

Summary Election Manifesto 2019



**Promoting
Christian Values in
European Politics**

Introduction

Europe is going through very turbulent times. In the previous mandate, the EU faced a refugee crisis, a Euro crisis and one of their member states has decided to leave the European Union. Besides we see a deepening rift between Eastern and Western member states. In this election manifesto for the 2019 elections of the European Parliament, ECPM aims to show you how we want to face the challenges the EU is facing and ECPM's vision on how to make the European Union a better place.

Challenges are also seen in many European countries where our member parties face a continuous push by activist NGOs of a radical left-liberal agenda that aims to fundamentally change the core concepts of humanity. On the other hand, there is a continuing strong presence of radical right-wing parties that espouse a view of humanity and society that does not match our Christian view on human dignity and a relational society.

At the same time, there is significant economic growth in the EU. This is good news for many families as unemployment is slowly but steadily decreasing. However, it is a challenge to reconcile this economic growth with the need to be sustainable in resources. Furthermore, fundamental economic inequality remains as economic growth and employment does not elevate all Europeans and EU member states in the same degree. A mountain of debt still looms over Europe's economies.

In all these developments and moving towards the European Elections of May 2019, the ECPM wants to be clear about its core values and continue to contribute to human flourishing and give answers to these challenges.

ECPM accepts the European Union as a political and social reality and has a constructive but critical approach to the current shape of the EU. In many cases there is a need to reduce the level of involvement from the EU institutions. For this reason, the ECPM recommends strictly respecting the principle of subsidiarity and clear reforms outlining where the EU institutions are still needed and EU regulation required. We are a forward-looking party that realizes that we live in a world that is in many aspects so interconnected that the EU is simply necessary. Furthermore, we acknowledge the stability in Europe to which the EU has contributed. This leads to an approach in which both national and EU level issues are named in this manifesto, in which EU competences are clearly distinguished from national competences.

As ECPM members we find each other in the core issues on which we agree. This is our strength in which we share fundamental values and goals and can work together regardless of differences on single issues. Together we have hope for Europe in the coming years and we feel the responsibility to work on a Europe in which life is valued and society is fruitful in such a manner that it might be blessed with peace and stability for the generations to come. Vote on ECPM members and have faith in your vote!

1. A Europe of Human Dignity

Human dignity expresses the intrinsic value of every human being. It is inviolable and must be respected and protected, as is 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.

Bioethics

Life is God-given and should be protected from conception to natural death. ECPM believes that a vibrant and positive Europe should celebrate and promote life. Because of the subsidiarity principle ECPM believes that the European Institutions should not interfere in bio-ethical issues and the definition of life. 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. Human dignity is the basis of human rights. ECPM believes that both European Institutions and member states should always uphold the principle of human dignity, from conception until natural death.

Rights of children

The rights of the child are set out in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Article 24/2) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (UN 1989) (Article 3). ECPM supports the principle that 'the best interests of the child' should be the primary consideration in all action related to children taken by public authorities both at the European and the national level.

Rights of children already start at conception. Unborn children should be included in the right to live. We therefore support all kinds of coaching and support for expectant mothers.

Children are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion, violence and abuse. However, ECPM stresses that sustainable policies in favour of the family are the most effective way to improve children's living conditions and opportunities. Parents have a natural interest in protecting the rights of their children. EU law and national legislation must guarantee balanced rights for both.

Freedom of education

ECPM observes that the EU has tried to interfere extensively in the school programs by indicating a specific form of education. We are convinced that parents should have freedom to choose which values and beliefs they want to pass onto their children. It is not a competence of the European Union to decide over such topics. This is a case for the member states themselves to decide upon.

Education is very important for children to get a good future. ECPM therefore supports education that strives to get the best out of children. We call upon governments to take care of community schools, to invest and support in them so that children can go to school close to their homes. In certain circumstances, home schooling can be a good alternative.

Aging

Thanks to better healthcare our society is ageing. Many elderly people face difficulties in that, especially loneliness. ECPM sees these problems and wants to address them. We stand for ageing with dignity. Our elderly people should be treated with respect and gratitude and our societies should cherish them and care for them. We believe that informal and customized care should be prioritized. Especially people taking care of their neighbours or family members should get financial support for their work.

When the end of life is near, ECPM believes that palliative care should be supported. Ending life when it is 'not worthy to live' is not an option to us, as life is given and created by God. We believe that with a

social network, customized care, life-coaches for mental health and palliative care, life can be dignified till the end.

Disabilities

ECPM believes that every life matters, even if it is not viewed as perfect. People with disabilities are fully part of our societies, no matter if they are physically or mentally disabled. We urge countries to support people with disabilities, both financially and judicially.

Child sexual exploitation online

ECPM is concerned about child sexual exploitation online which constitutes a serious violation of children's fundamental rights. The definition of child sexual abuse materials should be clarified in the international contexts. Children need to be informed in an easy and child-friendly way of the risks and consequences of using their personal data and images online. Their personal data online must be duly protected. For all these purposes, child protection officers, paediatricians and youth and children's organizations must play an active role in raising awareness on this issue and already existing EU legislation (Directive 2011/92) on this subject should be rigorously enforced.

Refugee children

We do firmly believe that the EU member states should cooperate on supporting child protection systems where the child's best interests should be considered, regardless of their status. The care that refugee minors receive in the reception cares is key factor in their long-term adjustment and should be regulated at the national level. ECPM suggests that the action at European level should be complementary to the member states' measures.

2. An Economy that Works for People and Planet

ECPM has a relational view of economy and understands the purpose of all economic activity is supporting life and advancing wellbeing for all. We consider the principles of free trade and open market economy as very important for Europe's economies but with adequate checks and balances in place which address issues such as environmental standards and tax evasion.

The end of the status quo and the road ahead

The ECPM is concerned that the current common practice in economic reform of mainstream parties leads to growth which does not translate in more economical long-term security for many people.

We believe real reform should have a positive impact on all stakeholders in the economy, including financial markets, shareholders and multinationals. The ECPM considers future reforms of the EU should be based on a broader and more inclusive stakeholder-based way of thinking about economy, with a particular importance given to the environment.

A number of key goals for EU and national economic policy can be derived from this approach to economy. Economic policy should strive for an economy that:

- Is people-centred and not financially centred
- Applies the potential of technology by respecting human dignity
- Insists on transparency
- Cultivates long term thinking

- Is as inclusive as possible and does not cave in to pressure from vested interests at the expense of other stakeholders and does not erode the rule of law and democracy

Based on these principles the ECPM has put forward a few policy recommendations for both the EU and member state level.

Goals for reforming European economies

On EU level measures should be introduced which enable EU policies to benefit all stakeholders in the economy. On member state level: there should be particular attention to addressing debt and improving fiscal transparency.

Innovation: Research & Development

ECPM supports investment in innovation as it believes Europe can further strengthen its position in the world as a technology hub by allocating more to Research & Development.

Directions of Research and Development governments should invest towards:

1. Offering support to creative entrepreneurs in terms of coaching and facilities in order to help them survive and grow and enabling the market to adopt innovations.
2. Defining several key technology areas in which governments would like to invest, such as through the “cluster approach”, where existing strong business clusters are helped to become even more innovative and worldwide competitive.
3. Implementing a “desired direction approach” for innovation focusing on research & development initiatives which make the economy greener, such as related to sustainable energy, building and production technologies.
4. Raising the average education level of citizens.
5. Combating corruption and implementing governmental accountability.

Sustainability, Industry and Agriculture

ECPM believes that sustainability, industry and agriculture of EU member states are clearly interdependent and as such, climate change is a phenomenon that should be dealt with together at EU level.

Sustainability

ECPM believes that wise stewardship is a biblical assignment and that the EU can be a driving force for a sustainable Europe as it can decide on goals for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions such as CO₂, for energy saving and for renewable energy.

Agriculture and fishery

ECPM is in favour of EU support for member state reform of their agricultural sector but believes there should not be conditions placed as to which direction these should take. ECPM, therefore, would like to see the EU reforms to its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) aimed at establishing goals and not focusing on specific methods.

Regarding fishery, ECPM believes that it should be a priority for EU Institutions to deliver on the promise of regionalization and that the powerbase should shift from Brussels to the regions.

Industry & transportation

ECPM supports and encourages EU advocating green sustainable industries, having a leading role in innovation and ensuring that the polluter pays. ECPM, therefore, sees the main role of the EU in making sure that all EU members are encouraged to foster clean and green industries.

Regarding the area of transportation, ECPM supports the current policies in place but continues to call for the principle of subsidiarity to be implemented, enabling EU member states to have the freedom to form their own policies for which transport modality they favour or infrastructure they build.

Protection of the environment

ECPM considers protection of the environment a very important policy issue of the EU. We have the responsibility to protect the environment not only for the sake of nature but for the sake of our current and future generations.

ECPM believes that technological innovation can be used to protect the environment, minimize the negative effects caused by us and also provide the energy and resources we need to live.

3. 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. ECPM recognizes the family as the most important social entity, 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'. We believe that the quality of life of a human being depends on the quality of his relations with others and the strongest and earliest connection in life is the family.

The family is a micro-society where elementary skills and experiences are being conveyed. ECPM promotes policies which will increase the capability of individuals to create and live in lifelong devoted relationships – in marriage and family. Today more and more families are in crisis. We value counselling and are standing firm for the rights of children in case relationships are ending.

Family policy is foremost a matter of national policy. Based on the principles of subsidiarity the European institutions should not interfere in family policies. However, many topics where the EU does have the power to make legislation are related to family policy, as for example labour laws. On a national level, ECPM promotes policies supporting parenthood and creating conditions that are conducive to child-raising. We do firmly believe that the policies fostering reconciliation between qualifications, labour market participation and family life affect economic growth positively in the long run. We believe that societies that are rooted in strong families are more relational, compassionate and sustainable.

Men and women should have the choice between childcare services and working fewer hours to take care of their children, especially if it concerns children with disabilities. Investing in children is investing in the future and in society. Parents should not be financially punished for taking responsibility to raise their children. The right conditions are especially important for single parents. Thus, flexibility and space for part-time jobs, enough maternity and parental leave and childcare opportunities within companies are essential. ECPM also supports programs which will decrease addictions and violence among youth and all other factors which disable them to realise stable and happy family life.

In family policy, it is important to touch upon the future of lower educated labour force in Europe. More and more jobs for people with lower education are replaced by computerization and automatization of production/business processes based on artificial intelligence. Even though tourism as a sector is

increasing Europe wide and is a prime sector for offering jobs for people with lower education, it cannot be denied that there is a threat of increasing long-term unemployment, in especially this vulnerable group of the population. Long-term sustainable solutions for this unemployment problem require careful thought and planning. Based on its Christian principles, ECPM strongly advocates policies for an inclusive Europe, which should offer support to member states and individual regions on policies to avoid people losing contact with available job opportunities. Through building an innovative economy we would avoid migration out of poverty or necessity from Central/Eastern Europe to Western Europe, which has a large and negative impact on the parts of the families that are left behind.

4. Freedom, Security and Stability

Real freedom of faith, conscience and expression only becomes visible through relations with those who feel, think or act differently. ECPM believes there must be a fundamental freedom to disagree with the view of the majority on any subject. ECPM is also worried by the lack of freedom of religion in many parts of the world. The European Union and its Members should promote a culture of freedom and forcefully support those who defend and promote freedom in their country or region.

Foreign affairs

The ECPM approach to foreign affairs is based on the Christian understanding of human dignity. This means that every human being is equally valuable regardless of ethnicity or gender. Fundamental freedoms such as freedom of religion and belief, freedom of expression and political freedoms are the safeguard and practical expression of this understanding of human dignity. It is our firm conviction that the spread of fundamental freedoms is key for the development of a more secure and stable world.

Concerning the refugee crisis: if countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia were to implement fundamental freedoms and if these freedoms found root in their societies it would not only bring development but also greatly diminish the integration challenges in Europe. It is the most straightforward way in dealing with Islam fundamentalism by supporting a culture that will no longer be a breeding ground for terrorism. EU member states should cooperate in active support for states or regions that implement fundamental freedoms and give them preferential treatment. EU – level Trade Agreements must be based on human dignity and support the development of a free society. This approach rests on the common work of the EU member states who can only together decide where there is need of a common effort in foreign affairs.

Foreign Affairs continues to be the competence of the member states. The EU can only get involved by engaging with state-actors and non-state actors and implementing programs for that goal.

Supporting Israel is important to clarify to the MENA & Central Asian countries that the EU member states are serious in their commitment to fundamental rights and freedoms. The ECPM underscores the need to support the security of Israel and be clear on its right to exist.

Russia and China should understand that the EU member states do not support foreign aggression and expansionism and that a good relationship with the EU can only be achieved if aggressive ambitions are ended.

Security

Military co-operation

ECPM strongly believes that all European military co-operation can be best conducted within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Although a specific interest of the EU is the security and stability of the continent of Europe, this shared European interest does not mean that we believe the EU should have the authority over (European) or even integrated armed forces.

EU-Cooperation should therefore be focused on defensive measures which are in the interest of all. The aim of defence cooperation between member states should be to create more affordability and make technical cooperation possible. However, the current proposals for PESCO and the Single Defence market are, in the view of the ECPM, not the best solution.

Instead we propose:

- 1. More modular and flexible defence capability by investing in modular platforms with better standardized weapons and sensors;*
- 2. European Union-Battlegroups (EUBG) framework but on a voluntarily basis only. These structures should be modular and according to NATO standards, procedures and training;*
- 3. Standardized unit compositions so the national units will be able to plug & play easier into bi- or multinational units when needed.*

Border security

Some member countries are, in a way, responsible for the outside borders while others enjoy the benefits of that. Since the control of the external borders is of great importance for all countries involved it shouldn't be the sole responsibility for the "border" country alone.

Therefore, we propose that the EU external borders are also a responsibility of the EC / EEAS which means that if external borders are breached by third countries a firm response should be given in order to protect our European interests. EU member states should support the countries with EU external borders more, both in financial and material way.

Cyber security

ECPM believes that all EU member states need their own cyber units, which should be interconnected. All member states need to have a common base level when cyber security is concerned. Furthermore, there should be rules created on the UN level for cyberwarfare and unmanned (autonomous) systems. Both on the EU and national level it would be worth-wile to consider the idea of operational reservist cyberunits.

Anti-terrorism

The ECPM has been very consistent in voicing that terrorism can only be dealt with effectively if it is dealt with at its roots. Ultimately any form of terrorism starts with extremist ideology that encourages violence as a means to achieve political goals. The fight against terrorism in Europe cannot be disconnected from foreign policy and the need to set new priorities there as well.

There is an urgent need to:

- 1. Reassess all aid programs and other support given to entities outside the EU and third countries in order to ensure that no funding ends up in the hands of extremists;*
- 2. Increase effective cross-border training of civil servants and officers in police and justice departments;*
- 3. Effective exchange between EU member states of data regarding terror suspects or those in connection with them as well as extremist preachers;*
- 4. Member states with large presence of communities from the MENA region could consider developing similar guidelines regarding (religious) leaders who are strongly connected to third countries;*
- 5. Effective monitoring of refugee streams and developing strategies inside asylum centres done in cooperation with those member states that are most affected;*
- 6. All existing EU level structures that deal with terrorism should get the funding and support that will enable them to cooperate more effectively with the member states where needed.*

5. Fighting Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery is an ultimate de-humanizing act that reduces people to trading objects. It distorts relationships and severely hurts people, making it a difficult process to re-establish new healthy relationships. Most of the victims are used for forced labour or human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Since human trafficking is a cross-border crime, combating it requires international cooperation. ECPM strongly favours the Nordic model approach to combating this crime, which focuses on criminalizing the client and the trafficker.

Trafficking for labour exploitation also continues to be on the rise. The ECPM believes an effective way of addressing this issue is to aim efforts for combating this crime at all levels of the supply chain, with a focus on those sectors which have a high risk of exploitation (e.g. textile, agriculture, tourism).

The ECPM supports EU efforts to ensure adequate national implementation of the 2011 Directive on combating human trafficking.

6. Reforming the European Union

ECPM considers that the way the European Union works and acts needs to be reformed in order to enable it to be an instrument of peace which facilitates economic growth and cultural exchange more effectively. We believe that there should be less regulation and more focus on strengthening core EU values, such as the principles of subsidiarity, solidarity and diversity, together with the values of freedom, stewardship, responsibility and human dignity.

The ECPM believes reform should take place in the directions of:

1. More control and involvement by national governments;
2. Focus on the idea of European Community rather than a Union;
3. Reduce bureaucracy by reviewing EU agencies and eliminating non-performing ones;
4. A move from a 'one size fits all' approach to a 'one size facilitation national needs';
5. Prioritizing EU Neighborhood policy over EU accession (i.e. an EU focus on offering more possibilities for partnerships with non-EU countries without directly pursuing their membership);
6. Facilitating and organizing cooperation (i.e. on transnational issues such as energy safety and security; in formulating rules regarding tax havens and taxation of multinationals);
7. Periodically reviewing legislation and improving relations between EU institutions and states/national actors.
8. Funding of certain ideological groups and practices which do not fall under the competence of the EU must be reviewed.

7. Preserving Christian culture & heritage

ECPM recognizes the Christian roots of EU member states and believes that there is value in this heritage. Key aspects of this Christian cultural inheritance also stand at the foundation of the European Union, namely: freedom, solidarity, reconciliation, love, truth and respect for life. ECPM, therefore, strives to continue building on the values based in our common Christian foundation and opposes secular, anti-religious ideologies as well as standing against EU membership of Turkey.

ECPM is concerned with the situation of Christians in the world today as Christianity comprises the most persecuted religion in the world. Other religions, like Buddhism and Islam, also face persecution in different countries. We, therefore, promote and advocate for freedom of religion of belief as a right for everyone, regardless of their religious beliefs. ECPM understands freedom of religion and belief as a right that should be protected for everyone – each person has a right to manifest his/her beliefs.

At the same time, there are many challenges to freedom of religion or belief and freedom of conscience within Europe, e.g. education, medical area, public profession of faith etc. The state has an obligation to respect the right of freedom of conscience, as it is a right enshrined in international and European human rights legislation. We believe in the importance of the concept of conscientious objection and reasonable accommodation as tools to ensure the enjoyment of freedom of religion and expression by all citizens so that they can live in peace and harmony and in acceptance of their diversity.

- 1. The EU should, therefore, refrain from pursuing legislative initiatives that do not respect the principle of subsidiarity;*
- 2. The EU should recognise the role of faith-based organisations, give them more freedom and allow them to operate according to their founding principles;*
- 3. EU member states should be encouraged to enable their citizens to fully manifest their religion or belief in private or in public, making use of the concept of reasonable accommodation.*

Contact us

Head Office

Bergstraat 33
3811 NG Amersfoort
The Netherlands

Telephone

+31 33 304 00 11

Email

office@ecpm.info

Brussels Office

205/14 Rue Belliard
1040 Brussels
Belgium

Telephone

+32 2 230 13 00

Email

lvdoesburg@ecpm.info

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www.ecpm.info