.

Belarus Statement

Stop the terror! Release the Belarusian Youth!

Considering that Belarus is becoming more and more a totalitarian dictatorship where not only political or social activity but also any kind of disobedience including white and red colors are forbidden;

Taking into account that:

-more than 40.000 Belarusians were detained during the last year and about 5000 criminal cases were initiated;

-at least every third of the detained was a young person;

-at least 14 people under 18 are sentenced to different terms in prison for peaceful protests;

-Belarusian students were made political prisoners for organizing legal strikes;

We demand on the Belarusian regime:

-To stop political repressions in Belarus

-To release all the political prisoners, including the young ones

We insist on European institutions to strengthen their cooperation with the US, Canada, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and other democratic countries in order to make more severe pressure on the political regime in Minsk.

Stop the terror!

Žyvie Bielarus!



New Members

Academy for Integrity in Leadership (Academia pentru Integritate in Conducere), Moldova

The Academy was founded by Valeriu Ghițchi and his two sons in 2018, as an organization aimed at identifying and equipping young prospective leaders with the knowledge and tools needed to better the society. By promoting the values of Christian morality, the organization pursues the development of qualities and abilities that are essential for individuals of integrity who want to become influential leaders with initiative, who adapt and efficiently integrate themselves into a dynamic society.



Scan to view more

New ECPM Member of Parliament- Ladislav Ilčić

We also had the delight to have the ECPM vice-president- Ladislav Ilčić- become a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) in June 2021. Here is a short interview with him, shortly after he became MEP.



Scan to watch video



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Peter van Dalen

Country
The Netherlands

Political party
ChristenUnie/SGP

Website
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

Country
The Netherlands

Political party
ChristenUnie/SGP

Website
eurofractie.sgp.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

Country
Germany

Political party
Familien Partei

Website
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.



Cristian Terheş

Country
Romania

Political party
PNȚCD (The Christian-Democrat
National Peasant Party)

Website
pntcd.ro



Mr. Terheş is a Romanian MEP for the 2019-2025 mandate. He studied Theology, Journalism and Communication in Romania and The United States. He also served as a priest in the Greek-Catholic Romanian Mission and as the President of the Romanian Greek-Catholic Association in US for 10 years. Cristian Terheş has a natural flair for business development and uses technology and communication tools effectively to maximize return on investment and to market companies online. He has successfully used his skills in doing so for companies and non-profits for almost 20 years.

At a political level, he has been involved with organizations which unite Romanians abroad and solidify relations between Romania and US, with an emphasis on religious liberty, the rule of law and fighting corruption in Romania.

As an MEP, he is a member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and a substitute on the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee and the Petitions Committee.



Ladislav Ilčić

Country
Croatia

Political party
Hrvatski Suverenisti

Website
<https://suverenisti.hr/>



Ladislav Ilčić is a Croatian MEP for the 2019-2025 mandate. He took over the mandate after his colleague Ruža Tomašić announced her retirement. He is the leader of HRAST (Oak) party, a coalition partner of the Croatian Sovereignists.

His political experience includes membership in the Council for laity of the Croatian bishop conference (2012-present) and city councilor on the Varaždin City Council (2013-2017); he was also a member of the Croatian Parliament (2015-2016) and special adviser to the ministers

of Foreign Affairs (2016-2017) and Culture (2017-2018). Since 2021, he is ECPM's vice-president.

Mr. Ilčić lives in Varaždin, Croatia, is married and has six children. Ladislav is also an accomplished musician, a violinist and member of the Symphonic orchestra of the Croatian radio/television since 1995.

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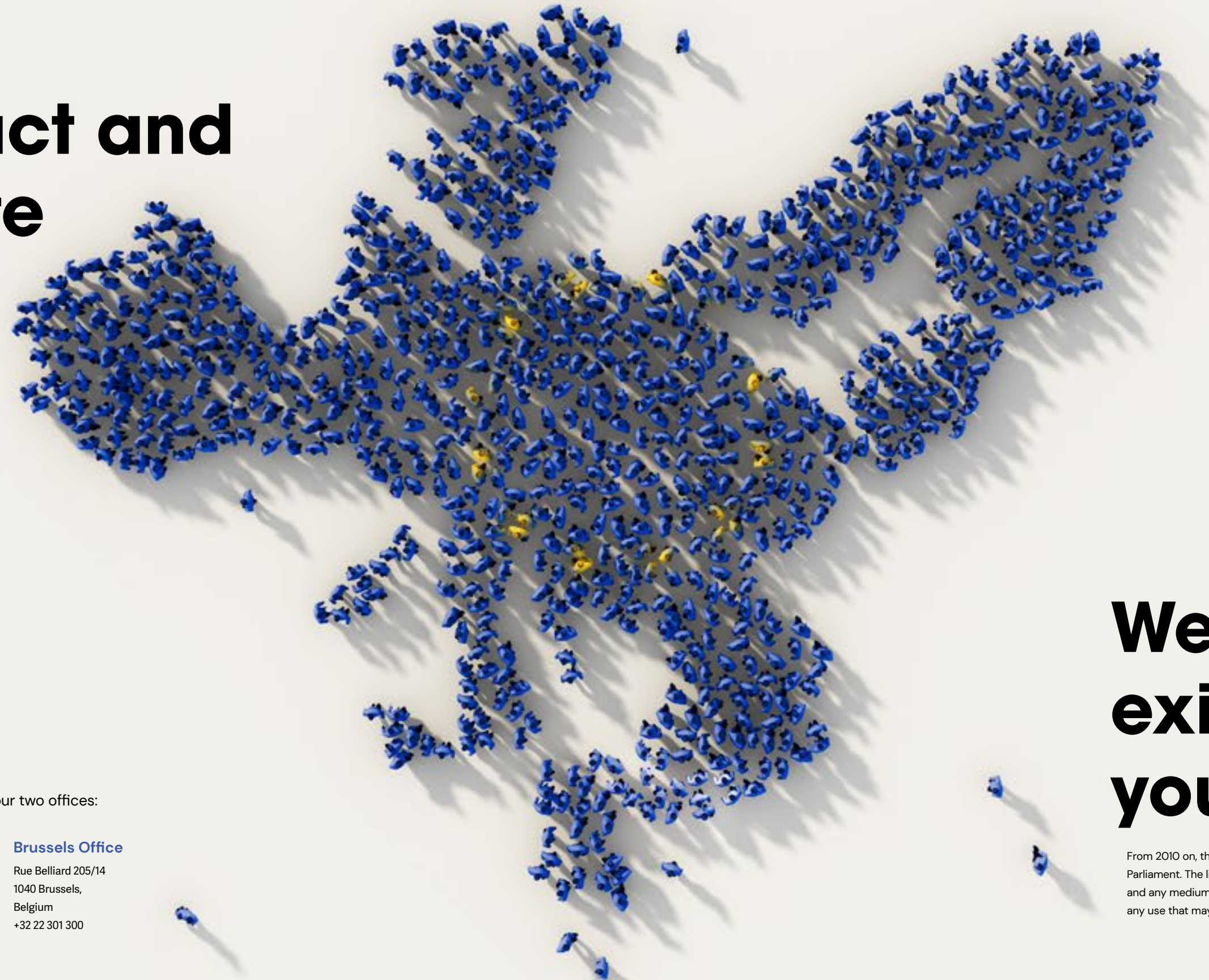


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