



2020 Yearbook

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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.



A Bergstraat 33, 3811 NG Amersfoort
The Netherlands

T +31 33 304 00 11

E office@ecpm.info

W www.ecpm.info



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ECPM Values

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.

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.



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.

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.

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.

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.

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.



Foreword by ECPM President



Dear members of ECPM, dear colleagues, dear friends,

What a challenging, surprising, and unpredictable year this has been! I can say without hesitation - and I am sure you feel the same - that we experienced a historical shift and things no one could have predicted. The pandemic spread of the new coronavirus forced us all to take a step back and reconsider every aspect of our lives.

All political activity stopped almost completely for some time and normalcy is not back yet. Even though the work in the European Parliament officially continued, it mainly met remotely, committees did not work properly, MEPs were rarely present in Brussels and plenaries in Strasbourg were cancelled. We never had the European Parliament functioning

but unable to come together physically! After some initial uncertainty regarding working procedures, a first completely online voting session took place.

At a national level, each country had some form of a lockdown, once or twice this year. There were no gatherings in crowds, no restaurants open, no public entertainment events. It soon became clear to people - from higherups to anyone in a small village - that we were not in control. There was a higher power at work. I come from Slovakia where we have a saying, based on the Bible verse: *"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails"* (Proverbs 19:21 NIV). People everywhere, on a large scale, came to the

realization that you cannot do what you like; and this brought many to thinking about God as the ultimate, highest Authority. The online space was full of spiritual talks and sermons, church services, encouragement speeches. Many people turned to God in prayer in this time. This pandemic caused so much creativity in people and the acknowledgement of Who is ultimately in control, as well as gratitude for basic things we used to take for granted.

Last year we developed a ECPM strategy for our political work. This year, caught by surprise, we had to adapt rapidly and move almost all our activities online. ECPM organized several webinars on current topics this year, but also our board meetings, General Assemblies, conferences big and small shifted to virtual spaces. Our MEPs - Peter van Dalen, Bert-Jan Ruissen and Helmut Geuking - continued their hard work on their political topics. They were involved in several events and webinars ECPM organized of which you can read within this yearbook.

I am happy that after several talks about shared values, as well as collaboration on a few events, MEP Cristian Terheş and the PNȚCD party (Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party) from Romania joined ECPM to strengthen our ranks. Starting this year, ECPM board member and former member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Valeriu Ghilețchi, focused on the main advocacy activities related to the Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe.

ECPM welcomed and pursued the Europe-wide Antisemitism petition which a few MEPs launched in February 2020. Since this is a European problem, we strongly feel this is a danger lurking under the surface. Let's be wise, and not let such things fester and grow. I see our world, continent, our lands, and the society we live in, as a Garden, of which we

need to take good care, as responsible gardeners. All of us long for and benefit from the good fruit it can bring forth. But it depends mainly on what we allow to grow there, depends on what seeds we sow into the soil. As the Bible says: *"A man reaps what he sows"* (Gal. 6:7 NIV); when we sow good seeds, we harvest good fruit. We see these days that some gardeners, as people politically responsible for their countries, bring into the land bad seeds, which can bring a lot of harm and unhappiness to the people living there. Let us carefully discern what values and principles we sow into our European land.

Friends, my mandate has come to an end; this is the last year I served as President of ECPM. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude for all the help and support I received from the board, the Advisory Council, MEPs and ECPM staff both in Brussels and in Amersfoort. It was a great honor to walk and serve alongside you all these years! ECPM is on a clear path, with a mission to bring like-minded politicians and organizations from all over Europe together, and to equip them with the information and resources they need. We believe in working together so that we can be effective in promoting Christian values in Europe and beyond.

I wish ECPM success and growth and I am praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance through it all!

Branislav Škripek

President of the European Christian Political Movement



Reflections on 2020



“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.” (Proverbs 31:8-10, NIV)

As we all know, this year brought about a lot of challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our societies, our economy and even the way we approach each other. We are especially concerned about the ways the pandemic affected the weak and vulnerable, like our elderly citizens. Because they were deemed high-risk, there were many restrictions placed on them. It was difficult for them to do their shopping or to not participate in social events. Families were not able to visit their parents or grandparents and nursing homes were closed for visitors. People were lonely. Unfortunately, despite the precautions, the coronavirus caused a lot of victims

amongst the elderly. On the International Day of the Elderly, we drew special attention to their situation and called on everyone at the political and societal level to remember the seniors and to do all they can within the current framework to keep in touch with them and to help them lead a self-determined life.

A second area where we noticed the lockdowns were having negative effects was on women and children. According to statistics from law enforcement and social services, domestic violence increased during the first lockdown of the year. In addition to that, children and youth spent more and

more time online and came into contact with harmful, explicit content, or became victims of online abuse. On the European Day on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, we spoke out about this disturbing phenomenon. Moreover, our Member of European Parliament (MEP) Helmut Geuking organized an online meeting as co-chair of the Intergroup on Demographic Challenges, Family-Work Balance and Youth Transition in the European Parliament on this very topic and discussed ways to counteract and prevent the oversexualization of children and access to harmful internet access from happening.

This COVID-19 crisis had its silver lining as well, though. Because of restrictions placed on human interactions and the decrease in demand, persons who were trapped in prostitution or Human Trafficking had a better chance to leave it. However, their situation is very difficult and complex, so it is more necessary than ever to develop reintegration models. Based on the “Exit Program for Sex Workers” (RUPS) in the Netherlands, several roundtables were held in Romania and the Netherlands. It was encouraging to see that the European Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality and Women Rights brought the issue of reintegration of persons who were trapped in prostitution or human trafficking at a European level.

The lockdown affected the entrepreneurs as well. Some countries are more affected than others as they were in a poorer economic situation to begin with. However, in all countries poverty is on the rise. It is therefore a good thing that the European Union is developing a solidarity fund to help the countries which are most affected. But these funds (or loans) should not be given as a blank check. Measures should be developed so that the funds will be well spent, and

necessary reforms will be implemented for these countries to be able to come out of the economic crisis they face.

For all that the different political measures and financial help are worth, they are not sufficient to battle the increase in poverty and loneliness. As the quoted text in Proverbs tells us, we need to speak out and show up for the poor and needy. It was encouraging to see initiatives where churches, Christian organisations and volunteers were working together to help the vulnerable and needy in their communities. As Christians it is our calling to do what we can for the weak and voiceless in our families, neighbourhoods, and communities.

2020 was in many ways a difficult year, that affected all of us. Sometimes the limitations brought by the virus pandemic, the concerns of getting sick or the anxiety about the future made us weary. But we need not carry these worries on our shoulders. We can cast our worries and sorrows on our Lord, and He will give us strength in difficult times. As is written in Isaiah 40:31 (NIV)- *“but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.”* Standing firmly on this promise, we look forward to another year of grace. With the help of the Lord, we will overcome!

Auke Minnema
General Director

Leo van Doesburg
Director for European Affairs





Advisory Council Report



The Advisory Council (AC) was established by the 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.

2020 was a challenging year for the AC as well. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Council was not able to meet in person. In order to prepare for the General Assembly- which took place on June 3 via Zoom- we received the documents some days in advance, studied them at home and answered by e-mail. Fortunately, we could support all the proposals the board submitted to the GA. Florica Cherecheş represented the AC at this GA by Zoom.

In order to prepare the documents for the GA which took place on September 25 via Zoom, the AC met virtually on September 15. Since we all know each other, that went on very well. Therefore, the AC president was able to provide a positive report and support all the documents presented at the GA.

The board had formed a selection committee whose task was to find, interview and submit a candidate for a ECPM board seat. I, the president of the AC, was part of this committee. The selection committee met via Zoom on June 12 and on July 10. The new ECPM board member- Karin Heepen- was voted in unanimously by the ECPM General Assembly on September 25.

At the end of 2020, the second mandate of the AC came to an end. Wijbren Jongasma, vicepresident of the AC, and myself, the president of AC, reached the end of our terms and had to leave the AC. We are grateful for

Wijbren Jongasma's counsel and service and I consider it an honor having served on the ECPM Advisory Council. Even though we could not meet in person this year, we had a positive and productive time during 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.

Next year, in 2021, a few members of the ECPM board, as well as the ECPM President, will have reached the end of their second four-year term, and will have to leave the board. As such, a new selection committee was formed, and I am honored to serve as its leader. The first selection committee meeting took place on October 19, via Zoom.

Heiner Studer

President of the Advisory Council



Introduction

In this yearbook you will find summaries of the events ECPM organized in 2020 either as a sole organizer or in collaboration with our party members and MEPs.

This year looked unexpectedly different for all of us. After the initial lockdown in March, we realized we had to make significant changes in our activities planned for this year. Even though it was difficult at first to adapt to the new reality, to become “unstuck”, to learn new technology, we are glad that with God’s help we made it through. Physical distance did not have to mean falling out of touch. In the end, we got to witness many great moments, our message reached people further than we thought we could, and in the process we grew.

World events like Brexit, the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, the economic crisis, the Moria camp fire and subsequent displacement of thousands of refugees- they all weighed heavily on us and we tried to make space and take time to address each one. We invited experts and people directly involved to speak on some of these subjects in the online events we organized or co-hosted. If you have a smartphone, all you have to do is open the camera and scan some of the QR codes you’ll be finding throughout this yearbook, and they will take you to our interviews and digital events.

Our MEP, Peter van Dalen, has raised his voice in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in particular, and in condemnation of Turkey’s aggressive tactics this year, in general. He and MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen have also been active in their committees regarding the Brexit negotiations around fishing and trade. We sat down for an interview with Bert-Jan Ruissen at the end of the year to talk about the new proposals brought to the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and how they should be implemented. That interview and the one we had with MEP Helmut Geuking where we talked about the elders in our midst and the impact the coronavirus had on them, can be found in the Fourth Quarter of this yearbook.

This year, we were glad to welcome MEP Cristian Terheş into our ECPM family. He is Romanian and was elected to the European Parliament last year, after having lived and worked in the United States for over a decade. As such, he brings a fresh, out-of-the-box perspective to European politics and a Christ-infused passion to his work and projects. You will find the interview we had with him in the European Parliament in the Second Quarter.

Internally, we have added to our ECPM vision a special strategy regarding Communications. We wanted to put into actionable steps what we are at our core, the values that animate us- and to do it with dignity and efficiency. At the same time, we have resolved to cast the spotlight more on our members and MEPs, their initiatives, struggles and successes. The aim is to foster a better connection between what happens in Brussels and in the rest of Europe, especially in times as divided and disconnected as these.

Our hope is that you will enjoy reading through this yearbook, that you will recognize the values and spirit underlying our efforts and be inspired to join us in our work of defending Christian values in European politics.



1st
Quarter



Christian- Democracy in EU and Georgia



George Rukhadze, ECPM Vice-President, CDPP Acting Chairman
Giorgi Targamadze, former CDM and Parliament Minority Leader
Magda Anikashvili, former MP and CDPP board member
Nikoloz Laliashvili, former MP and CDPP board member
Giorgi Taktakishvili, Young Christian- Democrats Leader
Ketevan Bezhitashvili, CDI Secretary General
Egor Petrosyan, Professor at Yerevan State University
Khatuna Lagazidze, expert in Conservative politics
Vakhtang Gabunia, CDPP Regional Leader

The Christian- Democratic People's Party (CDPP) and the Christian Democratic Institute (CDI) in Georgia, members of the ECPM family, organized jointly a conference on the Christian- democratic principles as they are expressed in EU and in Georgia. The two-day event was attended by 60 dedicated CDPP national and local leaders, as well as academics, journalists, and other experts.

On the first day, speakers have presented the history of Christian politics in Europe, in Georgia and the Caucasus, as well as recent challenges and future perspectives. George Rukhadze, CDPP Acting Chairman, outlined his vision for promoting and reviving Christian- democratic values in Georgia and the region and ways to translate them into concrete political action.



On the second day, speakers focused on similarities and differences between Christian democracy in Europe versus Georgia and the region. The various areas influenced by Christian policies were discussed, from art to culture, to education and the economy. Key lessons were drawn from historical examples of success and the various ways they can be adjusted and adapted to Georgian reality. The event concluded with a lively Q and A session.

¹CDM- Christian- Democratic Movement of Georgia

ECPM Board Member Valeriu Ghilețchi is Awarded at PACE

At the end of the most recent session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Valeriu Ghilețchi was awarded honorary associate of PACE in recognition of his service rendered to the European cause. Namely, he was rapporteur on important issues such as: discrimination against Christians in Europe, protecting children's rights and fighting against sexual exploitation of minors.

He also drew attention to the problems surrounding the Child Protection Services in Norway in a report calling for a balance between the best interest of the child and the need to keep families together.



An important aspect of the Council of Europe is that we learned to work with each other even when we disagreed, to build bridges and to respect each other.

Valeriu Ghilețchi



Launch of Online Petition Against Antisemitism in Europe



Nicola Beer, European Parliament vice-president

Peter van Dalen, MEP* (NL)

Bert-Jan Ruissen, MEP (NL)

Helmut Geuking, MEP (Germany)

Othmar Karas, MEP (Austria)

Mendel Samama, Rabbi of the Jewish Community in Strasbourg

Several members of the European Parliament have come together in Strasbourg to support and launch the online petition *Stop Antisemitism in Europe* which can be found at www.stopantisemitism.eu. The petition was initiated by the European Christian Political Movement, as a response to the rise in hate crimes and harassment of Jews in Europe over the last few years.

The petition is asking for the following:

- 01** Special attention to preventing and combating all forms of anti-Semitism in combating discrimination, racism and xenophobia.
- 02** Member States' endorsement of the working definition used by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).
- 03** Everything needed to guarantee the safety of Jewish communities, institutions and citizens, including taking security measures where necessary.
- 04** Increasing the willingness to report to authorities when an incident happens and removing experienced barriers to do so.
- 05** Take appropriate measures against hate crimes and incitement to violence or hatred against Jewish people.
- 06** Attention in education given to the Holocaust, anti-Semitism and the centuries-long history of Jews in Europe and the diversity and vitality of the Jewish community.



Stop Antisemitism in Europe.

Sign the petition

www.stopantisemitism.eu



Scan here to sign the petition.

*MEP- Member of European Parliament



Brainstorming Meeting on Reintegration Strategies for Human Trafficking Survivors



Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director for European Affairs
Aurora Martin, Romanian National Agency of Equal Chances
Frits Rouvoet, Bright Fame Director
Sabine Kallauch, Kavod Director

The ECPM Director for European Affairs, Leo van Doesburg, together with Frits Rouvoet (Bright Fame) and Aurora Martin (Romanian National Agency of Equal Chances) have organized a meeting whose purpose was coming up with ways to link hands and join efforts to aid survivors of trafficking or abuse in getting their lives back on track.

The meeting took place in Bucharest, at the Sustainability Embassy and counted representatives from about twenty organizations who are active in the fight against modern slavery directly or indirectly.

Aurora Martin presented her special project, the Mobile Museum of Modern Slavery, and spoke about education and raising awareness which in turn contribute to the prevention of this phenomena. Sabine Kallauch (Kavod) then spoke about the outcomes of an extensive research done on policies regarding prostitution and combating human trafficking. The next speaker was Frits Rouvoet from *Bright Fame* who talked about the work his organization does in the Red Light Districts and the Dutch exit program.

Three brainstorming sessions followed which explored answers and solutions to three issues: the problems Romania faces in general on the issue of THB* and the organizations present in particular, the possible solutions and the political changes (policy proposals) we want to see happening. It was a very interactive meeting and many original ideas surfaced with specific action points drafted for follow up.



* THB- Trafficking in Human Beings



Georgia's Role in the Security of EU via NATO



Ekaterina Metreveli, Director of Rondeli Foundation.

Davit Sikharulidze, former Defense Minister and presently Director at the Atlantic Council of Georgia

Nodar Kharshiladze, former Deputy Defense Minister

John Dipirro, International Republican Institute Country Director to Georgia

Radu Liviu Horumba, Romanian Ambassador to Georgia

Rosaria Puglisi, the Head of NATO Liaison Office in Georgia

Zurab Agladze, Former Commander of Georgian land forces

Nika Chitidze, Security Expert and Professor at Black Sea University

The Christian Democratic People's Party of Georgia, an ECPM member, organized a two-day conference focused on present security issues in Europe and the role Georgia could play in counteracting them. It was attended by 50 foreign policy experts, politicians, diplomats, and members of the media.

The speakers on both days focused on the current European security architecture and its challenges, on Georgia's prospective NATO membership and the EU-Georgia defense cooperation. George Rukhadze, CDPP Acting Chairman spoke about Russia's policies of insurgencies and the threat it represents for the European security. The subsequent speakers outlined roles that the Eastern Partnership countries could play in countering Russian threats, together with EU member states and NATO. Georgia's potential NATO membership and the possible outcome of the next NATO summit were discussed at length.





March: Women's History Month

This March, we wanted to take the time and space to honor the special, strong women in our party. We asked them who inspired them in their life and work, what their proudest moments were and the advice they have for the next generations.

Each of them is a trailblazer in her respective country and a wonderful example of the Proverbs 31 model: trustworthy, kind, industrious, a leader. We are honored to count them in our midst and praise them for their hard work and achievements.



Lilian Studer

 /LilianStuder

lilianstuder.ch



Member of the Swiss Parliament



Former member of the Aargau Kanton Parliament and EVP group leader



Managing director of Blue Cross Aargau Kanton



TV editor for Window to Sunday Talk Show



Interests: textile art and design, family policies, youth work, palliative care and volunteering



I am proud to be part of a Parliament with 42% women representation. That is much more than other parliaments and governments have, therefore there is still much work to be done. Under-representation matters when it comes to jobs, for instance: women are still a minority in CEO or senior positions. This has a lot to do with political decisions and getting the women the necessary support.

I encourage women to be more confident in pursuing high-power or political roles. I often hear women saying they do not feel good enough or prepared for a political position. We must remember that women worldwide continue to be oppressed and oftentimes not seen as equal. We need to do more for women's voices to be heard.



Inga Bite



@IngaBit



WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

INGA BITE



Former member of the Latvian Parliament (2 terms) and Deputy Speaker



ECPM Advisory Council member



Lawyer at a private firm in Riga



Interests: family values and protection of children, education, human rights



My role model for acting and living is Queen Esther from the Bible, Book of Esther. She was beautiful and smart, but also dedicated, faithful and brave, ready to risk her life and everything she had when the time came for her to fulfill her call. She was also aware of and able to use the gift of femininity God had given her.

The one and only advice I have for women considering a career in law or politics is to build a strong, personal relationship with God through His Holy Spirit. In both law and politics, you have to distinguish between right and wrong, true and false, every day. And oftentimes, that distinction is blurry, less obvious. It can only ever be reached through the wisdom and revelation of the Spirit of God.

Stieneke van der Graaf

 /stieneke-j-f-van-der-graaf



Member of the Dutch Parliament



Member of ECPM board



Background in International & European Law



Former member of the Groningen regional parliament & ChristenUnie group leader



Interests: human rights and financial inclusion solutions for Small & Medium Enterprises in developing countries



I am thankful for all the women who paved the way for future generations, raising their voices, sharing their light, seeking for justice.

Doing justice is what motivates me in politics. As a member of parliament, I want to raise my voice for those who can't speak for themselves.

Not all women are free. There are women bound in slavery, forced to work in prostitution or victims of human trafficking. I stand up for them, until all are free.



Julija Stepanenko

 @StepanenkoJulij

julijastepanenko.lv



Member of the Latvian Parliament (Saeima)



Background in Law



Member of the Legal Affairs and Foreign Affairs Committees



Interests: children and parental rights, family support, adoption



I am a happy mother and wife and I have been given the wonderful opportunity to live out my dream and make ideas work. The only obstacles I ran into were my own criticism and self-doubt, but I learned to overcome them by reading the signs and following my heart.



Florica Chereches

 /florica-chereches

fchereches.ro



Member of Romanian Parliament



Vice President of the Education Committee



ECPM Advisory Council member



Former deputy Mayor of Oradea



President of National Women Organization of the PNL



Interests: child protection, adoption, education and vocational training



Motivational speaker at Women's Conferences and Youth Meetings



I have realized that as women in politics we have to prove ourselves to be hard-working, serious, determined and ready for challenges. Men, on the other hand, are assumed to be all that by default. I took any task seriously and I never wanted to be treated differently because I was a woman. Having the support and understanding of my family was essential; I consider my family my biggest accomplishment in life.



Anna Záborská

 @AnnaZaborska



Member of the Slovakian Parliament



Former Member of European Parliament (3 terms)



Studied Medicine and worked as a doctor for 26 years



Interests: women rights and protections, healthcare, gender discrimination, child safety and protection, human dignity and promotion of life policies



The first time I was elected Member of European Parliament and became Chairwoman of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, the word 'family' was not used in official documents. Instead, phrases like 'intergenerational solidarity' were used. I consider it my greatest accomplishment that I brought the word 'family' back to official documents in the European Parliament. It may seem minor, but politics is about words and their

meaning. I received pushback from colleagues who didn't understand my insistence. It took a lot of time, arguing, patiently listening to push my colleagues in EP to admit that family is more than intergenerational solidarity, much more. Without that word, that concept still present in official documents, it would be almost impossible now to talk about pro-family policies and such.

For the women considering entering politics, this is my advice: start local. You need to stay connected to the real world, to the people, not just talk about great ideas. I think women have an excellent ability to transform

great ideas into daily life. The best place for that is at the local level. It might not be as trendy as being an activist these days, but if women want to change the world around them, they need to enter politics and learn to form coalitions, work in a team. It is impossible to survive alone in politics. If a woman eager to change things works through and within a political party, she will achieve much more than a single activist.



Karin Heepen



★ Chairwoman of Bündnis C Germany

★ ECPM board member

★ Graduate engineer and holding a Master in Cross-Cultural Leadership

★ Lecturer at various educational institutes and universities in Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology and Ethics

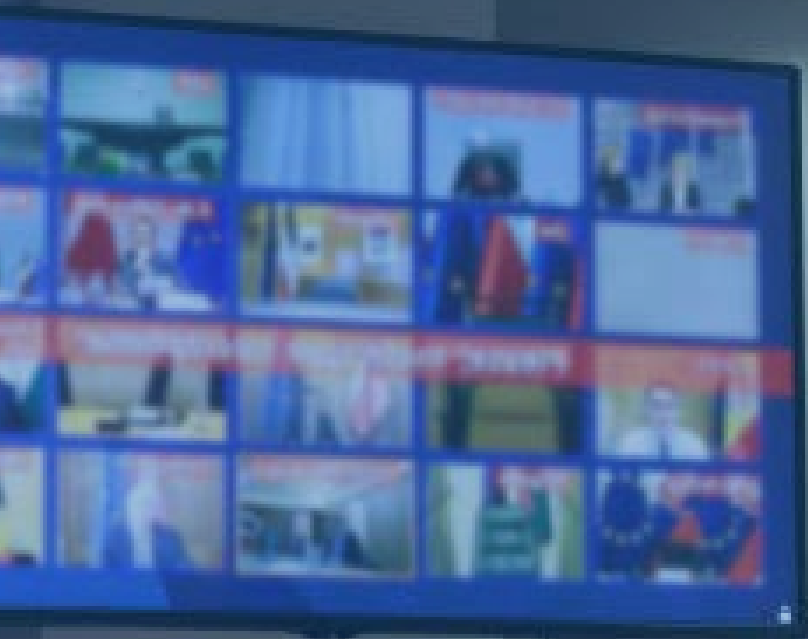
★ **Interests:** family values, freedom of conscience and religion in Europe, relational economics

My call to political work came out of many years of leading prayer for German politics, in an organic *ora et labora* (pray and work) way. I also did not apply for the party presidency but was proposed for it. So far, hardly anyone has opposed me for the position because most people in the party recognize that I do a great job. Of course, when the party enters a new phase of development, I will make way for a more suitable successor.

For us Christian women, the question of our career should not be a matter of quotas, but of vocation. Sometimes we find our calling at an early age, other times it develops gradually as we gain experience. When we step into our vocation and live accordingly, others notice and appoint us to the appropriate positions. This confidence gives us stability and serenity, even if others should fight us in it. It prevents us from fighting to prove we are the best and instead gives us the willingness to correct ourselves and to work as a team.

I am grateful for the early women's rights movement and its male supporters, who challenged centuries-old patterns in gender relations and succeeded so that women in the Western world today are no longer treated as second-class citizens. We have the same rights and educational opportunities, and all professions are open to us. We largely decide for ourselves what our educational path should be, whether we get married and to whom, and whether we want to have children or not. For me, gender balance has thus been fully accomplished.

**2nd
Quarter**





A Relational Perspective on the Economic Crisis in the Wake of the Coronavirus



Dr. Arleen Westerhof, European Economic Summit
Prof. Florin Duma, Babes-Bolyai University, Romania



Jacques Bazen, ECPM board member and Lecturer on International Economics, Netherlands



Dr. Arleen Westerhof



Prof. Florin Duma



Jacques Bazen



Scan and watch the full video.



We organized an online discussion about the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic and the various approaches to tackling it. We focused on presenting and discussing the relational economics approach. Watch the video for an in-depth analysis of the concept.

Romanian MEP Cristian Terheș joins ECPM

This past year we were fortunate and honored to welcome a fourth MEP* into the ECPM family: Romanian MEP Cristian Terheș. He has joined ECPM member party PNȚCD (Partidul Național Țărănesc Creștin Democrat) and the ECR* Group in the European Parliament.

European and national levels”, said Branislav Škripek, ECPM President.

He was elected as Member of the European Parliament in May 2019 as someone who fervently defends the dignity of every person, traditional marriage and the preservation of Christian culture and heritage in Europe. He aligns with the ECPM values in acknowledging the solidarity and subsidiarity principles of the EU, which calls for giving back more freedom to the national governments and increasing cooperation between the sovereign states, while maintaining EU’s role as facilitator.

“We are honored to have Mr. Cristian Terheș as our newest member of the European Parliament. He is a strong defender of the Christian-Democratic values which are the cornerstone of our movement and of the EU origins, and we look forward to a fruitful collaboration in promoting Christian values at



Cristian Terheș



Scan and watch the full video.



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



Promo Video

Have you seen ECPM's newest promo video?



Scan and watch the full video.





Importance of Christian Approach to EU and National Policies - seminar series



Scan to go to
YouTube channel

After the first seminar on March 7 in Zagreb, attended in person, coronavirus restrictions forced the organizers to continue the series in an online format. In total, there were 37 well-known speakers who took part and over 800 participants. All the events, except the first one, are available on ECPM Croatia/ Hrast's YouTube channel.

In these webinars, the Christian values which are the foundation of the EU and of democratic societies, in general, were presented and discussed in detail. Arguments were made for the benefits of principles like honesty, dignity, fairness, rule of law, family values etc. for the Croatian people and for Europeans at large.

Impact of COVID-19 on Georgian Economy and European Trade



Irakly Kipiani, Tbilisi State University

Giorgi Papava, Professor at Tbilisi State University

George Rukhadze, ECPM Vice-president

Merab Metreveli, Palitr News Business Reporter

Giorgi Targamadze, CDI Director and former Parliament Minority Leader

Giorgi Taktakisvhili, YCD leader

Khatuna Lagazide, expert in Conservative politics

The Christian- Democrat People's Party of Georgia organized a two-day event focusing on the economic impact of COVID-19 on Georgia and Europe. The event was attended by 30 Georgian experts, politicians, diplomats, academics and CDPP supporters.

Following the two-month lockdown, Georgian economy was struggling. The greater context of travel limitations severely impacted Georgian tourism and overall disruptions in supply chains affected several industries in Georgia and other countries. The speakers presented a potential model for reviving the Georgian economy and several key reforms which would make Georgia more economically stable in the future. The initial lectures were followed by a lively debate and exchange of ideas.



*CDI- Christian- Democrat institute of Georgia
*YCD- Young Christian- Democrats of Georgia



Georgia's Trading Opportunities with the EU post Pandemic- workshop



Giorgi Rukhadze, ECPM vice-president

Dimitri Bluashvili, YCD International Secretary

Giorgi Taktakishvili, YCD chairman

Giorgi Targamadze, former Georgian MP and Minority Leader

Khatuna Lagazidze, founder of Institute of European Values

Nodar Kharshiladze, former Deputy Defense Minister

Zurab Agladze, Director of Georgia Political Academy

David Usupashvili, former President of Georgian Parliament

The Young Christian Democrats of Georgia (YCD), together with ECPM and SGP organized a four-day workshop aimed at young leaders and entrepreneurs to discuss the current economic state of Georgia and possible recovery options post-coronavirus. Various economic policies were presented, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA)- a trade agreement between Georgia and the EU.

On the third and last day of the workshop, the speakers talked about the voting system in Georgia and how it compares to European countries, about governing coalitions and party building strategies. There were open discussions and Q&A sessions throughout with lively participation; the attendees received honorary diplomas at the end.



*SGP- The Reformed Dutch Party

A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a blue hoodie, is seen from the side, looking out a window. His hands are raised in front of him, palms facing forward. The background shows a blurred view of a city or town with buildings and greenery. The text "3rd Quarter" is overlaid in white on the right side of the image.

**3rd
Quarter**

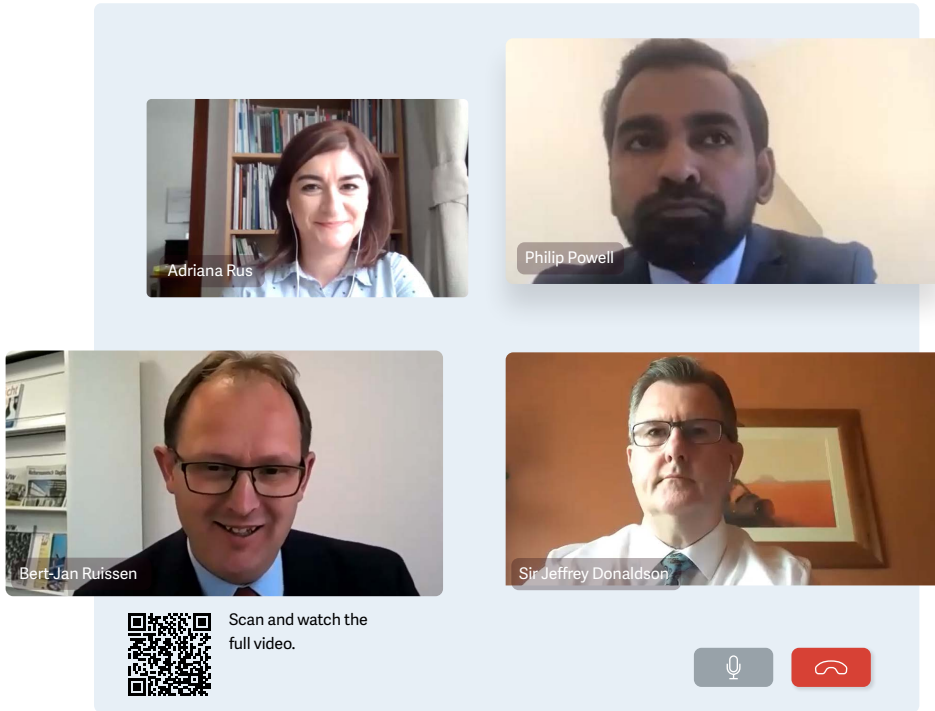


Brexit. What Makes It So Difficult?



Sir Jeffrey Donaldson, MP* for Logan Valley, Northern Ireland
Bert-Jan Ruissen, MEP** (NL)
Philip Powell, Jubilee Centre (UK)

ECPM organized a virtual roundtable discussion on the state of Brexit negotiations between the EU and the UK, especially regarding trade, the fisheries and agricultural sectors.

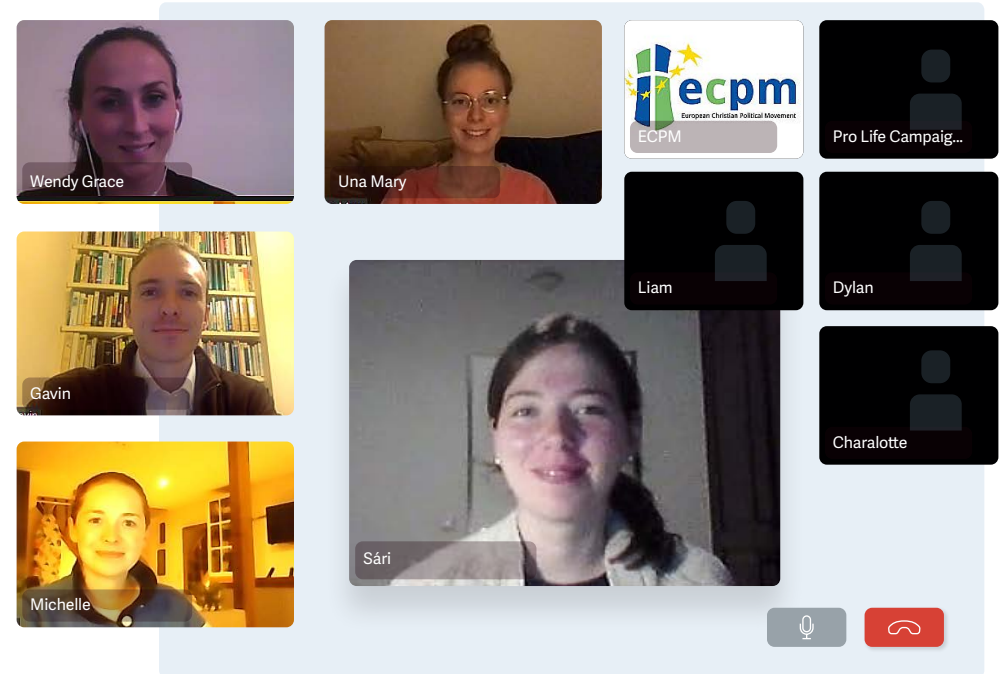


Future Leaders Program - webinar series



Senator **Ronan Mullen**
Michael Wee, Anscombe Centre
Josh Brahm, Equal Rights Institute
Stephanie Gray, international pro-life speaker

Dr. Anne Hope, consultant psychiatrist
Lorcán Price, Irish Barrister
Dr Paul Brady BL, Irish Barrister, author



Pro Life Campaign together with ECPM have organized a series of webinars for young professionals in Ireland, with the aim to equip and train them in pro-life advocacy. It was an intensive two-month course where participants have been given the skills, the

arguments and the motivation to promote pro-life vision in the public sphere. It covered topics from the legal and philosophical status of the embryo to medical issues connected to abortion, to communication strategies for promoting pro-life policies.

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



Supporting Mothers. Ways to Protect the Unborn



- Dr. Anna Záborská**, MD- member of the Slovak Parliament
- Mária Demeterová**, head of the project Let's Save Lives
- Zuzana Kiňová Stohlová**, PhD. - director of ALEXIS, counseling organization for pregnant women in Slovakia
- Petra Badaniová**, PhD. - Psychologist specialised in psychological problems of pregnant women in crisis
- Dr. Monika Geletová**, National Centre of Medical Information
- Dr. Ivan Wallenfels**, MD- Gynecologist
- Michal Považan**, PhD. - political scientist



ECPM member party- Kresťanská únia Slovakia- has worked on crafting a legislative proposal aimed at providing support to pregnant women who find themselves in a crisis. Anna Záborská tabled this proposal in the Slovakian Parliament, and it has garnered a lot of support. The working seminar was organized to discuss the legislative initiative in detail, to present it to the public and to raise awareness and support for it.

Since this initiative as well as other pro-life activities often receive heavy criticism in Slovakian society, it was our goal to present the facts and benefits such a law could have on pregnant women. It featured increased financial support for pregnant women, an extension of the reflection time before an abortion, as well as the creation of safe houses or shelters for pregnant women.

Turkey's Military Posturing in the East Mediterranean. What Should EU Do?



- Peter van Dalen**, MEP* (EPP**-ECPM)
- Dr. Kleanthis Kyriakidis**, Assistant Prof. & Dept. Chair Security & Strategic Studies, American Univ. in the Emirates
- Abdullah Bozkurt**, journalist, Nordic Monitor founder

Following Turkey's aggressive behavior towards EU Member States (Greece and Cyprus) and military presence in the East Mediterranean over the summer, ECPM invited a panel of experts to discuss Ankara's actions and the worldwide implications. The panelists have argued for a strong response from EU

and US towards Turkey, in the form of targeted sanctions and investigations into Erdogan's family and their business dealings. MEP Peter van Dalen has called for the EU accession talks (as well as the funding) to formally end and instead to develop a neighboring policy between Turkey and the EU.

* MEP- Member of European Parliament
 ** EPP- European People's Party



**4th
Quarter**



International Day of the Older Person - interview with MEP Helmut Geuking



Scan and watch the full video.



On October 1- the International Day of the Older Person- we went to MEP Helmut Geuking's office to have a short talk about his work on behalf of the elderly. He was happy to share his story and experiences from many years of social work and advocacy for the elderly in Germany and in the European Union. He expressed his concern about the ways the current coronavirus crisis has affected the seniors in particular and he encouraged all of us to take the time to see the older people around us: to notice them, to care for them, to keep them company.

It was a good day to reflect and to realize what a blessing these people are in our lives and a reminder to cherish the time we have with them.

Renewing Our Minds



Cristian Terheş, MEP Romania (ECPM-PNȚCD)

Bojan and Rachel Ruvarac, ROM Directors

Liviu Mocan, sculptor and poet

Heather Nicola Staff, political advisor on migration issues, UK

Dr. Catherine Lourdes Dy, political scientist and expert on migration issues

Anthony Cordle, UK

Lars Rise, former Norwegian MP

This year, the leaders of the Renewing Our Minds program decided to change the format of their yearly large gathering in Croatia, mainly because of the coronavirus restrictions and because the social distancing and safety of the participants would not have been guaranteed. In turn, they have organized smaller gatherings, like the one in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, for the ROM alumni as well as new participants. Those present had the opportunity

to hear from speakers in person as well as virtually who encouraged and inspired them to get involved, and courageously step into being the leaders they wish to see in their society. The speakers' messages also focused on immigration and social justice, as well as on ways and models for value-based communication and disagreeing well.

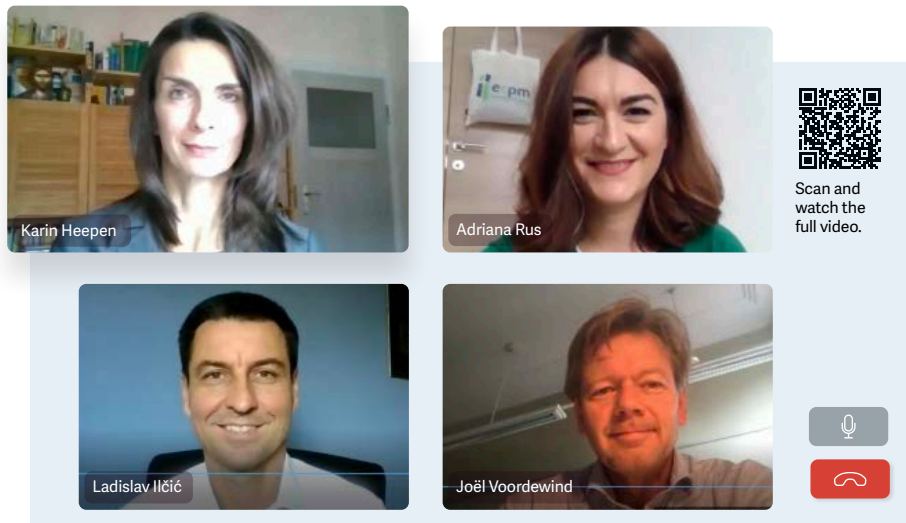




Refugees- Whose Responsibility are They?



Joël Voordewind, MP of Dutch Parliament
Ladislav Ilčić, President of Hrast, Croatia
Karin Heepen, Chairwoman of BündnisC Germany



ECPM organized a webinar on the recent EU Commission's proposals on migration. These latest proposals came as a response to the devastating Moria camp fire that left approximately 12,000 refugees displaced on the island of Lesbos, Greece. The New Pact for Migration and Asylum introduces a pre-entry screening process which aims to quickly identify people who present a security risk.

A new solidarity mechanism was also unveiled under which the EU Member States can contribute to the migration burden in more flexible ways (like helping with returns or offering operational support). Our speakers discussed the merits and shortcomings of the new proposals, as well as the various reactions across Europe to this plan.

* MP- Member of Parliament

Freedom Has No Price- Anti-Human Trafficking Awareness Day



Lidija Djordjevic, Athens NGO
Nada Padejski Sekerovic PhD, social worker, clinical psychologist
Natalija Novaković, Astra NGO
Natasa Kovacev, Journalist/ reporter
Milica Kravic Aksamit and **Tamara Srijemac**, journalists

In collaboration with IFES Serbia, Sloboda Nema Cenu, OPENS2019 and FIDCC, we organized a yearly event in Novi Sad focused on raising awareness about human trafficking and on training the participants to recognize and respond to instances of modern slavery around them. It was organized on the European Day Against Human Trafficking and social distancing as well as other safety measures were observed. Attendees were mostly students of journalism, law, psychology and

medicine. The training focused on language and reporting about cases and victims of human trafficking, as well as law-enforcement interaction and trauma counselling, exit and reintegration programs. The conference and training aimed to supplement information and education in an area that is mostly ignored in schools and universities and provide the tools and resources these future professionals can use to contribute to the fight against modern slavery.





AIC Fellowship Program 2020: Sustainability during a Pandemic- Remodeling Everyday Reality Through the Prism of Christian Values



Valeriu Ghilețchi, former Moldovan MP and ECPM board member
Serghei Railean, Minister of Economy and Infrastructure
Veaceslav Ionița, polling expert
Roelof Bisschop, Dutch MP
Vitalie Guțu, former news director TVR Moldova (Moldovan branch of Romanian national television)
Igor Grosu, Moldovan MP
Eugen Ghilețchi, financial sector specialist



Stanislav Ghilețchi, AIC

The Academy for Integrity in Leadership was created in Moldova with the goal of getting Evangelical Christians involved in the public square (in politics at local and national level). The goal is achieved through two main activities: creating a network of like-minded Christians and equipping them with the tools and skills necessary to achieve the goal and be successful in public life.

The series of webinars targeted young professionals, current leaders in their fields, for additional professionalization and for complementing what is missing from public education: Christian leadership, value-based poli-

cymaking and relational economics. A special focus was given to the concepts of integrity and justice as pre-requisites for leadership, especially in a context like Moldova, where the citizens mistrust the government and perceive the legal justice system to be corrupt.

A new component of this year's programme was the grant awarded to some of the par-

ticipants to support their research on a topic related to and addressed in the fellowship programme.

At the end of the programme, there was an in-person event where participants were awarded diplomas and could interact with some of the speakers.





Peace for Peace: The Implications of the Abraham Accords for the EU



Amir Avivi, reserve Brigadier General in the Israeli Defense Forces
Michal Cotler-Wunsh, member of the Knesset



Bert-Jan Ruissen, MEP
Miriam Lexmann, MEP
Peter Östman, MP

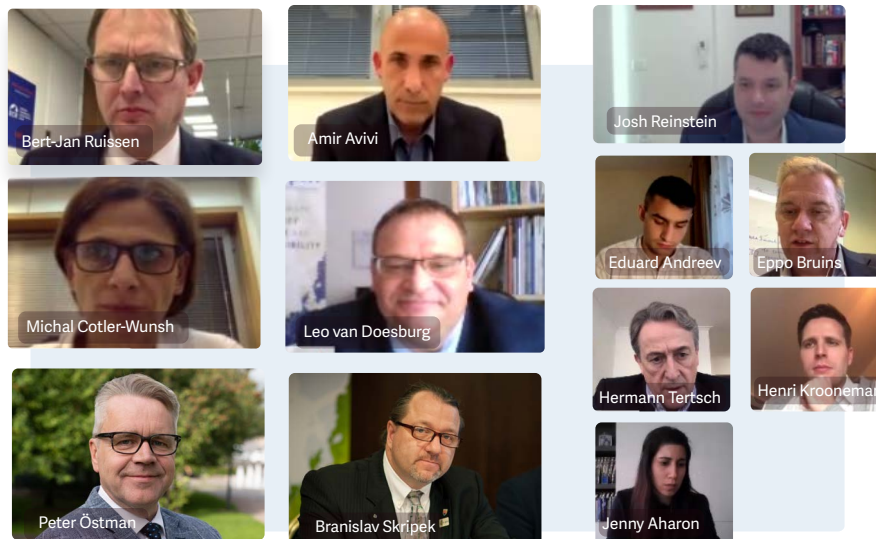
The online conference focused on the recent diplomatic agreements between Israel and United Arab Nations and Bahrain and between Israel and Sudan, brokered by the United States. The aim was to discuss the implications of the Abraham Accords for the European Union.

The speakers emphasized the historical significance of these accords and praised their strategic importance in maintaining stability in the region. It was noted by the other participants in the discussion that the European Union's lack of involvement in these accords or in similar efforts is noticeable.

The other participants who contributed to the discussion were:

- Branislav Škripek**, ECPM President
- Leo van Doesburg**, ECPM Director for European Affairs
- Josh Reinstein**, Israel Allies Foundation.

There were close to 60 participants online who engaged enthusiastically with the speakers during Q&A and drew from the main speakers' experience and speeches key lessons for the EU policies regarding the Middle East.



The Carrot or the Stick: How to Implement the New CAP Sustainability Measures

We sat down for an online interview with ECPM Member of European Parliament, Bert-Jan Ruissen, to discuss the new proposals in the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and how they should be enforced. Although the EU Commission would like to see a top-

down implementation, Ruissen argues for a bottom-up approach, where the farmers have more of a say and where incentives, rather than punishment, are the driving force for sustainable farming.



Scan and watch the full video.





Promoting Christian Values and ECPM in Croatia



Hrvoje Zekanović, Hrvatski Suverenisti
Ladislav Ilčić, President of Hrast and ECPM board member

Together with Hrvatski Suverenisti, we organized three conferences and a workshop in a few cities across Croatia where we presented the core values that define ECPM and spoke about ways they can be applied and adopted by politicians in Croatia. The events were aimed at believers and people interested in becoming involved in politics. The importance of connecting with other like-minded organizations and entities was emphasized as an important factor for gaining traction, increasing visibility and getting results at local and national level. The work and history of ECPM was presented as an example of successful organizing as the only European political party operating from an explicitly Christian- social position.



European Neighborhood Policy and Democracy in Belarus



Olga Lisitsa, activist, leader of protests in Lida, member of UPB
Anatoly Shirvel, journalist/ blogger, Minsk, Belarus
Valery Matskevich, spokesperson for Belarus presidential candidate Valeriy Tsepkalo
Irena Anosova, Director of Help Me Wroclaw, Poland
Dr. Alexander Milinkevich, Chancellor of the Belarusian Free University
Henri Kronneman, SGP Netherlands

We partnered with SGP* Netherlands and BCD** Belarus for a two-day conference where we discussed the fraudulent elections results in Belarus this summer and the continuous opposition protests that followed it. The speakers focused on the EU neighborhood policy in Belarus and its shortcomings. The turmoil this year exposed the vulnerabilities in the democratic processes in Belarus; the speakers as well as the audience have discussed the role the EU can play in it. Representatives of non-profit organizations have spoken also about Belarussian victims of government actions, arrested protestors and political prisoners and ways they can be helped with legal assistance or in other practical ways.



*SGP- The Reformed Dutch Party
 **BCD- Belarus Christian-Democratic Party



EU Politics Workshop



George Rukhadze, ECPM Vice-President and CDPP Acting Chairman

Ghia Japaridze, Professor at University of Georgia

Ghia Abashidze, Political Analyst at EU Representative Office in Georgia

Natalya Sabanadze, Georgia's former Ambassador to the EU

Archil Kharaulashvili, Head of NATO/EU integration department at Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Alex Petriashvili, former State Minister for European and Euro- Atlantic Integration.

ECPM, together with the Christian Democratic People's Party of Georgia (CDPP), organized a workshop on the history of the European Union, its main institutions, and its relationship with Georgia.

The event aimed to increase awareness of EU politics and provide information on the processes and policies at its core for the 30 CDPP/ YCD leaders present. The lectures focused primarily on the history of the European Union, starting with the Steel and

Coal Community to the present day. The speakers used interactive and visual materials to present the various EU institutions, their roles, and the ways they interact with each other, as well as the main European political parties and groups and their political priorities. An overview of Georgia's relations and cooperation with the European Union from 1990 until now was given on the second day of the workshop. The participants were able to engage lively with the speakers throughout the event.





ECPYouth



Fake News and Disinformation: How to Deal with It?



- Ania Helseth**, EU Policy Manager Facebook
- Maarten Schenk**, Fact Checker, COO/CTO at LeadStories.com
- Dr. Adina Portaru**, Legal Counsel, ADF International
- Leo van Doesburg**, ECPM Director for European Affairs.

We started off this year in Brussels with a successful event organized in the European Parliament on the topic of fake news and disinformation. We had with us experts from the world of media, business, think-tanks and advocacy who spoke on the various effects fake news has on our conscience, perception and actions. There is a well-known debate and contention between protecting freedom of speech and censoring speech that contains

inaccuracies or spreads falsehoods. Daniel Holten of ECPYouth (Working Group Politics) pointed to educating ourselves in order to recognize and counteract false information when it reaches us. He presented the ECPYouth document *Tell the Truth* which was disseminated among the participants. Leo van Doesburg spoke at the conference on behalf of the ECPM.



ECPYouth General Assembly- theme launch



The first General Assembly this year was held in Zagreb, Croatia. Following the organizational part of the Assembly, we had a regional conference with our friends from HRAST Youth where we kicked off this year's theme about AI (Artificial Intelligence). The discussions on the theme of AI were rich and interesting; we realized the topic is much more complex and profound than we thought. Grateful for each participant who brought their contribution.

We had the honor to join Ladislav Ilčić, the President of Hrast, at the Croatian Parliament, where we held a press conference and spoke about artificial intelligence from a Christian perspective.

Following the coronavirus outbreak in March, we decided to shift to online webinars and virtual events.





Artificial Intelligence- Blessing or a Curse?

In May, we continued our discussions on our yearly theme by having Stanislav Ghilețchi (member of our Working Group Politics) from the Academy for Integrity in Leadership speak about AI in today's world- its usage and implications. It was a great panel discussion on the usefulness of AI for life in general, but also about some of the dangers or ethical implications.



Scan and watch the full video.



Floris Wagenaar

Eduard Andreev

Sammy

Klariska ten Napel

Hanna

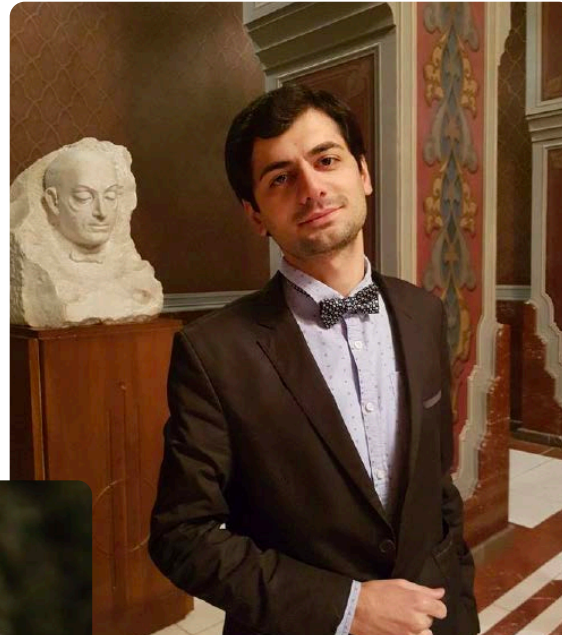
Scan and watch the full video.

In June, Samuel Weor, an ICT specialist, and expert in cybersecurity, spoke about various applications of Artificial Intelligence and the ways Christians can embrace this new technology. The industries where AI is being widely used and can make a difference is eCommerce, healthcare, logistics, automotive industry, even education. He emphasized the fact that when Christians know who they are in Christ and why they believe and act the way they do, they can be free to embrace new technology like AI as a means to an end, as a tool for its usefulness, nothing more. Samuel added the need for Christians to diversify their skill set and think ahead: this sector will need ethicists to advise on decisions and development, problems we haven't seen before will arise and it is best if we prepare and get ahead of things.



ECPYouth General Assembly

Our second yearly General Assembly took place online, due to the restrictions caused by the coronavirus pandemic. During this assembly, we have re-elected five members of our board, including President Klariska ten Napel. At the same time, board member Marysia Skwarcan's term has reached an end. George Labadze, from Georgia, will follow her as Board Secretary.



ECPYouth Statement on the Situation in Belarus

This summer has been marked by the presidential elections and the unrest that followed in Belarus. The European Council has called these elections "neither free, nor fair" and has repeatedly asked Lukashenko to stop persecuting the peaceful protestors. We joined the European voices calling out the situation in Belarus and made the following statement:

In October, we published a video in which our board members and several representatives of our member organizations, spoke out against the political oppression and violence in Belarus. We asked everyone who watched the video to stand together and pray for Belarus.



Scan and watch the full video.

European Christian Political Youth
 Bergstraat 33
 3811 NG Amersfoort
 The Netherlands
 Tel +31 33 304 00 11
 www.ecpyouth.eu
 info@ecpyouth.eu

Statement on the Recent Developments in Belarus

We, the European Christian Political Youth, have been following, with great anxiety, the increasingly alarming news about the political situation in the Republic of Belarus.

In view of the upcoming presidential elections and a huge decrease of support for the President-in-Office, Alexander Lukashenko, the authorities are imposing severe restrictions to their citizens' civil rights and freedoms.

For several weeks now, hundreds of political activists, independent journalists, politicians and those who sympathize with them in a gesture of 'chain of solidarity', which came out in the streets of Belarus, are being detained and arrested daily. These actions of the Belarusian authorities go against the inviolable principle of human dignity.

We cannot remain silent about these events and strongly condemn the actions of the Belarusian authorities. ECPYouth fully sympathizes with the Belarusian civil society in their effort to have free and fair democratic elections, and an independent state, which guarantees protection of rights and freedoms of their citizens. Our prayers are with the people of Belarus.

In the view of the aforementioned, ECPYouth urges President Alexander Lukashenko and the Belarusian government to stop further detentions, arrests, disruptions of peaceful demonstrations and punishments of their own citizens for their rightful social and political activism.

June 24, 2020



Switzerland Terminating Relationship with EU?



Nik Gugger, MP Evangelical People's Party (EVP)

Dominic Taubert, Co-chair of Young Evangelical People's Party (jEVP)

Klariska ten Napel, President of ECPYouth



Eduard Andreev, ECPYouth

Communications

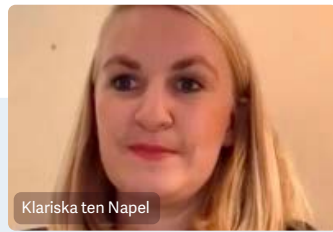
In September, we organized an online panel with our member organization Junge Evangelische Volkspartei (jEVP) on the referendum taking place in Switzerland regarding Swiss-EU cooperation. The initiative subjected to the referendum refers to the free movement of people with EU, a bilateral agreement that was part of a bigger treaty between Switzerland and the EU.

Since Switzerland is not an EU member state, once one of these accords from the treaty is voted down, the other ones are endangered as well. The initiative was brought forth by the far-right party- Swiss People's Party (SVP)- who have a strong anti-immigration rhetoric in Switzerland.

** The referendum took place on September 27 and it was voted down, so free movement between Switzerland and EU is maintained.



Eduard Andreev



Klariska ten Napel



Dominic Taubert



Nik Gugger



Scan and watch the full video.



Statement on the Terrorist Attacks in France and Austria

We could not remain silent in the wake of the attacks in France and Austria. Therefore, we published a video in which we expressed our deepest sorrow for the victims of these horrific events. We urged people to pray "for the end of the violent attacks and for the

restoration of mutual respect, dignity and peace among all people." We closed the video with the statement "wir werden euch nicht vergessen" ("we will not forget you").



Scan and watch the full video.





Poland's Pro-Life Ruling

At the end of October, the Constitutional Court in Poland has ruled that provisions permitting abortions due to "a high likelihood of a severe and irreversible disability of the fetus or an incurable life-threatening illness", which make up almost all pregnancy terminations in the country, are unconstitutional.

For now, abortion remains legal only in cases of incest, rape, and when mother's health or life is at risk. This ruling sparked country-wide protests which went on for several weeks. In response, we published several articles on our social media written by our board members, which you can read by accessing the links below:

Abortion in Poland, by **Marysia Skwarcan & Ewa Rejman**



Right to Life: Absolute or Conditional, by **Victoria Gloria Sophia**



Freedom of Decision, by **Magdalena Vakulova**



In November, our General Secretary- Floris Wagenaar- who had assisted the board in administrative matters for the past three years, left ECPYouth, after accepting another position. A selection procedure has been initiated to find a new General Secretary.

We are very thankful for the opportunities the Lord gave us even in these times of trial. We keep trusting the Lord and we are looking forward to many ways in which we will continue to inspire, equip, and connect young Christian politicians next year.





Supporting the Dignity of Black Lives

On June 2, ECPM published the following statement on our social media channels. We find what happened to George Floyd and other people of color appalling and we decided to take a stand. Our statement in no way endorses any particular organization, it simply states that the lives of black people (in Europe, US and all over the world) matter and should be protected and respected.

Watching what is going on in US we can't help but stand with our brothers and sisters of color and grieve with them. George Floyd's death is a tragedy. Every human being is intrinsically valuable and must be treated with dignity, regardless of skin color.

We see and recognize the systemic racism and inequality they have been facing for centuries (in US but also in Europe) and we support every disenfranchised person's right to protest.

That being said, violence is never the answer. We call on looters as well as authorities to refrain from any type of violence and work towards de-escalating the situation. It is important to prevent further loss of life, injury and destruction of property.

Now that protests supporting Black lives are popping up everywhere in the world we also call on people to remember the threat of coronavirus is still out there, so please be safe, mind the distancing regulations and take all precautions necessary!





The Views of ECPM MEPs on the European Commission's Recovery Plan for Europe

At the end of May 2020, the European Commission has put forward a proposal for the economic recovery in Europe in the aftermath of coronavirus. The Recovery Plan is two-fold: (1) Next Generation EU is a new recovery instrument of €750 billion which will boost the EU budget with new financing raised on the financial markets for 2021-2024, an instrument which is part of the larger (2) Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 of more than €1 Trillion. Considering that the European Council will discuss this issue tomorrow via videoconference in order to make decisions on the proposed recovery plan, the ECPM MEPs would like to mention the following:

The ECPM MEPs agree overall with the EU's involvement and facilitating the recovery process, but there are some boundaries which should not be crossed. MEP **Cristian Terheş**, for instance, points to the subsidiarity principle which is at risk: "While a recovery plan is needed to boost the economies of the EU Members States, certain provisions in this recovery plan will lend more power to the European bureaucracy, implicitly undermining the sovereignty

of the Members States, which is deeply concerning. In order to have a stronger, united Europe of nations, the solutions of this recovery plan have to be in line with the constitutional requirements of each Member State."

Another aspect which is concerning is the huge amount of debt this recovery plan entails. Our MEP from The Netherlands, **Bert-Jan Ruissen**, echoed that worry by saying that "in difficult times like these the need for European solidarity is evident. However, the European Commission is proposing in its COVID19 recovery plan to show solidarity by issuing an enormous common debt under the name 'Next Generation EU', partly paid for through common taxes. In my opinion, these plans are the opposite of showing solidarity, and instead, create a risky and unsustainable debt union. This is not a solution for the current crisis, as it merely passes the debt on to the next generation of Europeans."

The greatest challenge of the recovery plan has proven to be the differences in the various economies of the EU and striking a balance of fairness when it comes to the benefits and

obligations we share on this path to rebuilding. **Peter van Dalen**, MEP rightly said that "it is in the Dutch interest that countries such as Italy remain in good financial standing. After all, many of our companies export goods there and we have financial interests south of the Alps and the Pyrenees." He also pointed to the reforms that were already underway in the Southern European countries when the pandemic hit. "The incentive for reforms could be removed if Southern governments are simply given handouts. Rather, it seems the key to finding a solution is an extensive loan setup for these countries, the conditions of which should be tied to environmental and climate objectives. That way, financial restoration leads to creation restoration, which is necessary."

Our MEP from Germany, **Helmut Geuking**, shares the same view on lending to the most affected countries, taking it a step further on the specifics: "I propose the introduction of 'single purpose bonds', meaning loan packages that would finance a specific purpose (childcare support for parents, infrastructure projects, climate protection measures etc.). The purpose and amount need to be jointly agreed upon, the bonds can only be held by the European Central Bank and they would carry a repayment date, instead of interest. I believe this is needed in order to prevent the euro from falling apart; it would be a long-term, future-proof and flexible solution in order to stabilize Europe and reconcile the independence of Member States with economic development/ responsibility and reform demands. This would not represent a significant burden for future generation."





Declaration of ECPM Members of Parliament on the Freedom of Religion or Belief in Iran

ECPM Members of the European Parliament are greatly concerned about the situation of Christians in Iran and thus, make the following statement:

We, as ECPM MEPs are concerned about the freedoms and rights of Christians in Iran. Estimates say there are between 300,000 and 1,000,000 Christians (<1% of the population) living in Iran and many of them are harassed, beaten or jailed regularly for their faith. In jail they are often tortured and denied healthcare. The UN Special Rapporteur on human rights has called on Iran to temporarily release all its political prisoners during the pandemic.

The only Christian minority tolerated in Iran are people of Syriac or Armenian ethnicity. It is not allowed for a Muslim to convert to Christianity. It is illegal to produce Christian literature or to hold religious services in any other language than Syriac or Armenian and churches have been shut down for conducting religious services in Farsi.

We find it disturbing that in 2018 as well as in 2019 there has been a rise in arrests of Christians and other religious minorities (Baha'i, Sufi, Sunni) in Iran, with Christians being specifically targeted at Christmas. We draw attention to the fact that the US has been designating Iran a "country of particular concern" (CPC) since 1999 under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 for having engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedoms.

Religious freedom represents more than the freedom to believe privately. It is also the freedom to talk about and act in accordance with your core beliefs without interference from the government. Iran blatantly disregards this. We utterly condemn the Iranian government's systematic persecution, surveillance, harassment and torture of Christians and other religious minorities.

We call on all EU institutions to denounce Iran's violation of religious freedom and human rights and to pressure Iran into fulfilling its international obligations under the UDHR and the ICCPR. Iran must commit to protecting the freedom of Christians and of the other religious minorities in the country.

We urge NGOs active in this area to report violations of the Freedom of Religion or Belief perpetrated by Iran and we urge world leaders and NGOs to continue to advocate for the speedy release of Christians imprisoned in Iran because of their faith.

Iran is acting in a totalitarian and oppressive way towards women, religious minorities or anyone who dares to speak against the regime. The EU has had a permissive attitude towards Iran's behavior so far, but we call on the EP, the Commission and the Council to reconsider its diplomatic and economic stance. The European Union can only be credible towards its own citizens and member states if it upholds the same values at home and abroad.





Declaration on the New Law in Montenegro Regarding Religious Minorities

On December 27, 2019, the Parliament of Montenegro adopted a law titled “Freedom of Religion or Belief and Legal Status of Religious Communities”, which came into effect on January 8, 2020.

The law regulates two aspects: the registration and legal recognition of all religious communities in Montenegro and the estate and possessions of a church. The new registration system is rather complicated and contradictory, and in some of its provisions seems to discriminate against the Serbian Orthodox Church, while favoring the Montenegrin Orthodox Church. The second point of contention is church property. Unless clear evidence of ownership is supplied, the State will claim it. The Serbian Orthodox Church claims that this stipulation targets them as well and that the government of Montenegro intends to nationalize its property.

This law was also criticized on two points regarding religious education. Firstly, while the right of parents to educate their children according to their beliefs is recognized, it has to be done with respect for the “psychological integrity of the child” (Art.52) and only up to age eleven. Once the child is twelve years old, the child decides for him/herself. Secondly, no religious community or group is allowed to establish a religious primary school.

The law was examined by the European Commission for Democracy Through Law of the Council of Europe (the Venice Commission). The Commission continuously emphasized the need for the government to hold public consultations with all religious groups in Montenegro, a process which was limited in practice. Also, the obligation to register goes against the principle enshrined in the Venice Commission’s guidelines on the legal personality of religious communities.

The law was finally voted in a contentious atmosphere: during the night, while opposition members and religious figures were arrested, and protesters rioted in the streets on the day of the vote.

We, the ECPM MEPs, call on the government of Montenegro to abide by and implement the recommendations of the Venice Commission,

especially regarding the use of church property and registration of religious communities. If amending the current law is required, we urge the government to do so following an adequate and transparent consultation process with all stakeholders involved, without showing any bias.

We also ask the Montenegrin government to refrain from using violence against its own citizens and to cultivate a climate of inclusivity and mutual respect in its interaction with the religious groups and especially with the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Lastly, the European Commission needs to closely monitor the performance of the government of Montenegro regarding freedom of religion, as it constitutes an essential element of the EU Accession process.



Decrying the Recent Terrorist Attacks in Europe

In view of the recent terrorist attacks in Europe, ECPM published the following statement on our social media platforms. We mourn the loss of life and we find the attacks utterly reprehensible.

We read with horror about the terrorist attacks in France- the murder of professor Samuel Paty and now the murders in Nice by Islamic extremists.

We condemn such horrendous crimes, and we are concerned to see such a violent and disproportionate reaction to persons using their freedom of speech or participating in a religious service.

We plead with authorities, governments, educators, religious communities and the civil society to increase their vigilance and the measures for counteracting this trend.

At the same time, we cannot give in to Islamophobia and forget to treat our neighbors, colleagues and friends with the dignity they deserve, because of the radical actions of the extremists in their community. Matching evil with more evil is not an answer.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims in France and their families. We pray the Lord's comfort over them and may He provide them with strength these days.

Macedonian and Albanian Accession to the EU Blocked Because of Bilateral Issues

On the 17th of November, Bulgaria vetoed the accession of North Macedonia and Albania to the EU. It was a move that hurt the aspirations of both the Macedonian and the Albanian people to participate in EU integration. The path for accessing the EU was opened after the Prespa Agreement which was signed in 2018 and ended a bitter dispute between Athens and Skopje that had lasted for more than thirty years.

Officials in Bulgaria accused the Macedonian government for distorting history and disrespecting the cultural history of Bulgaria; asking among others, that a roadmap for the implementation of a 2017 friendship treaty between the two countries must be added to the initial stage of accession negotiations. However, these disagreements are not part of the Copenhagen Criteria. Additionally, the EU Enlargement Strategy calls for the addressing of bilateral issues, including those that pertain to opposed views of recent history, by the parties concerned without holding up the accession process.

ECPM believes that the stance of Bulgaria creates a dangerous precedent and may enable other governments in the area to put forward similar issues in the future when their neighbors apply for EU membership. One must take into consideration that all countries in South-Eastern Europe tend to give excessive emphasis to historical disputes. Addressing historical and cultural disputes should be part of a process of developing productive bilateral relations. They should be discussed in a spirit of cooperation and not put forward as a reason to block the accession process. Once the accession negotiations start, both countries will have the opportunity to discuss these issues in a spirit of mutual respect. By blocking the accession process, the options that each government has at its disposal become limited, and extremist voices on both sides of the border are strengthened.

The European Council should respect the Copenhagen Criteria and therefore stop any attempt by Member States to block the accession of a potential member state based on bilateral political issues, including opposing views on history.



New Members

PNTCD Romania

The Christian- Democratic National Peasants' Party



Hrvatski Suverenisti
(Croatian Sovereignists)



Cristian Terheș

MEP

Country
Romania

Political party
PNTCD Romania, The Christian- Democratic National Peasants' Party

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University, expert in
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Political party

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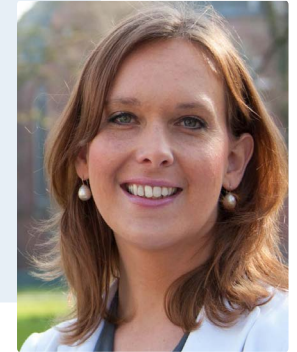
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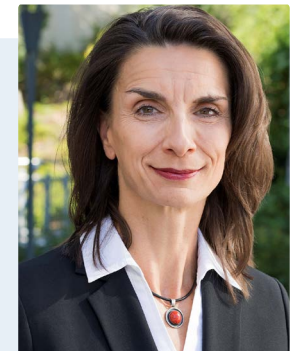
Gemrany

Employment

Chairwoman of BündnisC Germany

Political party

BündnisC Germany





ECPM MEPs

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	Political party	Website
Germany	Familien Partei	familien-partei-europa.eu



Cristian Terheş

Country	Political party	Website
Romania	PNȚCD (The Christian-Democrat National Peasant Party)	pnctcd.ro



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.

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.



ECPM Staff

Head Office

Bergstraat 33
3811 NG Amersfoort
The Netherlands



Auke Minnema

General Director

office@ecpm.info



Maria van Oost

Manager of Events and Administration

administration@ecpm.info



Leo van Doesburg

Director for European Affairs and Policy Advising

lvdoesburg@ecpm.info

leovandoesburg.blogspot.com



Lefteris Kaloterakis

Assistant to the Director for European Affairs and Office Manager

lk@ecpm.info

Brussels Office

205/14 Rue Belliard
1040 Brussels, Belgium
+32 2 230 13 00



Adriana Rus

Communications Officer

arus@ecpm.info



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You can contact us at one of our two offices

Head Office Netherlands

Bergstraat 33
3811 NG Amersfoort
The Netherlands

Telephone

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Brussels Office

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1040 Brussels
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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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