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“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask to God who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does” (James 1:5-8)

We are living in challenging times. The economic crisis is hitting hard and the governments have to make tough decisions. Where do you cut in your expenditure? The danger of these big budget cuts is that it hits the hardest on the poor and marginalized in society. How to invest in order to stimulate the economy? Another question deals with the extent to which the European Union is obliged to help the different fragile economies, especially in the Euro zone. The mainstream view in the European political landscape is that more Europe is required in order to solve the crisis. More responsibilities are to be handed over to the European Union and the European institutions. The question is: do we really need more Europe or rather a better Europe?

Freedom of religion and conscience is increasingly under pressure in Europe. The Report on the Intolerance against Christians in 2011 - drafted by the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians, showed that 85% of all hate crimes with an anti-religion background in Europe are directed against Christians. This problem is also highlighted by the report of the OSCE on “Combating intolerance and the discrimination against Christians in the OSCE area”, which recommends that a public debate on intolerance and discrimination against Christian be initiated and that the right of Christians to participate fully in public life should be ensured. As you read through our yearbook, you will find that this topic was tackled with at several ECPM events as well as in a publication.

These challenging times often require difficult decisions. In the Bible, King Solomon felt this great responsibility very clearly when God asked him what he needed. He answered: “Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?” (1 Kings 3:9). During difficult times, Solomon asked for wisdom to do justice to his people, instead of asking something for himself. He received the following answer: “The LORD was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for a long life or wealth for yourself, nor have you asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart (...) Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for - both riches and honor - so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings” (1 Kings 3:10-13)

If we choose to be active Christians in politics, what are our motives? Do we strive for power? Do we aim to defeat our enemies? Do we seek wealth? King Solomon’s motivations were clear. He was looking for a ‘discerning heart to govern his people and to distinguish what is right and what is wrong, in administering justice’. This is precisely what God asks from us: “to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8) and represents a core value that ECPM intends to act upon. As we depend on God, we have to seek justice in Europe: public justice to discern what is right and wrong, and social justice to help the marginalized in society. In the passage from James 1, God promises to give wisdom to all who ask for it. However, the most challenging part comes when we have to rely solely on God to give us this wisdom instead of counting on our own. Because if we only partly rely on His wisdom, we become what the Scripture calls a “double minded man, unstable in all he does.”

In the Bible, there are many examples of believing politicians. We have so much to learn from them. We should, for example, have the passion of Moses, the pragmatic skills of Joseph, the faith of David, the wisdom of Solomon, the project management skills of Nehemia, the integrity of Daniel, the lobby skills of Mordehai, the diplomatic skills of Esther, but most of all, we need to follow the great Example and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, not only in our personal lives, but also in our profession.

We are thankful for the growing impact of ECPM in Europe and all the activities that were organized this year. We would like to thank all our friends who were involved in organizing trainings, conferences, seminars and other events and to everyone who sent their reports for this yearbook. Last but not least, we want to thank Lucian Enasoni for the design and for all the supporting work of Eunice Vatran.

But above all, we want to thank God for all His provision throughout the previous year. Because of His Goodness we had so many opportunities this year. By His Grace we hope to continue our activities towards promoting Christian Democratic values on all different political levels in Europe and wish all of our readers God’s Blessings, Wisdom and Protection!

Sincerely yours,

Editors:
Leo van Doesburg, External Affairs Manager
Guido van Beusekom, General Manager
About the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM)

Founded in 2002, the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) is a political organization, currently involved in 24 European countries, committed to promote Christian values on all levels of the European political field and to unite Christian politicians in Europe.

At this challenging time for Europe, we are grateful for the guiding role that Christian values can play in the continent as they draw attention to core principles that represent the solution to the economic and moral crisis we face today. In this context, ECPM is the only Christian, explicitly pro-life, European political party on the continent. It is unique in that it promotes politics inspired by Biblical values throughout the EU and beyond. Our activity mainly focuses on issues such as Human Dignity, Social and Public Justice, Sustainable Economy and the Family.

ECPM was launched in November 2002, when representatives of different political parties and denominations from over 15 European countries, decided to examine new opportunities for Christian politics in Europe. This took place at the conference “For a Christian Europe” in Lakitelek, Hungary. Following the 2005 founding congress in Estonia, many more activities took place between 2005-2009. Since 2010, the ECPM has been recognized as one of the ten European political parties, thus introducing an explicitly Christian Democratic political party into European politics.

ECPM aims to be active in every corner of Europe and on every political level. Therefore, ECPM provides trainings for politicians, is active in advocacy for our values at different political levels, and develops materials on actual political topics. ECPM also organizes conferences, seminars and thematic regional conferences in many countries all over Europe, as well as the annual ECPM General Assembly.

In terms of political representation, ECPM is present, through elected officials, in both the European Parliament and many national parliaments. Numerous Christian national parties, politicians, think tanks and NGO’s are connected through the international framework provided by ECPM and thus have the opportunity to combine their efforts in promoting Christian values in politics.

Through ECPM as a political channel, today you have the opportunity to raise awareness regarding the significant contribution of Christianity to the cultural and historical heritage of Europe and, more importantly, to stress the remarkable impact that Christian values can still have in the modern world today. Thank you in advance for faithfully contributing to the reiteration of Christian values in Europe and for helping us grow in our combined witness to the world around us.

Warm regards,
The ECPM Team

Special points of interest:

Protection of the family
When you invest in healthy families, based on the marriage between a man and a woman, you invest in current and future generations.

Human Dignity
Recognizing the inherent God-given value of each individual person from conception until natural death will ensure protection and respect for all human life.

Justice
Real freedom can only come with real justice. A just society based on social and public justice is a thriving society.

Sustainable Economy
God entrusts us as stewards of the resources He has given us in order to serve all people’s needs. These resources should be used creatively and with responsible concern for others (including future generations) and the environment.
ECPM’s 2011 Annual Overview reveals a vibrant growth and development towards a more committed and concerted Christian involvement in the European political arena.

2011 was an important year for ECPM, as it registered significant steps forward and a continuous growth that falls in consonance with previous years.

Not only has ECPM organized numerous conferences and events on a wide array of subjects, but it has also registered the emergence of new developments such as a deeper involvement in public policy, a more articulate stance on Human Dignity, stronger partnerships in Western Europe and a more active role in collaborating with local grassroots organizations throughout Europe.

In terms of events, we are grateful that all together, ECPM, ECPF and ECPYN, were active in 22 different countries. Events can be summarized as follows:

- ECPM organized 19 events (trainings, conferences) in 13 different countries;
- ECPM actively participated in 10 events organized in 10 different countries;
- ECPM representatives made 8 visits to 15 different countries;
- ECPF organized 5 events in 4 different countries;
- ECPYN organized 5 events in 4 different countries.

In addition to activities, however, considerable efforts were dedicated to the elaboration of publications as well, such as the ECPM publication on “Liberty of Faith and Conscience” and ECPF’s two publications on “Fair taxation and families” and “After capitalism”, the latter two of which were prepared in 2011 and are available to you in 2012.

The growth that ECPM has recorded in 2011, however, should not be accounted for only in terms of numbers of events and of newly welcomed members. Not only did ECPM organize more events than in previous years, but new directions have branched out in countries such as Spain, Russia, France and the United Kingdom, where ECPM visibility and activity had previously been limited.

**Increased Focus on Western Europe**

An encouraging development is that a growing number of activities were organized in West European countries, a shift that creates a better geographical balance in ECPM activities. One of the significant events that took place in Western Europe, in this sense, is last year’s Conference "Beyond Individualism", an activity that ECPM organized in collaboration with Christian Concern and the Christian Peoples Alliance in London. The purpose of the conference was to bring together Christians of different denominations in order to inquire into how Christian values and principles can be promoted and developed in UK politics. In addition to a large audience, the conference also benefited from good media coverage.
Supporting Grassroots Political Movements
Looking back, we observe the emergence of an increasing number of fresh political initiatives in Europe, which mainly focus on the promotion of Christian traditional family values. ECPM organized trainings for these new (potential) movements such as the ones in Spain and Croatia.

Supporting Christian Inter-Parliamentary Networks
ECPM became more involved in activities that aim at developing networks of Parliamentarians from different national parties in order to promote Christian values in their parliaments. This initiative is supported by ECPM in cooperation with the Bible Society in the UK, CARE for Europe and the European Evangelical Alliance. We are also pleased to mention the collaboration with the Dignitatis Humanea Institute in Rome towards developing Parliamentary Working Groups designed to promote the fact that we are created in the image and likeness of God from conception until natural death.

Support in Policy Making
With help from organizations in our growing network, we are more equipped to assist politicians in preparing their policies and amendments on important legislative proposals that they launch in their parliaments. On request, we are able to assist several politicians in drafting amendments on a wide array of topics such as family law, human rights and freedom of religion. The ECPM publication on “Liberty of Faith and Conscience” also proved to be a useful tool as politicians seek means of addressing the existing challenges related to this fundamental right.

Country Visits
ECPM Representatives also visited different countries and met with contact persons and/or members in order to gain insight not only into the situation of their countries but also into the activity and status of their organization/political party. Throughout the visits our target is to encourage and equip them in their activities. Some visits were part of a fact finding study and resulted in stronger relationships and often in new projects that were developed in collaboration with ECPM. Countries that were visited for these reasons in 2011 were: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Hungary, Italy, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. The reports of the most important country visits can be found in this yearbook.

Activities Begin at the European Christian Political Foundation (ECPF)
We are thankful that the European Christian Political Foundation (ECPF) – a newly founded think-tank associated with ECPM - has begun its activity in 2011. Its main target is to connect think-tanks and NGOs from all over Europe in order to explore and present ideas in order to face current challenges in Europe. They also organized five important events in 2011 and have elaborated three study projects: ‘Europe’s values’, ‘Fair taxation and families’ and ‘After Capitalism’. More information is available in the special chapter dedicated to the ECPF in this yearbook.
Welcome from the Chairman

Many politicians have admitted that the current economic crisis is rooted in a moral crisis, the crisis of values. Loss of eternal values, the dictatorship of relativism and secularism have led, as Tunne Kelam, Estonian MEP has claimed in his speech at the State of Europe Forum 2012, to our current predicament, a situation that has not come upon us suddenly, but has been building for decades. The spiritual values promoted by ECPM are thus rendered more relevant than ever in the recession caused precisely by the lack of these values.

In 2011, ECPM has continued to unite European politicians and parties which share common Christian values. Several conferences and meetings have been organized throughout all of Europe and many publications were issued and became available in both electronic and printed version. New members have joined ECPM in 2011, making it a growing organization. ECPM has been offering a common, value based political platform to both individual members and member organization during this politically and economically very challenging year.

Throughout the previous year, ECPM also continued its activities as an EU recognized European political party. Compatibility with the constantly changing rules for the recognition by the EU has remained a priority for ECPM. In 2010, ECPM had established a political foundation (ECPF) and was recognized by the EU at the beginning of 2011. This first year has been fruitful for ECPF, as it organized conferences and issued publications. Many new members also joined ECPF in 2011.

The 2011 ECPM Congress took place in the Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest, Romania. A symposium on “Liberty of Faith and Conscience” was attached to the Congress that ECPM organized together with the Ecumenical Prayer Group in the Romanian Parliament.

Having become more active in Western Europe, ECPM rented an office in Brussels in order to meet the increasing need for holding meetings there. The office space that includes a small conference room has served ECPM well so far and is expected to be necessary in the future too, especially when taking the growth of the organization in consideration. Most of the Board Meetings have since then taken place in Brussels.

One board meeting was organized in Israel. The ECPM board combined this board meeting with other meetings with Israeli MP’s and government officials. Being an item that is in the centre of international politics for decades, the board decided that it was good to spend more attention to the political view on Israel. This resulted concrete plans for a Symposium on this theme prior to the General Assembly in 2012.

Throughout 2011, the Board of ECPM has been working on the identity, mission and goals of the organization with the help from an expert organization on branding. As a growing network, ECPM has also been working on many other aspects that are necessary in building up a solid organization.

ECPM has organized and partnered on many events all over Europe. Both Board members and member organizations have participated in many gatherings, activities, and conferences. ECPM was also represented in large fellowship meetings such as the European Prayer Breakfast in Brussels, the Westminster Prayer Breakfast in London and the International Berlin Gathering in Germany. The youth movement of ECPM, ECPYN, has also organized several events on different topics of relevance for today’s youth.

On behalf of the Board of ECPM I want to express our gratitude to all our members, organizations and individuals for the active participation in the common task of advancing Christian principles in Europe. We are also thankful to our staff and volunteers who have effectively organized several big events and have been keeping the organization functioning through the past year. In 2012 we look forward to continuing to serve through this unique Christian political organization and to assisting its members and collaborators in their endeavours. Our hope is that ECPM can be a blessing for Europe, as it seeks answers to the challenges our continent is facing.

Yours Faithfully,

Peeter Võsu
Chairman of the European Christian Political Movement
Welcome from the Chairman

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Yours Faithfully,

Peeter Võsu
Chairman of the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) Activity Report 2011
1.1 Key Events Organized by ECPM

Training for Leadership of the Christian Democratic People's Party of Moldova
6 March, 2011, Chisinau, Moldova

On March 6th 2011, ECPM offered a training for the leadership of Christian Democratic People’s Party of Moldova. A newly elected Leader of the Party, Mr. Victor Ciobanu, as well as former Leader Mr. Iurie Rosca and 23 other branch leaders and vice-Chairs, were present.

The training and brainstorming intended to consolidate the new Party structure, after CDPP leadership has been completely been renewed at the Party Congress in February.

Conference on the "Civic Responsibility of a Christian for the Russian Fatherland"
8-10 April, 2011, Moscow, Russia (in collaboration with the Dutch Reformed Party (SGP)

From 8th-10th of April, an important conference took place in Russia. Recently, an initiative group was formed that brings representatives, churches and people active in politics together to discuss how Christians could have more impact in society, social-economy and politics. The name of the conference was: "Civic responsibility of a Christian for his Russian fatherland" and was organized in collaboration with the ECPM and the Dutch Reformed Party (SGP). On behalf of ECPM Leo van Doesburg (External Affairs Manager) travelled to Moscow to take part. Here is what was reported:

When I arrived, I talked to Ekaterina, the project coordinator for Russia and with Sergey, the Russian expert on Christian Democracy and one of the most active people in the organization committee.

The committee is made up of five persons: Ekaterina, Sergei, father German, serving as priest in the Russian Orthodox Church, Vladimir, a colonel who served in Afghanistan and in the Balkans and Valeri, a Christian businessman who is active in the battle against corruption. The preparations went well and things were looking quite promising. The next day I had meetings with two important persons working in the Russian Parliament. One was of a more philosophical background and the other was connected to the Russian Orthodox Church. Both of them wanted to build bridges between the parliamentarian groups in the Russian Duma and the Christian values. We had a good discussion and we talked about the meeting they wanted to organize in the Russian Parliament on the next day.
The following day the conference started. After the opening prayer of Father Nicholas, adviser for external affairs, and the opening message of Ekaterina, I was asked to give the opening lecture. The subject I chose was human dignity as basis for the Christian social thought. I discussed different views on dignity in history and talked about the Catholic and Protestant views on human dignity and the Universal Declaration on Human Dignity which recognizes the fact that we were created in the image and likeness of God from conception til natural death as basis for legal charters and legislation (even as basis for the universal declaration for human rights) and motivated the participants to promote the principles in Russia too.

In the afternoon we went to the Russian State Duma where we met Father Nicholas, representatives of the 'United Russia' party and two representatives of the Parliament. Our delegation existed of senator Roel Kuiper (Christian Union, NL), Henk Jan van Schothorst (Dutch Reformed Party (SGP), NL), Ekaterina and me. We had a good and constructive discussion about possibilities to promote the value of human dignity in the State Duma and they were open for the idea to start a human dignity group within the Russian Parliament. They were also interested in sharing information about how to deal with challenges of a multicultural society with diverse religions (relation between Muslims and Christians in some areas of Russia). A follow-up was planned to discuss concrete plans.

The second day of the conference started with a lecture by the Dutch Senator Roel Kuiper. He spoke about the important fact that Christians have historically been wise in focusing on creating communities. The new movement that will be started is an example of this. He also mentioned the fact that the main founders of modern Christian social thought can be said to be Pope Leo XIII and Abraham Kuyper. What was even more interesting was that here in Moscow also a Leo and a Kuiper explained the basics of Christian Democracy. Christians always have been focused on the creation of communities and he wondered if societies have not become based on contracts rather than on covenants. The difference between a contract and a covenant is that the latter is focused on an agreement and a commitment for a longer sustainable time. Contracts are business like and short time oriented. In his eyes, moral capital is more important than social capital. Christian justice should therefore be based on “shalom” and “chesed”: justice that takes the person into consideration!

Not long after the speech of Roel Kuiper, Henk Jan van Schothorst offered a clear explanation on the (dis)functions of the European Union and the reason why Christians are called to enter European politics. After the break opinions concerning politics were shared.

Alexander Ogorodnikov spoke about the Christian Democratic Movement in the 1990’s and the challenges and repressions they faced. His presentation was followed by an emotional discussion on the reasons this movement finally failed and the absence of a clear support from the Orthodox Church for the movement.

Others said that the failure was due to the fact that it was not the right time; the movement was focused too much on relations with the West and not enough on the situation of the country and a lack of experience. However all the participants agreed that the timing is much better now and that the support for this new initiative is much broader. On the third day, the first greeting was from the vice president of the 'Center for Slavic Culture and Literature' where the three days' event was hosted. He was followed by a Christian entrepreneur who explained that although there were many pressures, he tried to remain incorruptible. He called on the business people not to be involved in corruption but to form a kind of Christian business club (he called it a parallel economy) where businesses were committed together to remain clean. His speech was followed by a counsellor of a municipality in Russia. He explained the pressure that many business people face. He did not only mention the obligations to pay high "taxes" to the government, but also the fact that because of false and corrupt judges, many honest business people are falsely accused and end up in prison. His list and his fights against a corrupted regime did not shock just me, but the other participants as well.

After this, the conclusions of the conference were drawn. There was a general agreement that a movement should be started, based on the values of the former Christian Democratic Union of Russia. Many suggestions were made regarding what it should look like. After discussions, people were invited to suggest names of persons they considered fit to take part in an initiation committee. The initiation committee of the conference (five people) was extended to 14 persons. Alexander Ogorodnikov took part as well and had an important role in the discussions, along with many others. The initiative committee for the movement which will be established is now composed of all kinds of people: journalists, philosophers, professors & scientists, students, politicians, dissidents, business people, lawyers, priests, pastors and so on. An important starting point was set.
On Saturday May 7th, Leo van Doesburg (ECPM External Affairs Manager) and Auke Minnema (ECPYN Secretary) provided some training for the Initiation group H-rast in Zagreb, Croatia. Leo started with the session: "EU about identity and integration". He discussed the different strategies about the EU and the question: "Does a European identity exist and how can we identify our identity within the EU?" He also talked about the different strategic directions in the European block. This course was requested because of the growing scepticism of the EU fed by the trial of a Croatian general in the Hague tribunal and the dissatisfaction about the politics of the government and the way it promotes EU integration. It is also feared that traditional values will be harmed and the economy and agriculture will not benefit from EU integration.

When Leo finished the session about the EU, Auke offered an explanation about the basic values of Christian Democracy.

After lunch, Leo discussed about how to develop a party strategy. He used the Dutch party ChristianUnion with all its ups and downs as a case study. This was followed by a lecture given by Auke on party democracy. Especially the part about the code of conduct ignited interesting discussions.

We were thankful for the very successful days in Zagreb and for the "society movers" we met. We were encouraged by their vision and enthusiasm to impact their societies based on Christian Democratic values (like public and social justice, solidarity and reconciliation, the responsibility to spread and share values and stewardship). These all result into basic principles, such as the protection of life from beginning to end, respect for families based on the marriage between one man and one woman, human dignity, social market economy and care for the environment and sustainable development.

Visit of the Ukrainian Christian Democratic Union Delegation to the Netherlands.
Meetings with ECPM, ChristianUnion and SGP
23-29 May, 2011, Netherlands

From May 23rd to May 29th, representatives of the CDU Ukraine as well as of the CDU Youth organization made a study tour to the Netherlands in the framework of the cooperation between the CDU, ECPM and Dutch ECPM member ChristianUnion for 2011.

The aim of the study tour was to find out more about the political system of the Netherlands from the inside, about the country itself as well as its culture and traditions. In the framework of the event the CDU/CDUY representatives visited The Hague, the administrative capital of the Netherlands, where all ministries and the Parliament are situated. Ukrainians had several meetings in the Second Chamber of the Dutch parliament, discussed the current political situation and tendencies as well as mechanisms how the Dutch laws are approved with the Assistants to MPs of ChristianUnion and SGP and also met with the MP from ChristianUnion, Esmé Wiegman.

During this meeting, the situation of children with special needs was widely discussed. The question is how the situation in Ukraine can be improved in this respect. The participants took an excursion through the building of the House of Representatives of the Parliament and afterwards went to the Senate – the First Chamber of parliament, where they had a chance to experience a working day of the Dutch Senate.

The theoretical part of the study tour was really very successful due to contributions of such speakers as Guido van Beusekom (ECPM), Rob Nijhoff (Research Institute of the ChristianUnion), Johannes de Jong (ECPF), Menno van Hulst (Director ChristianUnion) and Benjamin Beldman (Assistant MEP Peter van Dalen, ChristianUnion).
The Ukrainian delegation discussed ideological backgrounds and values as well as their practical implementation in the party work and politics. A practical part included the visit to the city of Enschede where the CDU/CDUY carried out a presentation of Ukraine at the secondary school on the proposal of Jacques Bazen (Dutch Reformed Party, SGP), followed by debates with the support of the youth organization of the ChristianUnion: Perspectief and Jonathan van Tongeren, ECPYN adviser.

One of the most exciting moments of the study tour was the meeting with the MEP Mr. Bastiaan Belder (SGP/ EFD), during which very important issues of EU-integration of Ukraine, lobbyist groups and visa liberalization process were discussed. Besides being involved in the studies, the participants had a chance to visit such cities as Utrecht, Amersfoort, Apeldoorn and Amsterdam. The study tour took place with the support of ECPM.

**Round Table: "The Anti-Discrimination Law: Problems and Solutions" in Moldova**

Thursday, May 26, 2011, the Alliance of Families from Moldova, in cooperation with the ECPM organized at Chisinau a round table entitled “Anti-Discrimination Law: Problems and Solutions” with participation of foreign experts in human rights. The event was also attended by deputies of the Parliament, representatives of the Ministry of Justice, representatives of the Union of Jurists of Moldova, representatives of all Christian denominations in the country and representatives of civil society. The meeting aimed to learn from European experts on the effects that could make this law and to find appropriate solutions to overcome disagreements about the phrase "sexual orientation" from the legislative proposal.

Deputy Valeriu Ghiletchi declared that the nondiscrimination bill, drafted by the Ministry of Justice, is a much more liberal than equivalent projects that European countries voted. Mr. Roger Kiska, a lawyer in the "Alliance Defend Fund ", specializing in international litigation, particularly in cases of discrimination under EU law regulations, considers that the Republic of Moldova has already become a major player in the culture war of European bureaucrats. Mr. Roger warns us not to leave us so soon caught up in their promises, because, in fact, states have fulfilled their requirements and have received nothing from the proposed and Romania’s example is relevant here.

Leo van Doesburg, European Christian Political Movement representative, confirmed that the Moldovan legislative proposal is too liberal, since it is based mostly on the EU directive on discrimination in goods and services, which has not yet been adopted and apparently will not be voted in the EU.

Paul Coleman, lawyer in London for “Christian Concern for our Nation”, argues that the consequences that bring this law are very serious, as shows the nowadays situation in Britain and the lawyer’s practice. “The biggest problem in this law is the conflict between religious freedom and freedom of expression, that are protected, and protection of gays, which are also protected, and it seems that religious freedom lost in this conflict.” Christoph Grzelczyk, a former Polish legal adviser in matters concerning the Lisbon Treaty, explained how his country could face pressures from the EU. For Poland one of such difficult moments was the choice: acceptance or non-acceptance of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. Even it was a very difficult election period, Poland managed to reject the charter. Anca Bulica, European policy expert in the organization Care for Europe, based on their own experience of influencing the decisions of the European Parliament, explained how pro-values organizations have to develop their lobby activity in Moldova.
Regional Youth Conference on "Dealing With the Past – Building the Future"
3-5 June, 2011, Belgrade, Serbia

The goal of this conference was to answer some of the following questions:

- What politicians, diplomats, officials of the former Yugoslavia and future leaders in the region should do or have already done in order to deal with the problems that emerged after the break up?
- The question of responsibility, not for the breakup of Yugoslavia, but for improving and stabilizing the relations in the region? (What should be done and who should do this, in terms of bridging the existing gap?)
- Compare that to any country in the region, respectively, influence and impact, the burden of the past, and how these problems primarily affect the regional cooperation of youth?
- What is the common ground for further collaboration of the participants at the conference? Ideas for collaboration and communication and activities they should provide in near future.

The conference started with an introductory speech by Milica Radenković, coordinator of the Center for Strategic Projects and student at the Faculty of Law. Milica made a reference to 2001 and the foundation of the Centre, which aimed at destroying the myth of their past and becoming a leading organization in the civil society.

After a brief review of the current work of the Centre, Milica, as a member of the Serbian delegation, welcomed the participants and wished them constructive discussions and a constructive dialogue at the conference. Dragan Sljivic, representative of the Ministry of Youth and Sports expressed his honor to accommodate the representatives of the former Yugoslavia and representatives of ECPM.

The Regional Youth Conference took part in Belgrade, Serbia, as a first capital host of a series of conferences, which are planned in the following years. The conference was held on June 3th-5th on two locations: June 3th - Palace Serbia (Yugoslavia hall), June 4th and 5th – Cultural center of the Student City. The participants at the Conference were delegations (Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Macedonia) whose members are students of the Faculty of Political Sciences, Faculty of Philosophy and Faculty of Law in their home countries.

On the other hand, representatives of the Ministry of Justice, Ms. Olga Rusu said that this law is not an innovation for Moldova. “The states go on two ways to implement the requirements and EU directives: either include such provisions in existing legislation or adopt new laws.”

Veaceslav Ionță, member of the RM Parliament, noted that cases of discrimination in the Republic of Moldova are not those that require us to adopt non-discrimination law, Mr. itself being representative of a religious minority stating that he had not the necessity of the court’s intervention. „No minority except of the sexual minorities are not protected in the current legislation of RM. It is not good to use firewall EU to promote different values, values which are not EU’s values, because it prints disgust to the values of the EU,” Ionță said.
The Ministry of Youth and Sports is a product of the desire of young people to make some institutional changes in Serbia and is therefore supporting the Regional Youth Conference. In 2007, Serbia was the only country in the region without a national youth strategy, which is why it was the leader of the “brain drain”.

The remainder of the conference was marked by the organizers of the Conference and members of the delegation of Serbia: Marija Jelic and Miljan Pavlovic. Ms. Jelic spoke about her leadership experiences as a student in a Mathematics High School and stipendist of Fund for Young Talents, which is actively involved in youth activism. Miljan Pavlovic, a graduate student of International Relations at the Faculty of Political Sciences, spoke about the idea of the project and the Conference.

Auke Minnema, Secretary of ECPYN, transferred his experience as a leader of youth activism in Europe, the importance of teamwork, tolerance, non-violent communication and the current problems of youth in Europe. ECPYN is an umbrella organization for its members in the EU and beyond.

ECPM Representative for East Europe, Leo Van Doesburg, spoke about of the importance of teamwork, based on his experiences in various countries. He also referred to the word “Christian” in the name of the organization, and then explained that the work concept of ECPM is about the promotion of Christian ideas and values in politics and societies.

The next day the conference continued with an interesting presentation of country delegations on two aspects:

1) Who are we? (national identity in the way we experience it)
2) How to solve the problems of youth in our countries?

All delegations gave their opinion on these issues from their own viewpoint and during the day discussions on these views took place.

The guest of the third day of the conference was Goran Petrovic, former head of the security intelligence agency, who chronologically described his experience and operational knowledge and informed the participants at the conference about the political and security situation in the region.

The final phase of the third day and the conference was reserved for members of delegations participating in the conference. Focus groups were made, each consisting of members from different countries, which for a time, by doing team work, were supposed to answer the delegates’ questions, which were included in the Conclusions of the Regional Youth Conference.
On Thursday June 23rd, ECPM held a symposium on ‘Liberty of Faith and Conscience’ in the Palace of Parliament in Bucharest, together with the Ecumenical Prayer Group of the Romanian Parliament. Participants from all over Europe attended the lectures that addressed the theme from theological, social and political perspectives.

The symposium was opened with a session moderated by Gheorghe David MP, Secretary of the Senate. The Rt. Rev. Ciprian Câmpineanul, Patriarchal Vicar Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Church, opened the session with prayer. The symposium was greeted by Teodor Baconschi, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Peeter Võsu, President of ECPM; HE, Mgr. Francisco Javier Lozano, Apostolic Nuncio to Romania and Moldova; Dr. Theol. Adrian Lemeni, Secretary of State for Religious Denominations; Mrs Prof. Ecaterina Andronescu MP; Leo van Doesburg; Prof. Cristian Sorin Dumitrescu, President of the Ecumenical Prayer Group.

The first plenary session was moderated by Mircea Lubanovici MP. The first message was delivered by David Fieldsend on behalf of Roger Kiska from Slovakia. The speech discussed the tactics used by certain lobby organizations to try to impose secular liberal ideas on Central and Eastern European societies and how these tactics can be countered. The speech included examples such as the Lautsi v Italy case at the European Court of Human Rights and the McCafferty Report in the Council of Europe.

This was followed by a speech by Dr. Ben Oni Ardelean, university lecturer at the Baptist Theological Institute in Bucharest, which dealt with the development of the perception of the notion of freedom of conscience throughout history with a special focus on the age of Enlightenment.

Nelu Burcea, President of the National Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty, discussed the relation between conscience and freedom. The first session was concluded with a speech by Petru Andea MP, professor at the Polytechnic University of Timisoara and member of the Academy of Romanian Scientists.

After the coffee break the second plenary session was moderated by Pavel Horj MP. Mrs Andrea Williams of Christian Concern for our Nation (UK) discussed how freedom of religion and conscience has been infringed on by the state in recent years, for example by means of legislation regarding non-discrimination and hate-speech. Williams’ examples of cases in the UK served as a clear warning regarding what to expect in other countries in the near future.

This was followed by Mrs Maria Dunca Moisin of the Provita Association, an orthodox pro-life organization in Romania, who discussed freedom of conscience as related to medical ethics. Ms Ekaterina Smyslova, Vice-President of the Christian Public Movement “Graceful Russia,” discussed the development of freedom of religion and conscience in the last few decades in Russia and how Christians have responded to this development. This second session was concluded by Valeriu Saitan MP, after which the attendants went on a guided tour of the Palace of Parliament before going to lunch.

In the afternoon there were several workshops which allowed for more interactive discussion. One workshop was on the subject of the freedom of conscience and the theme was presented by speakers such as Dorel Covaci MP; Andrea Williams (CCFON, UK) and Jonathan van Tongeren (ECPYN). The second one focused on the freedom of faith and the role of the Church and was moderated by Catalin Buciumeanu. The third workshop was about the “European Values” Project of the European Christian Political Foundation (ECPF) and was lead by Johannes de Jong and Sander Luitwieler. The coffee break was followed by a plenary session lead by Mr David, Mr Van Doesburg and Mr Andea, which served to summarize the conclusions of the earlier sessions, before the symposium was finally concluded with a dinner.

The 7th Annual ECPM General Assembly took place in Bucharest, Romania on June 24 Around 70 members, associates and friends were present during this meeting, where the board and staff reported over the activities and the development of the year 2010. The meeting started with a welcome by ECPM president Peeter Võsu. The meeting was chaired by ECPM General Secretary Guido van Beusekom.

One of the first items of the meeting was the approval of the changed statutes that ensured that ECPYN would receive the rights of a full member. After this, treasurer Dick van Dijk explained in a very transparent way the financial status of the ECPM and the results for 2010. After this clear presentation, the members accepted the financial report on 2010. Dick van Dijk was also re-elected as a treasurer for four more years.
The General Assembly also welcomed the new members and associates of the ECPM. This list included two parties: Alianta Romanilor din Vojvodina (Serbia) and the Dutch Reformed Party (Netherlands). Lenuca Caran introduced the first party and the latter was introduced by Jacques Bazen.

New associates that were present were the Schuman Centre for European Studies (Netherlands) introduced by Jeff Fountain and Worldteach Association (Romania) introduced by Benjamin Lup. Other associates that were also welcomed were: Christian Democratic Union of Nagorna Karabakh, Dignitatis Humanea Institute (Belgium), Stichting Crown Financial Ministries (Netherlands) and Serbian Christian Democratic Movement (Serbia).

Another outcome of the meeting was the expansion of the board with at least two persons beginning with 2012. A statement on Belarus was also made. ECPM board member Vladimir Plamadeala reported on the commission for revision of the ECPM basic programme and Johannes de Jong (ECPF manager) shortly introduced the European Christian Political Foundation to the General Assembly.

Leo van Doesburg (Regional Representative East Europe) reported the activities from 2010 and handed the first ECPM Yearbook 2010 over to chairman Peeter Võsu.

On behalf of the board, vice-chairman Kris Vleugels officially ended the meeting with a short personal note and a prayer.

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**Economic Diplomacy Seminar**  
17-28 August, 2011, Fuzine, Croatia

In August, another ECPM-sponsored event took place: the Economic Diplomacy Seminar (EDS). EDS was initiated and is annually organized by Justin Kagin and Milan Pavlovic, EDS Co-Directors.

Around 30 people (including participants, leadership and speakers) mainly from South East European countries came to Fuzine to learn, discuss and live according to the principles of Jesus applied to Economic Diplomacy.

For 10 days they gathered to listen to lectures on the EU, economic diplomacy, politics, discrimination and a different kind of economics. Besides practical topics, there was a lot of emphasis on matters like identity, vision, the combat against discrimination and social involvement.

The different subjects were dealt with by guest speakers such as Leo van Doesburg, Officer Relations & Networking and Regional Representative East Europe, Milan Pavlovic, Co-director of EDS from Serbia, Justin Kagin, Co-director of EDS from the US, Jack Fallow (Trinity Forum, UK), Mihaela Kovac, Director of Beraca Foundation, Aurora Martin, Senior Counselor of the Romanian National Council for Combating Discrimination, Nolan Sharp, Drazen Glavas, Tihomir Kukočja, Director of Renewing our Minds and Rita Poppe MP assistant, ChristianUnion, Netherlands.

On behalf of ECPM, Leo van Doesburg delivered lectures on the basics, history and principles of Economic Diplomacy. He focused on the extent to which economics is determining diplomacy in a global world.
During the last few days of the seminar, Rita Poppe spoke about belief in politics and practical ways to get involved in the political process. Her lectures were both motivating and informative. Leo van Doesburg complemented these lectures by asking about identity within the EU and the relationships between society, politics, human dignity and principles of Jesus. After these lectures there were some heated discussions on the role of government, the corruption involved and how to change these things.

Throughout the seminar, small groups were formed to build friendships and to discuss the issues raised during the lectures. There were workshops which offered practical skills and friendship/mentorship walks that offered participants one-on-one help. These were complemented by a trip to the beach in Crkvenica, panel discussions, a talent night and a couple dialogue cafes. The team which facilitated these events and worked hard was especially united and worked diligently on behalf of the participants and each other. During the 10 days, all these relationships grew into bonded networks and our bonds into friendships, which will truly last forever.

Perhaps it is best to end this report by quoting a response from one of the many participants who rated the seminar highly. He wrote “EDS was one of the best seminars I have ever attended, not only the content was surprising to me but also the surrounding and the people around me. It certainly gave a spirit to the seminar, it provided joy and knowledge. Every activity was designed to fulfill the gap that our educational system had been missing for decades or so. I’m glad I was a participant and I encourage everyone, without any doubts, regardless of their ethnic and religious background, to apply and attend a seminar of such character.”

Brainstorming Workshop with H-RAST, Croatia
30 August, 2011, Zagreb, Croatia

Leo van Doesburg visited Zagreb two times this summer in order to talk about the national situation, the development of the new party H-RAST and their preparation for the next elections that took place in December 2011. H-RAST is a new political party that is based on the Christian-social teachings and moral values and the preservation of Human Dignity. In July the situation of the party was discussed and plans were made for this year.

On the 30th of August a brainstorming workshop was organized in order to prepare H-RAST for the elections in December 2011. It was led by Leo van Doesburg, Regional Representative Eastern Europe for the ECPM. The participants were local coordinators of different constituencies in Croatia. “Based on the SWOT analysis made by the H-RAST in April this year, targets and goals were established and also characteristics of their target group were analyzed and a strategic plan was developed,” said Ladislav Ilčić, a leader from the Croatian H-RAST. According to Mr. Ilčić also many ideas that can be used for the coming election campaign were developed. He expressed his belief that raising a lot of money is far less important than enthusiasm and creativity, which H-RAST does not lack. After these insightful sessions H-RAST actively began their campaign in Croatia.
Summer School Georgian Young Christian Democrats
1-5 September, 2011, Batumi, Georgia

The International Summer School of Young Christian Democrats of Georgia which was supported by the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) took place in Batumi, Georgia, 1-5 September. The topic of the summer school was “Civil Society and Politics”. Around 30 young politicians from Western and Eastern Europe participated in the YCD Summer School and expressed their opinions and attitudes towards the issue. The keynote addresses were delivered by leaders of the Christian Democratic Movement (CDM), representatives of ECPM and ECPYN, experienced Georgian politicians, international foundations and independent experts.

Roundtable on ”The Current Situation and Perspectives of Croatian Economy"
21 October 2011, Zagreb, Croatia (in partnership with H-RAST)

"It has become more and more clear that we need to build a healthy society and a strong economy that both lean on values such as respect for family and assiduity.” This was one of the conclusions of the Roundtable held under the title “Current situation and perspectives of the Croatian economy” in Zagreb, Croatia. The idea for this roundtable came during the meeting in August.

Among the speakers were Dutch Senator Peter Ester, Leo van Doesburg, the ECPM representative for Central and Eastern Europe, Tomislav Nürnberg, co-author of the economic programme of Hrast (’Oak - Croatia Growth’, a new political party), Zdravko Roško, ICT consultant, Nikola Šopar, a manager and specialist for creating business opportunities and prof. Ljubo Jurčić, an economic expert.

Mr van Doesburg gave an opening greeting and welcomed the main speaker, Mr Ester, on behalf of the ECPM. Senator Ester is member of the Christian Union and an expert in the field of labor issues. Mr Ester pointed out that we all need a value based society, since it is society that generates just business opportunities and fair progress. The problem is that modern people are not accustomed to saving or being moderate, but want it all and want it immediately. That leads us to a consumer (not producer) society, and determines our lifestyle of living on debt. It is up to us, as Christian economists and politicians, to highlight and speak against common practices which contradict Biblical principles.

Also, the family is heavily neglected in this modern lifestyle which is rather demanding. People have to work more and more and have very limited time and opportunities for their family. Parents cannot spend enough time with their children which often leads to negative consequences (like school drop outs) which ultimately lead to persons who cannot contribute to society. That puts us in a position of a closed circle and leads to a greater economic and debt-problem. As opposed to that, it is our role to think about the future generations and leave them a better heritage, based on solid families and finances, rather than on more debt and more dropouts.

Furthermore, Mr Ester reflected on the education system which needs to be in close relationship with the economy, in order to promptly offer the work profile that is currently needed. Otherwise, we may educate future job seekers who will always be a step behind the market’s demand, which eventually will cost much more than vivid and open-to-situation changes in the educational system.
Therefore, the investment in education is and must become the first goal of any society! Of course, Christian politicians must always be recognizable by that specific “Biblical add-on,” since the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ is relevant nowadays too and it is our duty to implant it in this changing 21st century too. In fact, it is the only sustainable way of doing business and leading a country on the long run.

Following Mr Ester’s thoughts, Mr Nürnberger, member of the Great Council of HRAST and co-author of it’s Economic program explained to the audience the program, which seeks for deep cuts in the current way of doing business. Mr Nürnberger ran through it stressing out the necessity of shifting from the current consumer economy towards a technological economy. He spoke about the brain drain problem and stated that Croatia should be not just a beautiful country, but a country you would love to come to and live in because we offer knowledge, experience and give our youth a fair chance.

A Croatian economic expert and former candidate for the position of Prime Minister, Mr Ljubo Jurčić reminded the audience of the political-economic crisis in the 20th century. More exactly, he spoke about crucial factors that influence the Croatian economy, focusing on the reasons that generated the current economic problems in Croatia. He agreed that education is intertwined with economy and vice-versa. Apart from investing in education, Croatia needs to determine in which fields of production it has a comparative advantage and strengthen domestic production.

The Roundtable was organized by HRAST and ECPM. In fact, right after the event, there was a Great Council meeting of HRAST where a proposal that HRAST should become an associated member of ECPM was unanimously accepted. Both organizations saw it as a firm step towards even better and tighter collaboration in promoting Christian values in the two countries, as well as in EU’s politics.

Conference on "The Active and Positive Role of Minorities in Serbia – Vojvodina in the Serbian EU Integration Process"
29 October, 2011, Vojvodina, Serbia (in partnership with the Alliance of Romanians in Vojvodina and the National Council of Romanian Minorities)

ECPM organized an event in the Festive Room of the Vrsac City Hall in Vojvodina (Serbia) together with the Alliance of Romanians in Vojvodina and the National Council of the Romanian Minorities in Vojvodina.

Representatives of different communities that live in the Vojvodina province came together to discuss ways for collaboration with each other and with the central government in order to promote the accession of Serbia into the European Union. The conference was attended by members of National Councils and representatives from the Croatian, Hungarian, Macedonian, Romanian, Ruthenian, and Slovak communities in Vojvodina.

The meeting was also attended by the Provincial Secretary for Education, Self-Government and National Communities, deputy from the parliament of Vojvodina, vice President of the Vrsac community and the local executive (and member of the community council of Vrsac) for minorities and religious affairs.

As motivation, Ms Lenuca Caran, organizer, stated:

“Where I heard, from Mr van Doesburg, about the Dutch “Matra” programme, I set my mind to write a project for Serbia, that is, on how I see that Serbia and Vojvodina, could fit into this project. I wrote the project under the name “The positive – active role of Vojvodina – Serbia minorities in Serbia’s EU integration process”, because I believe that national minorities in Vojvodina - Serbia can be promoters of Serbia’s faster integration into the EU and a bridge between Serbia and the countries of origin of respective minorities that are already members of the EU, or are on the path of EU integration.”

The conference

The guests were welcomed by Mr. Mirko Dobrosavlijević, deputy of the Municipal President of Vrsac and Nicolae Moise, member of the Municipal Government.

They mentioned that it was an honor to host a conference that brings international European guests and local representatives of national communities together.
It was an opportunity to understand the vision of the European Union concerning the coexistence and cooperation of the majority with smaller communities. Vojvodina is an example of how a multicultural environment can function.

The Provincial Secretary of Vojvodina, Mr. Mato Groznica mentioned that Vojvodina should not be multicultural but intercultural: sharing the diversity, cultural and religious differences with each other. This is a treasure that we should cherish. Therefore we should not speak about the minority groups living in Vojvodina but the different communities. Leo van Doesburg explained more about the theme of the conference, splitting it into three topics:

1) The different communities in Vojvodina where personal identity is formed within a field of social values, norms, behavior and collective symbols. These people are associated in groups, communities which form each other’s social identity. Therefore, from the Christian Democratic point of view, the society is based on communities, having the family as core community. He also highlighted the positive aspects and the advantages of diversity, which can be an effective instrument for diplomacy.

2) He spoke about the positive role and called upon the different communities not to fight, but to work as minorities with the majority, to collaborate also as communities with each other, to focus on manageable concrete issues and to use their unique position between main political forces.

3) The Serbian EU integration process. Leo van Doesburg mentioned that European collaboration started as a reaction of the wars held on the continent. The hunger for peace and stability was the basis for the European Community for Coal and Steel and the European Economic Community: unity through diversity. This does not mean that communities should give up their own identities. The subsidiarity principle is important in order to cherish the cultural and religious diversities in Europe. As a conclusion he called on the different communities to develop a constructive collaboration in order to promote Serbia to enter the EU and to spread the basic values of peace and reconciliation based on unity through diversity in Serbia.

The Round table was followed by constructive discussions in which the different situations of the National Councils of minorities were explained. In a positive atmosphere, the situation of the minorities was discussed and especially how they could collaborate with each other.

Difficult topics were not avoided either, for example the way the legislation concerning the minorities is implemented or not at all implemented. Interesting fact is that it seemed to be the first time that the different communities came together to discuss about these important topics.

There was an agreement to continue these meetings and to form a platform where the different communities could meet with each other.

The accepted conclusions of the conference were as follows:

- The political parties of smaller ethnic groups should work together in coalitions.
- To become larger in number and gain more influence on the political scene.
- To organize future conferences on additional topics that have been suggested during the conference and are related to the problems encountered by smaller ethnic groups, such as the situation of education and religious affairs.
- To look critically at the current legislation for ways in which smaller ethnic parties could be better represented at all levels (local Parliament, the Provincial Parliament, Parliament of the Republic).
- To improve the collaboration between Serbia-Vojvodina minority parties and the authorities in the country. Efforts based on respect, integrity, cultural and religious characteristics of national ethnic minorities.
- To organize activities in collaboration with ethnicities’ countries of origin (which are already EU members or are on a firm path towards integration), that aim to emphasize Vojvodina’s role, through its multiethnic, multicultural and multi-religious richness, as a promoter and bridge for Serbia as a state, towards a faster EU integration.
Conference on "Beyond Individualism"

At the end of November the first ECPM event in London, UK took place. The conference, co-hosted by Christian Concern and the Christian People’s Alliance, was attended by over 120 participants on both days.

On behalf of ECPM, Chairman Peeter Võsu opened the conference. After that, Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, conference chairman, took the floor and introduced the theme to the participants. Following that, he welcomed Philip Blond, one of the keynote speakers of the conference, to the stage.

Mr Blond, the acknowledged driving force behind David Cameron’s “Big Society,” told the delegates, comprised of political, charity and religious leaders, the following words:

"Liberal individualism has led to a massive concentration of wealth and the disintegration of family relationships and human association: this reduction in "social capital" has decreased well-being, health, trust and support for the most vulnerable."

"We need to displace this narrative with a larger and far more successful story - a fact that has perhaps not yet been fully grasped by those tasked with implementing the Big Society project. Moral markets, and a return to civic association, require Christian values: mutuality, subsidiarity, reciprocity, solidarity, mediation (both in the theological and institutional sense)."

Mr Blond, director of ResPublica and author of “Red Tory: How Left and Right Have Broken Britain and How We Can Fix It” pointed out a number of policy agendas that have failed as a result of sidelining the Christian framework:

- liberal representational democracy has not given a voice to the many but has lead to the domination by elites;
- multi-culturalism and belief mediated by state ‘neutrality’ has eradicated diversity in the name of equality;
- in the name of free markets we have created a massive concentration of wealth which has produced not modern liberty but medieval serfdom.

He said: “After the economic crash and the social collapse of the riots, now more than ever, we need religious and moral voices re-admitted to public policy debate. The contemporary attack on Christianity as one of those voices is perhaps the most disturbing element of the new secular fundamentalism that seeks to police faith and drive belief from its central and proper role.”

Lord Glasman, sometimes labeled as a “Blue Labour” thinker, contributed to the conference as well, stating that (in Britain):

“We need more love in the system, greater solidarity and we have never been in greater need of the gifts that the Christian tradition brings.”

Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, the conference chairman, said:

"1945 was a critical juncture in European history; it was Christian faith which brought about the reconstruction of Europe. In 1989, similarly, Christianity played a key role in the dissolution of Communism and the liberation of Eastern Europe. Today, again, if the European malaise is to be addressed, there must be a Christian-led moral and spiritual renewal affecting our political, business and social life."
In response, Francis Davis, who has advised government on matters relating to faith communities, said:

“Lord Glasman and Phillip Blond have reminded us of the ethical resources available in the Christian tradition but also the practical resources. Around the world, Christians have creatively addressed pressing social problems in fresh and innovative ways and today we’ve touched on the need to recover a language to have that contribution recognized and replicated.”

ECPM External Affairs Manager Leo van Doesburg chaired a session that included speakers such as Franck Margain (vice-president Christian Democratic Party (PCD, France) and Maria Hildingsson (Secretary General, Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe, Sweden). Margain gave some practical guidelines on how European politicians should consider dealing with the current crisis: by reaffirming the Christian roots of the European community, leaving more space to the community life, always favouring long term engagement vs. short term and fighting strongly for family values. Regarding this last item, Maria Hildingsson went on to speak about the vital importance of the family as the fundamental building block of European societies and that “Beyond Individualism” starts within the family. Professor John Milbank, Professor of Religion, Politics and Ethics at the University of Nottingham, commented:

“We have to face nothing less than the crisis of Europe and the West. This crisis has a double aspect. First, the threat of a totalitarian capitalism, perhaps including individual rights, but certainly not including democracy. Secondly, the loss of respect for the person, for the rights of free association and a society infused with pastoral care. All these values derive from Christianity and it is only the Christian legacy that can now forge an alternative economy and society based upon trust and mutuality. If Europe does not base its political unity on its Christian cultural legacy, then it will die.”

Os Guinness (author and social critic) started the second day with a speech on the freedom of faith and conscience. He emphasized the need to create an open civil public square with fundamental room for diversity and fundamental disagreement. He stressed the importance of educating the people in the vital importance of living peacefully with each other’s deep differences.

Eimert van Middelkoop (former minister of Defense, Netherlands) stressed that it is inevitable for Britain and the EU to continue cooperation. The future of all European countries lies in the European Union. But the question is, however, how and on what basis the European Union should develop. For Van Middelkoop it is clear that this can only be on the basis of Christian values and in a shape that still has the support of the people living in Europe.

Andrea Williams (co-founder & chief executive officer, Christian Concern) stressed the vital importance of Christians being explicit in their faith in public life. Without this clear presence there is no guarantee that Christianity will be able to remain visible in society.

After their speeches, Williams, Guinness and Van Middelkoop joined in a forum together with Dave Lundrum. The vivid debate in the forum ended a well attended conference that created more common understanding between Christians active in politics and civil society and inspired cooperation for the future.
On the 8th and 9th of December, the annual Romanian Prayer Breakfast took place in the Palace of Parliament. This event is organized by the Senate, Chamber of Deputies and the ecumenical prayer group of the Romanian Parliament. The events started with a cocktail offered on behalf of Roberta Anastase, President of the Chamber of Deputies. During the cocktail many different choirs performed wonderful songs with Biblical and religious messages.

The second day (December 9th) early morning, the Romanian Prayer Breakfast took place. Among the keynote speakers of the Romanian Prayer Breakfast were: Prof. Dr. Sorin Oprescu, General mayor of the Romanian capital Bucharest, Ioan Oltean: Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies; Mr Petru Filip, vice President of the Senate, Larry Ross from ALRC (a full-service US based media and public relations agency to restore faith in media, who has worked as director of media/public relations since 1981 for the evangelist Billy Graham). Besides politicians, religious leaders like Ciprian Campineanul, Vicar Bishop of the Romanian Patriarchy and Teodor Hutanu (president of the Romanian Seventh Day Adventist Church) also shared their messages.

Leo van Doesburg based his devotional message on the Song of the Virgin Mary (Luke 1: 46-55). “Mary exclaims further that God is the ruler of the world. Everything is in His hand. “He has brought down rulers from their thrones, but has lifted up the humble. He has lifted up the hungry with good things, but has sent the rich away empty”. If we look at Europe, it is very actual. After years of prosperity, the financial crisis brought an end to a lot of wealth and we face a very unsure future. Also in Romania, I believe that we all have to go back to our roots, to the genuine Christian faith: the faith in the merciful God and Salvation through our Lord Jesus, born in a manger.”

The prayer breakfast was followed by a discussion on the theme of “State and Church.” Several representatives of the Civil Society, politics and churches participated actively in the discussions. The topics that were discussed were: What is the relation between State and Church? What does the separation of Church and State mean? Does the separation of Church and State also mean a separation of Faith and Politics? What were the different roles between and among Church, State, and Civil Society? And how can the freedom of religion be protected? Marius Cristinel Dugulescu, vice president of the parliamentary commission for Human rights, minorities and religious affairs had an important contribution to answering some of these questions.

Both the Romanian Prayer Breakfast and the discussions were chaired by Cristian Dumitrescu, chairman of the Ecumenical Prayer group of the Romanian Parliament. It is also important to mention the role of Petru Andea and Ioana Minzu, who both took care of the practical organization of the events.
Conference on "For a Political Debate Based on Values and Principles, in the Interest of the Citizen"
10-11 December 2011, Durres, Albania (in partnership with the Center for Dialogue and Promotion of European Values)

On 11th of December 2011, in the coastal city of Durres in Albania, the Center for Dialogue and European Value Promotion organized a conference about basic values and principles in politics. Around 40 students and members of youth forums of the main political parties in Albania attended this meeting. One of the main speakers was former Defense Minister of the Netherlands Mr Eimert van Middelkoop and regional coordinator of ECPM, Leo van Doesburg. All participants were welcomed by the founder of the Center for Dialogue and Promotion of European Values, Mr Shaban Sulce.

He thanked ECPM for the support offered to Albania through the Center for Dialogue, to strengthen the democratization of the country and to distribute the message of the importance of political dialogue. This in order to enable the creation of a European policy in Albania and the realization of integration reforms, which will bring Albania even closer to Europe, making it part of the great European family. Mr Sulce emphasized that the purpose of this conference was to encourage and provide strong messages about the importance of youth involvement in politics.

Then the word was given to Mr Eimert van Middelkoop, who delivered a speech which was greeted with much interest. Van Middelkoop, who contributed to the Albanian NATO membership as a Dutch Defense minister, encouraged young people to take an active role in politics. He invited the young Albanians to make them heard not only in Albanian politics, but also within party forums where they adhere. Van Middelkoop convinced the participants that young people with energy, desire and vision can bring needed change to the policies and society of Albania.

The next speech was delivered by Mr Leo van Doesburg, who talked about the Rule of Law and the role of state and society. He explained the importance of the involvement of young people in politics. He told that the best way to strengthen the role of the society by using the model where the society was divided in different autonomous spheres that were independent but interrelated with each other. In this model, the government is part of (and serving) the society as its unique sphere and is not above the society. This makes the state government more responsible to meet the needs and interests of society and the development of a strong civil society.

After the speeches, there was also time for an interactive workshop. The participants were divided into three parliamentary groups, just as the actual number of parliamentary groups in Albania, where two groups constitute the majority (two parties) and a group poses the opposition. During the workshop, the young people were encouraged and provided with ideas about how to negotiate and give their votes to reach a consensus that meets the interests of the parties, but above all, the interests of the country. The meeting was widely praised and received a positive feedback from the audience, who said that they had spent a fascinating day and had received a positive encouragement to engage even more in politics.

Eimert van Middelkoop and Leo van Doesburg also had informal meetings with the mayor of Tirana Luzim Basha (and former Minister of Public Works, Transport and communications, former Interior Minister and also former Minister of External Affairs) and with the current Minister of External Affairs and vice Prime Minister Edmond Haxhinasto, about the current political developments in Albania generally and Tirana in special and the role of ECPM.
Between the 25th and the 27th of February, The Boris Trajkovski International Foundation held its 6th Youth Leadership Forum and 7th Fellowship Prayer Dinner. This year’s theme was “World of Differences — Identity and Peace,” an issue that Macedonians have been confronted with for nearly 20 years. Throughout the last two decades, Macedonians have always tried to overcome conflicts, obstacles and trials, based on their identity, thus promoting peace and stability in an often unstable world.

Throughout the plenary sessions, different aspects of identity were discussed, and questions such as “what is my personal identity,” “what forms of identity are there and what is the relationship between identity and peace” were tackled with. All these plenary discussions were based on the principles of Jesus. Wilfried Nausner, Superintendent (United Methodist Church) spoke about three core values that form identity: family, education and memory (history). He illustrated this with texts from the Bible. He was followed by Robert Liddell - Head of Political section in EU commission in Macedonia. He explained that identity gives you security and helps one know how to react to certain circumstances. David Beasley, former governor of South Carolina, mentioned the identity crisis one can go through as a young politician. The question that one faces as a new young politician is: “Do I know who I am or do others determine who I am?” In this sense, it is maybe important to stay close to people who do not always agree with you.

After lunch, the second session started with Leo van Doesburg’s presentation on “The European Union between identity and integration.” He considers that the country of origin (he comes from the Netherlands and is currently living in Romania) is not of utmost importance to him, but rather his identity as a follower of Jesus and following values such as social care, reconciliation and forgiveness: not to dominate but to serve and act out of justice. He then discussed about the initial vision of the European collaboration: to create peace by solidarity and increasing welfare. Then he discussed about a European identity. Do people living in the European Union see themselves as Europeans? On the one hand they do, as far as traveling and the exchange programs in universities etc are concerned. On the other hand, the European identity is not dominant in comparison to national identity (like in the US where the national identity dominates all regional identities).

The session was followed by Mounzer Fatfat, a Lebanese-born former US Ambassador in Iraq. He spoke about the difficulties of being accepted in American society because of his Muslim identity on the one hand, and of the difficulty of being accepted in Lebanon because he had lived in the US for such a long time, on the other. He told us about the principles of Jesus, as a common ground for Muslims and Christians, principles that have developed his identity. As a Muslim, he follows the principles of Jesus and he called on people to be ready to step out of their comfort zones and to respect and love others as friends. Larry Ross, owner of a large PR agency in the US, also focused on “Who is Jesus” and His principles as a basis for identity. The Fellowship Dinner is organized every year on the day that former President Boris Trajkovski passed away in order to remember the work he did and to further develop his ideas. David Beasley (former governor of South Carolina) and Nikola Gruevski (Prime minister of Macedonia) addressed the participants on the importance of President Boris Trajkovski’s actions of actively promoting and implementing the values of Jesus in Macedonia. Following the poem “Who am I,” by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the dinner was traditionally closed with the song “Amazing Grace”.

In the morning of the second day, a forum on the relation between Identity and Peace took place. Following the introduction, Auke Minnema (Secretary of ECPYN) introduced the speakers and led the meeting. Contributions were made by Lars Rise, former Member of the Norwegian Parliament, Hristina Runceva and Ermina Mehmeti, both members of the Macedonian National Parliament.
Against a background of crisis and scandal embroiling European institutions, some 500 leaders returned home from the HOPEII congress in Budapest buoyed with fresh perspectives of hope for Europe.

Gathered from 40 European nations, congress participants heard over twenty short talks from speakers including globally known authors such as Os Guinness, Vishal Mangalwadi, Thomas Schirrmacher and Philip Jenkins, who addressed plenary sessions at the Budapest Congress Centre on the first two days, May 9th and 10th 2011.

Over the remaining two days, participants were spread across the city in nine hotels, engaged in network consultations ranging from church planting and urban missions to ministries for children and disabled people. Politicians and artists, health workers and women in leadership, theologians and evangelists, intercessors and migrant pastors were among the professions and callings building relational links across the continent and strategizing for the future.

HOPE II is the second pan-European congress held by Hope for Europe, following HOPE21, also held in Budapest in 2002. Hope for Europe is a relational movement networking Christians in many fields across the continent, with close ties to the European Evangelical Alliance. Greetings from the World Evangelical Alliance were conveyed in the opening session by Dr Schirrmacher, chairman of the theological commission of the WEA. Keynote speaker Philip Jenkins anchored the plenaries with talks on Europe yesterday, today and tomorrow. Originally from Wales, the Penn State University historian addressed several myths widely accepted in Europe. He had said that several years ago, as he was working on a book about religion in Europe (God’s Continent), he had often been told that it must be a very short book. By and large, he commented, people had no idea how deeply rooted Europe was in the Christian faith, and scoffed at the vague phrase ‘spiritual impulse’ used in the proposed European constitution, an oblique reference to Christianity’s contribution.

Myths
"Look around you," he urged his listeners, “at street names, religious holidays, flags, monuments, and you can’t avoid seeing how much Europe is rooted in a deeply Christian past." This cultural past could still be appealed to in helping today’s Europeans understand their roots, he added. Yet educated Europeans had been taught many myths about Christianity being an “aggressive and expansionist” religion, promoting tyranny and ignorance against “enlightened and reasonable” explorers and scientists. One such myth was that Christopher Columbus exposed the "falseness" of the church teaching that the earth was flat. The truth was that the debate concerned how big the round earth was – Columbus had been wrong and did not end up in India as he predicted; the “ignorant and fanatical” friars and monks had actually been proved right, he said.

While Christians were often painted as ignorant obstructionists to progress, the rise of science had in fact been a Christian project, asserted Jenkins. Charles Babbage, for example, “father of the modern computer,” wrote a book on why miracles were not only feasible, but essential for the process of creation.

“Modern Europeans continued the spiritual search,” he said, claiming that the golden age of pilgrimage was not to be found in the 14th or 15th centuries, but in the 21st century! “Never have so many undertaken pilgrimages as in our own time,” he pointed out. Several other speakers, including Os Guinness and David Bjork, expressed their belief that Europe’s weaknesses can also be strengths as in our need, we find fresh answers to greed and corruption or reach out in unity towards other parts of the Body of Christ. Michael Schluter, Prabhu Guptara and Michael Ramsden each addressed the failures of a humanistic vision of society and economy, proposing biblical truth and values to offer a future full of hope for Europe. Without God it was dusk for Europe, concluded Professor Guptara, but with the true God it was always dawn.

The two-day politics consultation was attended by several members of the ECPM and brought together crossdisciplinary input from historian Philip Jenkins, sociologist Os Guinness, economist Micheal Schluter, theologian Thomas Schirrmacher, lobbyist David Fieldsend, activist Vishal Mangalwadi, political consultant Sander Luitwieler and futurist Prabhu Guptara, which addressed issues facing European politicians today. The topics dealt with formulating and revitalizing the “European values,” realizing a more “relational” Europe and defining and defending the European value of “Freedom.” Other sessions, including informal table talks, offered opportunity for discussion on how capitalism could be transformed and on the challenges of Islam, populism and elitism.
ChristianUnion Politicians Congress
18-19 March, 2011, Netherlands

On the 18th and 19th of March, the ChristianUnion organized a politicians’ congress with the theme: “Belief in politics”. The politicians’ congress takes place once every two years. The invited participants come from around 200 local politicians (mayors, representatives from the municipality’s council), members of the provincial council and waterschappen (a unique Dutch governing level) and members of the parliament (Deputies and Senators), members of the party office, staff & advisors and other people that play an important role in promoting the values of the ChristianUnion in politics. Leo van Doesburg, Officer Relations & Networking and Regional Representative East Europe was invited to participate and was given the opportunity to inform the participants about the work of the ECPM.

The theme “Belief in politics” was not only inspired by the profile and passion of the ChristianUnion, but was also based on a critical report on the ChristianUnion’s last national campaign named: “With heart and soul: looking back and looking towards the future”. After the victories in the elections of 2006 and 2007, the ChristianUnion suffered a loss in the elections of 2010 and 2011. After the elections of 2010, the party evaluated the situation and developed a vision for the future.

The conference was opened by Nico Schipper, chairman of the politicians’ association of the ChristianUnion. The opening was accompanied by a praise and worship band with traditional and contemporary worship music. He explained the purpose of the meeting. Reformed pastor David Rodenburg shared a Biblical message on the question: “What drives us as Christian politicians?” followed by theme and podium interviews led by Sjirk Kuiper. After a break, workshops were led by the five members of the House of Representatives. The themes presented included topics related to the way in which austerity measures of the Dutch government should be implemented, developing traffic and transport policies, youth care, nature and agriculture and integration policy in times of polarization. During dinner, speeches were given on the theme of “passion”. Andre Rouvoet, party leader of the ChristianUnion and former Minister for Youth & Family and Robert Heij, chairman of Perspectiev, youth organization of the ChristianUnion, were among the speakers. Leo van Doesburg told a little about the work in East Europe and the challenges he faces. He also asked for specific attention for the events that will be organized in Russia in April, in which the Dutch Senator Roel Kuiper takes part. The next day, Leo got a chance to give a short business-like presentation on the ECPM in the plenary session.

In the afternoon, Gert-Jan Segers, director of the Scientific Institute of the ChristianUnion, had an interesting speech on the theme: “The ChristianUnion is not leftwing, not rightwing, but what is it?” Not the actual positioning between left or right was truly important, but the core values of the party, since they represent the basis for acting in the political field. This was followed by interesting feedback from Christian politicians from other parties: Dirk- Jan Nijrink (Representing the Youth of the Dutch Reformed Party) and Arjan Vliegenthart (Senator for the Socialist Party and member of their Scientific Institute). The last session was a short training about the question: “politics with passion, how do I do this” by Ron van der Spoel. The trainer warned against using terms that are too vague for the average voter, technical terms or topics that are too much related to future visions and less to day-to-day problems. As a practical exercise, he challenged the participants to convince his 17 year old daughter to vote for the ChristianUnion.

The congress ended with a closing message, accompanied by the praise & worship band. It was a great event, and important discussions were ignited but they were all carried out in unity and were guided by Biblical principles. It was also shown that even a setback in electoral results is not a reason to be discouraged, but to look back to the basics, to the vision in order to develop the vision for the future.
School of Christian Democracy in Serbia
26 March, 2011, Belgrade, Serbia (Konrad Adenauer Foundation, in cooperation with the "Serbian Christian Democratic Movement" and the "Centre for interdisciplinary religious studies and political theology")

The project "School of Christian Democracy" led by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, in cooperation with the "Serbian Christian Democratic Movement" and the "Centre for interdisciplinary religious studies and political theology" started on Saturday, March 26th 2011. It was the first meeting, held in the Konrad Adenauer Foundation premises.

Many young people attended this course. Some of them were center right orientated and some were members of NGO’s and youth networks. Mrs. Gordana Pilipović and Mr. Vladimir Marjanović were moderators of the meeting.

The program started with a speech delivered by Mr. Henry Bohne, director of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. He warmly welcomed the participants to the project and emphasized the great significance of courses such as this. He mentioned that they might be very useful, not only in countries with no Christian political parties, but also in those which have quite active parties with similar programs. Vladimir Marjanović, representative of the "Serbian Christian Democratic Movement" introduced the participants to the main ideas and the work of this movement and emphasized the importance of giving information about Christian democracy in Serbia in general.

Mr. Miša Đurković, representative of the "Center for Conservative Studies" gave a lecture on "Christian Democracy as an aspect of Political Conservatism". He spoke about the history of this idea and its place in the conservative tradition. He noted the need for conservative political force in the domestic and regional political scene. Afterwards a discussion about different conservative streams followed.

After the lunch break, Mr. Leo van Doesburg, the representative of the ECPM gave a striking lecture "The development of Christian Democratic values in (South) East Europe: opportunity or challenge"? He introduced the participants to the main principles and values nourished by the ECPM. He also presented the ECPM’s activities in the countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Numerous questions about the development of Christian democracy in those countries, which do not have a rich Christian political tradition, were discussed.

Meeting of the Association of Christian Democrats of Eastern Europe (ACDEE)
12 April, 2011, Kyiv, Ukraine

The Political Bureau meeting of the Association of Christian Democrats of Eastern Europe took place in Kiev on April 12. The meeting gathered leaders of Christian democratic parties and civic movements from Moldova (PPCD), Georgia (CDM), Belarus (BCD), Latvia (KDS), Estonia (ECD), Ukraine (CDU), as well as Russia.

"We are glad to see our colleagues from Latvia in our organization and we are looking forward to further expansion of the Association of Christian Democrats of Eastern Europe. The more we are, the more effective our work is in spreading Christian Democratic values in Eastern Europe" – the head of ACDEE, Alaksiej Shein, said.

"It’s a good sign that we have gathered today in Kiev as the whole situation in Europe and the whole world worsened" - Volodymyr Stretovych, a member of the Board of the CDU and member of the Ukrainian parliament said. According to Stretovych, "Christian Democrats are needed in unity of thought and unity of action in implementing the values written on our flags and in the papers of our parties".

During the Political Bureau meeting, new members were admitted (KDS of Latvia) and the participants discussed and approved the priorities of the ACDEE’s activities for 2011, which are the protection of children’s rights and family values.

The members of the ACDEE agreed to carry out a joint event dedicated to the International Children’s Day on June 1st, 2011 simultaneously in all member-countries represented in the ACDEE, according to the needs and actual problems in every country represented in the Association.
Westminster National Prayer Breakfast
21 June, 2011, London, United Kingdom

The National Prayer Breakfast in the UK is an annual event that takes place in the historical setting of Westminster Hall, inside the Houses of Parliament, by kind permission of the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Lord Speaker of the House of Lords, under the auspices of the Christians in Politics all-party group. The appointed chair for the 2011 NPB was Sharon Hodgson MP. The Chairman was Mr. Leo van Doesburg attended the event on behalf of ECPM.

This year’s event focused on the theme “raising young people’s aspirations” and brought together approximately 650 guests, including Members of both Houses, Ambassadors, leaders of Christian churches, charities and youth and community organizations from across the UK. On the evening of June 20th, the evening before the breakfast itself, guests were invited to attend a reception in the historical Speaker’s Apartments (hosted by Christians in Politics). The main part of the event took place on the 21st of June and consisted of a full morning of events that included the Breakfast itself, seminars, prayer and a worship event held in the historical chapel of St Mary Undercroft inside the Parliament.

The Prayer Breakfast commenced with a Welcome Address, delivered by the Rt Hon Bercow MP, Speaker of the House of Commons and a prayer addressed by the Speaker’s Chaplain, Rev. Rose Hudson-Wilkin. Following the introductory remarks given by Sharon Hodgson MP, the Chair of the 2011 NPB, the programme of speakers, performance items and prayer continued to place emphasis on the theme of the event – “raising young people’s aspirations”.

The keynote address was entitled “Communities of Hope” and was delivered by guest speaker Andy Hawthorne, Chief Executive of The Message Trust, a Christian mission organization based in Manchester and working in schools, local communities and prisons. Additionally, prayers for both, young people and political leaders, Scripture readings, stirring songs and video presentations such as “Testimonies of Transformation” turned this into a high level and inspiring event, where the topic of “raising young people’s aspirations” was communicated very well.

The day appropriately ended with a prayer and worship service organized by Christians in Politics in the historical Chapel of St. Mary Undercroft. The service featured a programme that included both traditional and contemporary elements and represented a unique opportunity to worship Christ and to pray for political leaders in a venue located at the heart of the British Government.

In Westminster a meeting was organized with the purpose of forming an European Christian Inter-Parliamentary Forum. This forum is meant to support individual members of the Parliament to promote their Christian values in politics. A brainstorming meeting was held with some members of Parliament from different European countries, discussing whether such a platform is needed and how it should look like. On behalf of the ECPM, Mr. Leo van Doesburg is part of the coordination team and participated in this event.
The International Berlin Gathering brought nearly four hundred German and international politicians to the capital of Germany from June 30th to July 2nd, 2011. The annual event took place for the 16th time, organized by the Prayer Breakfast Group, mainly initiated by the Christian Democrats but it also included other parties. ECPM chairman Peeter Võsu was also present.

Traditionally, the opening session took place in the Bundestag (The Federal Parliament), followed by a festive dinner in Johannesteig (in a suburb of Berlin). The second day of the Gathering started with the International Prayer Breakfast in the historical Adlon Hotel, followed by plenary sessions, seminars and workshops. All guests from different religious backgrounds were invited to take part in a church service at Johannesteig in the afternoon of the third conference day. The gathering ended with a barbecue night on July 2nd.

The International Berlin Gathering has become the biggest Christian political event in Europe. Each year, up to 400 politicians mainly from Europe but also from Africa, Asia and the Americas gather to listen to the topic of the year, to discuss and to pray together. The event also makes a good platform for meeting with Christian politicians from all over the world and having fellowship together. Rudolf Decker, a former MP founded the Berlin Gathering and is the main organizer of the event. Dr. Andreas Jahn is the executive manager. The main theme of the Berlin Gatherings is: „Responsibility before God and Man“ – a quote from the Constitution of Germany. Each year a different subtheme is added to it – this time it was: „And who is my neighbor: in my family, in my country, in the world?“ The parable of the Good Samaritan was cited from the Bible as the introduction to the topic in the Bundestag.

Members of the Bundestag, Anette Hübinger, Patrick Meinhardt, Ernst-Reinhard Beck, Johannes Selle and Dieter Grasedieck, and the main organizer of the event, the former MP Rudolf Decker, moderated the sessions. Dr. Guido Westerwelle, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, Dr. Norbert Lammert, President of the Bundestag, Volker Kauder, Chairman of the CDU, and several other Members of the German Government and Parliament contributed to the Gathering. Many of the guests came from African countries, like Dr. Kakule Molo, Senator of Dem. Rep. Of Congo, and Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, a former President of Burundi. Among the participants were also several international MPs and Members of Government.

Dr. Guido Westerwelle welcomed all the international guests to Germany on behalf of the government of the country. He spoke about the Germans’ role to serve peace and for the active defence of the human rights in the world. He mentioned his last year’s trip to Sudan as one of the success stories. He also named religious freedom as a universal right and mentioned the situation in Iraq, where the state does not intervene when Christians are persecuted. He had named the problem to the President of Iraq during his last visit there. Dr. Westerwelle ended his speech with a clear statement that he is a member of the Christian church and confesses his faith publicly.

Paul Magnuson, a Federal Court Judge from the US spoke on the prayer for rulers and leaders at the Prayer Breakfast. Richard McCormack, Director of Bank of America and Hans-Joachim Tonnellier, CEO of Volksbank of Germany spoke about the responsible handling of finances in the uncertain economic situation of the world. Both of them named their personal faith in the Lord as an important part of their identity and a major factor for their decision making process.

Most of the sessions took place around meals or snack tables that gave a relaxed feeling and formed natural conversation groups of different people. People from nearly 40 different countries met each other in an open and friendly atmosphere. Forming new relationships was also one of the goals of the event. All the participants expressed their hope to come to Berlin next year again.
One of the key principles of ECPM is reconciliation. This summer we were involved in two important events that took place in Fuzine (Croatia): Renewing Our Minds (ROM), a programme that took place from July 16th-28th 2011, and the Economic Diplomacy Seminar (EDS), between the 17th and 28th of August 2011. Leo van Doesburg, ECPM’s regional representative in East Europe participated in both events as part of the leadership team, mentor and speaker.

ROM is a Southeast European initiative focusing on change and developing vision for young leaders, inspired by the example and teachings of Jesus Christ. Its mission is to develop leaders of integrity, committed to reconciliation, peace-building and constructive social action; leaders who are renewed in their minds, characters, attitudes and actions in the likeness of Jesus and are steadily transforming their constituencies, communities and countries. This year there were 54 participants, from the Balkan countries as well as from Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and a few persons from the USA and Zimbabwe.

Throughout the program, participants had an opportunity to experience unique ways of learning to communicate, negotiate and work in different groups, by using tools like café dialogues, forums, small groups, workshops and games with a purpose. ROM participants generally go through four phases: they start out with the “Embracing phase”, continuing through the "Challenge and Confronting Phase" and the "Finding Purpose and Calling Phase", and eventually concluding the process with the "Planning and Action Phase". Over the years, ROM has grown into a transformational international leadership and reconciliation movement that has inspired the birth of numerous movements, NGOs and socially engaging groups.

Throughout ROM, Leo van Doesburg led two plenary sessions and one workshop. During the first lecture, he defined Human Dignity as a foundation for Human Rights, based on the notion that we are created in the image of God from the conception till natural death. He approached the subject by defining the concept of Human Dignity from a historical, theological and political perspective.

The second course that he offered during the second plenary meeting was entitled "European Union: between Identity and Integration" and it tackled the question of whether there is an European identity and if so how does this affect national identities? Using an interactive media presentation as visual support for his lecture, Leo van Doesburg spoke about the history, vision and strategies of the EU, alongside the question: What is identity? In addition to the plenary sessions, he also gave a workshop named “From vision to action” and focused on the Biblical story of Nehemiah as a case study.

As one of the participants describes ROM: “ROM was personally transformative for me. I went into ROM living as if it were possible to approach reconciliation work with Jesus as nothing more than my personal motivation for being involved; now I am more convinced than ever that He must be at the center of any and all reconciliation efforts, even when people of diverse religious backgrounds are involved. Without Him we are left to approach conflict on solely human terms and logic. And that simply isn’t enough.”
Parliamentary Hearings on "The Institution of Family in Ukraine", Ukrainian Prayer Breakfast and CDU Forum of Christian Politicians
22 September, 2011, Kiev, Ukraine

Parliamentary hearings on "Institution of Family in Ukraine: state of affairs, problems, solutions" initiated by Christian Democratic Union took place in September in Kiev. During her presentation at the hearings, Kateryna Lukianova, MP, CDU Board member, said that Ukrainian family should be the center and the goal of all reforms. "We should create the conditions that will enable every Ukrainian to work and sustain himself and his family. This is what the reforms should aim at," she headlined. Oksana Biloiz, CDU Board member, also proposed that families with children should be subjected to special tax benefits. This will help to raise several children. It is highly significant that these parliamentary hearings coincided with the Forum of Christian Politicians' devoted to family values in a globalized world.

On September 22nd the Forum of Christian Politicians, entitled "Christian Values in a Globalized World" took place in Kiev. The event was initiated by Christian Democratic Union of Ukraine and was attended by leading European and Ukrainian politicians, state leadership, members of parliament, members of All-Ukrainian Church Council, representatives of non-governmental and religious organizations and diplomats representing more than twelve countries.

Meeting with Association of Christian Democrats in Eastern Europe Concerning Belarus
22, October, 2011, Chisinau, Moldova


The Association of Christian Democrats in Eastern Europe expressed its concern in respect to the condition of the human rights and freedom created in Belarus, especially after the presidential elections of December 19, 2010 in the following statement:

The rights to freedom of assembly and free speech continue to be violated in this country. In the last months, in the Republic of Belarus, freedom of conscience and religious rights were seriously violated. In many parts of the country, the Prosecutors Office issued official warnings on the bases of art. 193.1 of the Criminal Code, which provides imprisonment for up to two years for Protestant Christians, performing activities within unregistered religious and political organizations or public associations. Opposition leaders continue to be detained, among them Paul Severinet, the party leader of “Christian Democracy in Belarus,” Nicolai Statkevici and Andrei Sanikov, ex-presidential candidates in recent elections, Alesi Beleatikii, Vice-President of International Federation for Human Rights, President of the Center for Human Rights "Vesna," Zmiter Daškevici, leader of the “Youth Front” and other political and civic activists, recognized by the Belarusian and international organizations for human rights as political prisoners.

They also expressed their concern about the fact that the legislation of Belarus has suffered a series of changes without any prior public discussion, aimed at restricting the rights and liberties of the citizens and the onset of an even harsher repression on behalf of law enforcement authorities.

The listed facts raise the concern of the international community regarding the situation of observing democratic standards and human rights in Belarus. Expressing our solidarity with the international community’s position, we call on Belarusian authorities to respect fundamental human rights, release and rehabilitate the opposition leaders and civic activists.
European Prayer Breakfast
30 November 2011, Brussels, Belgium

On November 29th and 30th, ECPM took part in several important events in Brussels. On the 29th of November, Peter Vösu, chairman of the ECPM and Leo van Doesburg, Officer Relations & Networking participated in the welcoming cocktail organized for the participants at the European Prayer Breakfast. This meeting was held in a restaurant in a building of the European Commission. The next morning, the ECPM board members and Leo participated in the European Prayer Breakfast. The keynote speaker was Jerzy Buzek, president of the European Parliament. Among the speakers were also our friends: Sarah Essayah, Finnish Member of the European Parliament, Peter van Dalen (Dutch Member of the European Parliament on behalf of ECPM member party the Christian Union) and Prince Charles-Adrien de Merode. The European Prayer Breakfast was followed by a keynote lecture about the theme: “Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace” given by Dr. Os Guinness.

After the European Prayer Breakfast, Peter van Dalen hosted a meeting for the European Christian Interparliamentary Forum (ECIF). This forum has as main target to support individual Christian Members of Parliament from different countries and to form a European network. This was initiated and coordinated by Care, Care for Europe, ECPM and the European Evangelical Alliance. Important discussions about common challenges for the Members of Parliament were discussed, as well as ideas to form a pragmatic and efficient way of communication between the ECIF and the individual MPs.

In the evening, ECPM co-hosted the Cornerstone dinner. The Cornerstone is a group of young leaders mainly living in Brussels. Every month they organize a special dinner where the topics which are discussed focus on how to implement the principles of Jesus as young leaders. After the European Prayer Breakfast, a bigger dinner traditionally takes place, to which young leaders who are invited to the European Prayer Breakfast can also participate. Around 60 young leaders from all over Europe took part in this event. On behalf of ECPM, all the members of the board took part. Leo van Doesburg chaired the event together with Susan Kerr from the Cornerstone group. Jeanette Schoonderwoerd took part on behalf of the ECPYN and the youth organization of the Christian Union Perspective. Many participants showed great interest in the activities of ECPM and new contacts were made.

ECPM Representative – Leo van Doesburg – Awarded at 2nd Conscience and Freedom Award Gala
3 December 2011, Timisoara, Romania

The second Conscience and Freedom Award Gala took place in Timisoara, Romania, on the 3rd of December 2011.

The event is organized by the Conscience and Freedom Association, in collaboration with the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, Religious Affairs and National Minorities and it aims to honor individuals who have espoused, established, defended and promoted the cause of freedom of religion and conscience throughout Romania.

Recipients of the Conscience and Freedom Award include politicians, academics, activists, writers, religious leaders, diplomats, scholars and other individuals with inspiring stories, who were involved in defending and promoting religious freedom and conscience through their activities, writings, legislative initiatives or acts of courage.

One of this year’s award nominees and winners, Leo van Doesburg, is a Dutchman who has been living in Romania for the past 12 years and, through his work for ECPM, has been very active in the advancement of Christian values in the political sphere and in promoting fruitful collaborations between diverse religious and political affiliations.
The award “for the promotion and safeguard of freedom of religion and conscience” was presented to Mr. Doesburg by the Hon. Marius Dugulescu, a Member of the Romanian Parliament who attended in his capacity as Vice-Chair of the Committee on Human Rights, Religious Affairs and National Minorities and Chair of the Subcommittee on Human Rights.

Here is Leo van Doesburg’s statement on the recognition: "It was not only special because I have been living here for a long time, but because there is where people were shouting "Freedom" and "There is a God," calling out for their fundamental freedoms! While Western Europe became more and more secular, Romania taught us a lesson that freedom is not to be taken for granted, and that it was bought with a high price! Unfortunately, even in Western Europe, freedom of religion and conscience are increasingly under attack. Therefore Romania, in my view, has a responsibility to promote and protect these fundamental freedoms not only in Romania but throughout Europe!"  

The gala commenced with the opening remarks of the President of the Conscience and Freedom Association, Nelu Burcea, who emphasized the significance of the second Gala being organized in Timisoara. Given that the first edition of the Award Gala was held in March in the Romanian Parliament, Mr. Burcea underlined the symbolic implication of the second Gala taking place in Timisoara, the city that sparked the anti-communist revolution in December 1989.

Being the first city to have made a call for Romanians to stand together for freedom, Timisoara has proved to be a beacon of hope and freedom for generations to come. The introduction was followed by beautiful music performed by "Laudes Christi" Choir and Banat Philharmonica’s Choirmaster, Lucian Onita.

Other personalities awarded at the Gala were Senator Gheorghe David - MP, Deputy Dorel Covaci - MP, Titu Bojin - County Counselor and President of the Social Democratic Party in Timis, Francisc Boldea - Mayor of Lugoj, Stefan Dragulescu, MP – former Minister of Health and Rector of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Timisoara, Gabriel Ivanica – doctor, Gheorghe Catana – Principal of Logos Christian Highschool, Claudiu Ariesan – Lecturer at Faculty of Arts, History and Theology, West University, Vasile Tamoioaga – Editor of Timisoara daily newspaper, Nelu Mehedinti – former director of Voice of the Gospel Christian Radio Station, Oscar Berger - head of the Timisoara daily newspaper, Pastor Mihai Maur – President of the Adventist Chuch in Banat and Ionel Tutac – Secretary General of the Baptist Union in Romania.

European Christian Political Movement Eastern Representative Leo van Doesburg’s was granted the award in honor of his outstanding contribution to promote Christian values and the freedom of religion and conscience in Romania, such as the collaboration with the Ecumenical Prayer Group in the Romanian Parliament, the annual Romanian Prayer Breakfast and numerous other conferences and trainings regarding human dignity and moral values.

"It was a special honor for me to receive the award in Timisoara, a city characterized by good relations amongst different religious denominations, cultures, and nationalities; a city with beautiful architecture and parks, but most of all, beautiful people. The atheistic, communist regime could not destroy the tolerance, beauty and heritage of the city. I do not think it is surprising that the revolution started there almost 22 years ago. Timisoara is what I consider home and a cornerstone for the ECPM work in Eastern Europe."
From the 4th-20th of February, Leo van Doesburg (East European Representative and Officer Networking and Relations) and Auke Minnema, Secretary of ECPYN started a long journey through the Balkans. The target was to visit the partners and contact persons of the ECPM, to get more insight into their situation and to discuss the projects that will be developed this year. The trip included Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. Here follows their report:

"In Serbia we visited two new members of ECPM. First we went to Vrsac where we talked with members of the local council about the situation of minorities in the country. In Pancevo we visited the Alliance of Romanians in Vojvodina. They recently became a member of the ECPM. Besides bringing the official papers of ECPM, we discussed with them about the situation of Romanians in the region and about the party. After this visit, our new associate member Serbian Christian Democratic Movement welcomed us to Belgrade. They also received the official confirmation of becoming an associate member of the ECPM. We discussed their activities and plans for the future. During our stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina we visited the local office of IFES (The International Foundation for "Croatian Growth"), that is based on principles very similar to those of ECPM. We carried out multilateral cooperation between the ECPM and the CDU, parliamentary hearings dedicated to family values in Ukraine. The members of Slavic Euro-optimists nor Euro-pessimists; rather we should be multilateral cooperation between the ECPM and the CDU, parliamentary hearings dedicated to family values in Ukraine. The members of Slavic Eu

The next country on our list was Croatia, where we visited a new political movement (HRAST that means oak tree and is also short for "Croatian Growth"), that is based on principles very similar to the principles of the ECPM. We talked about activities which can be carried out in collaboration with the ECPM. The most important item in Croatian politics is Croatia’s accession to the European Union. A proposal from Leo to organize a meeting and a course on the theme: "European Union between identity and integration" was welcomed. We also gave a course on basic Christian Democratic principles of politics for members of STEP (IFES Croatia) and Partner Business Association (a Marketplace ministry in Croatia).

From Croatia we travelled to Montenegro where we met Sinisa Nadazdin and Emil Krijestorac (representative of the People’s Party of Montenegro). We discussed about the political situation of the country, about the development of the opposition and the party. Emile and Sinisa informed us about the main focus of their work for the coming period, about plans to organize a conference on family values and a larger Balkan conference in collaboration with the ECPM.

In Albania we met with Shaban Sulçe, who started the Centre for Dialogue and Promotion of European Values. Political unrest in Albania resulted in three people being killed in January 2011. The Centre is focused on bringing the youth of all political parties together in order to start a necessary peaceful dialogue. Other items that were discussed were the collaboration with the OSCE and the Summer School. We met several politicians from all parties and they all realized the need for the Centre and assured us of their involvement in making this a success. The Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs showed his gratitude to ECPM for their statement concerning the demonstrations in January. In Kosovo we visited our contact persons and friends and discussed about the development of a conference for representatives from all the political parties, municipalities and minorities to discuss the identity and integration in the European Union. Leo van Doesburg met with the representative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), who was positive about this idea and showed willingness to be involved in developing this project.

In Macedonia we visited our partner, 'Boris Trajkovski International Foundation'. We had a discussion with the president of the Foundation, Vilma Trajkovska, Robert Milcev (Executive Coordinator) and Vilma Milcev (director 'Searching for common grounds') about the Youth Leadership Forum, the collaboration with the ECPM and the development of a Balkan Initiative Group. The latter will be led by former leaders from the Balkans. The aim is to develop cross-border and regional collaborations on different fields all throughout the Balkans, based on the principles of Jesus.

It was a long but interesting journey. It was good to visit most of the countries in the Balkans on one trip. This gave us a better overall view on the situation in the whole peninsula, common challenges and problems but it also helped us see the differences. It was good to visit our friends and to encourage them to continue their good work in often very difficult circumstances. Besides this, we gained insight on the impact of the ECPM in this region and the activities that will be developed this year and in the common years. What has begun will undoubtedly be continued..."
Slovenia: Meeting with Civic Initiative Committee
9 May, 2011, Ljubljana, Slovenia

On Monday May 9th, Leo van Doesburg and Auke Minnema (ECPYN Secretary) met representatives of the civic initiative committee in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The aim was to investigate possibilities for collaboration in promoting family values in Slovenia.

It was encouraging to speak with two of their representatives. As in many countries, the government (pressed by secular (mostly Western European) lobby groups) wants to change the family law in order to allow same-sex marriages. These initiatives are often against the will of the majority of the people in several countries (as an opinion poll showed). Often undemocratic means are used to push such initiatives through the parliament. The members of the civic initiative committee were banned from the expert discussions and from the 47 delegates; the government chose 27 delegates that supported the new family bill proposal. The views of society were not reflected and many experts were not invited. After these meetings, a referendum will be organized.

The civic movement is active in monitoring the democratic processes in order to safeguard the traditional definition of marriage in the Slovenian family code. It was encouraging to see what they were doing and their pro-active and pragmatic approach.

We were impressed by Slovenia with its Austrian pragmatism, Slavic passion and Italian flair, its postcard surroundings and the friendly people.

ECPM Visit with CDU (Christian Democratic Union) and Lecture on "Europe, Between Integration and Identity"
1-2 June, 2011, Ukraine

Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Officer Relations and Networking, Regional Representative Eastern Europe, visited Ukraine on May 30th-June 2nd, 2011. During his visit, several meetings with CDU MPs David Zhvaniya, Volodymyr Stretoych, Oksana Bilozir and Volodymyr Maruschenko were held. During these meetings, the parties exchanged their visions regarding the development of multilateral cooperation between the ECPM and the CDU, discussed the project of an Ukrainian prayer breakfast to be held in the Autumn of 2011, agreed on the importance of parliamentary hearings dedicated to family values in Ukraine. They also carried out consultations on development and strategy for the Association of Christian Democrats of Eastern Europe.

On June 1st, Leo van Doesburg held a lecture "Europe between Integration and Identity" for activists of the CDU Youth Organization. During the lecture, the key issues for modern Europe have been discussed having with young Ukrainian Christian democrats: supranationality or intergovernance, economic cooperation and cooperation in the social-cultural, humanitarian sphere. Leo van Doesburg stressed that we should be neither Euro-optimists nor Euro-pessimists; rather we should be Euro-realists.
Regional representative in Eastern Europe, Leo van Doesburg, was invited to come to Sibiu, Romania to discuss collaboration between the Christian Centre for the Roma and the ECPM. For this occasion, the president of the Centre, Mr. Florin Cioabă organized a meeting where, besides leaders of the Center and believers, Pastor Samu Ion from the United States, a well-known evangelist who was also very involved in spreading the Gospel in the communist time and standing up for the Roma, was also present.

Mr. Cioabă opened the meeting and showed the importance of the believers and the Christian Church in the Roma community. In 1970 there was officially one Roma church, but now there are more than 300 churches. The churches helped the Roma community to realize that they need to change common mentalities and behaviors and to understand the importance of Christian values. As an example he mentioned the problems concerning the child marriages that should be terminated.

The Christian Centre for the Roma has been established in 1996 in light of the need to develop Roma pastors and deacons for their evangelical churches. From that time on, more than 100 churches from the whole country are connected with the Centre. Mr Cioabă also mentioned that the State should support these churches more so these communities could grow.

After this, Pastor Samu Ion took the floor. He was active in the evangelization of the Roma since the 1970’s and shared the difficult situations during the communist era and the problems of the Christian Roma community with the Security police and authorities. The communist authorities could not destroy the Christian faith that is growing now more than ever, transforming people and societies. After Pastor Ion, Leo van Doesburg, shared his personal testimony and gave a presentation about the ECPM. He spoke about the history and the activities of the Movement that are planned in Romania. He mentioned how important it is for the Roma to be involved in these activities and he also expressed his wish to organize a day for human dignity, with debates and workshops on this theme, to which he welcomed the involvement of the Roma as well.

Florin Cioabă mentioned the four most important problems that the Christian Roma community is facing. The first one was the education problem. In the Roma community 70-80% of children abandon school. If children do not go to school, they will have fewer chances in life. Another great problem are the social issues. Young people who do not have a job have no choice but to move abroad, where they often become involved in criminal networks and are exploited to beg, steal or prostitute. Another problem of the Roma is housing. Many Roma live far below the living standards. Health remains a problem too, because they do not benefit from the social and health security. Many strategies of the Government do not produce an effect, but remain paper strategies. Representatives of the Christian Centre of the Roma furthermore underlined their collaboration with the German Forum in Sibiu. They developed common actions together and succeeded to tackle some of the issues the Roma community is facing. Unfortunately the Romanian political parties only remember the Roma during the election campaigns.

Silviu Dulceanu, counselor on behalf of the centre for the Minister of Education and Research was also present at his meeting. He mentioned that only faith and education can change the situation of the Roma. Together with the Ministry of Education, the Christian Centre should find funds for scholarship, school supplies and clothes for children from poor parents who cannot support these costs. At the same time, Mr Dulceanu said that it is of utmost importance that parents bring their children to church, which is neglected some times by the Orthodox Church.

The second part of the discussion was reserved for discussions and interventions from the participants. The pastors’ presentation showed the main challenges they are confronted with and underlined the importance of the church communities in facing these challenges. They agreed that the State should be much more involved in helping the Evangelical Church. They are supporting the Orthodox Church, but the Evangelical Churches are often neglected even though they represent the motor of change for the Roma community.

Leo van Doesburg stated that churches could play a role by forming local communities of believers where changes can happen and projects can be developed. Not the church as an institute should be supported, but as a creation of communities based on the love of Jesus that is the basis of love towards God and towards the other. The seminar was finished by a church service in the Filadelfia Church.
Study Visit: Christian Roma Center
12 October 2011, Sibiu, Romania

Regional representative in Eastern Europe, Leo van Doesburg, strategies.

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2.1 Introduction. The European Christian Political Foundation

At 2 February 2011 the Bureau of the European Parliament recognised the new European Christian Political Foundation as an official European political foundation and approved its funding by the European Parliament.

The European Christian Political Foundation (ECPF) acts since that moment as the political foundation for the European Christian Political Movement. We support and underpin the ECPM especially in terms of political content through European co-operation and the introduction of analysis, ideas and policy options. The ECPF shares the basic program and Christian values of the ECPM. Thinktanks, NGO’s and individual politicians are welcome as members if they agree with these values and the Christian-democrat principles as expressed in the basic programme. Associates of the ECPM are obviously welcome to become a full member of the ECPF.

Below you can read how the foundation developed its activities in its first year of existence. We thank all our volunteers for their efforts that made it possible to have a smooth running administration and to develop a website that has become a European portal to many like-minded organisations and their research and publications. You are warmly invited to visit our website: www.ecpf.info

We thank all members and all the organisations who co-operated and supported and contributed to a successful first year. The ECPF thanks also the many individuals who helped in the organisation of all the events and work of the ECPF. After this good start, the European Christian Political Foundation can look forward with confidence to 2012.

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2.2 ECPF Conferences & Seminars

First ECPF Members’ General Assembly
Romania, June 24th

The ECPF can look back to its successful first General Assembly of Members after its official recognition by the European Parliament.

This first Members’ Assembly took place on June 24th in the Romanian Parliament. The ECPF assembly was chaired by its president, David Fieldsend. ECPF members, as well as observers from the ECPM, were present. The new member-organizations were announced and shortly introduced and all who were present welcomed the quick growth of the organization since its recognition by the European Parliament. All members of the Board were confirmed in their positions by the member-organizations. The Board is grateful for the trust expressed by the members of the ECPF. Mr. Fieldsend introduced Johannes de Jong as manager of the ECPF, who will be available as full-time staff of the organization.

Dr. Sander Luitwieler gave an introduction of the ECPF study project “Europe’s Values,” which was greeted as a very valuable project in the framework of the debate on the soul of Europe.

The Chair thanked all the participants for their presence and input during this first member’s assembly of the ECPF. The ECPF trusts that this event will prove to be an invitation to become more involved in the process of cooperation in Europe.

Seminar on "Impacting Society"
Spain, August 3rd

In cooperation with the Spanish Evangelical Alliance, a one-day seminar was held on the 4th of August in Barcelona, on the topic of “Impacting Society.”

The Spanish Evangelical Alliance took this as an opportunity to reflect and enhance the socio-political work taking place in their network. Representatives of various Spanish organizations attended the meeting. The Spanish Evangelical Alliance considered it a successful and important seminar and will continue to cooperate with the ECPF in this field. The ECPF thanks Leo van Doesburg for representing the vision of the ECPM side by side with the manager of the ECPF, who presented a vision for constructive involvement in society as a minority.
Seminar on "Social Market Economy"
Vilnius, Lithuania, September 9th

On the 9th of September, the ECPF held a seminar on the "Social Market Economy," in cooperation with the Lithuanian Social Market Institute and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS).

The seminar took place in the Lithuanian Parliament; the Seimas. The meeting was lead by Mr. Paulius Saudargas MP and Mr. Valentinas Stundys MP and Chairman of the Christian-democrat group in the TS-LKD faction of the Seimas.

The event gained prestige by the fact that Mrs. Irene Degutiené, President of the Seimas, opened the event. Speakers on behalf of KAs and ECPF were Mr. Andreas Klein, director of the Baltic Division of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Mr. Beniamin Lup, secretary of the ECPF.

Dr. Gitanas Nausėda, director of the SEB bank gave a clear in-depth comment on the Lithuanian economical situation. Professor Lazutka of the Vilnius University focused on "trust" as a fundamental factor for any social market economy. Dr. Mark Hauptmann presented, on behalf of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the history and present state of the social market in Germany. Dr. Michael Schluter, director of "Relationships Global," presented his relational review and renewal of the concept of "social market economy."

After the break, the director of the Lithuanian Railways, Dr. Albertas Simenas, explained how in cooperation with the trade unions, the social plan for the workers of his company was designed and put in place during an economical downturn. Prof. Sergej Lukin and Georgij Dmitruk spoke about the economical situation in Belorussia and how destructive the dictatorship of Lukashenka is for the economy of their nation.

The final debate was centered on the Lithuanian economical policy. In this debate there was a special focus on how to identify the strong parts of the Lithuanian economy and how to use them as engines for future prosperity. The ECPF is grateful to its hosts, the Lithuanian Seimas, and all those working for the success of this seminar. This seminar also gave a groundwork for the input the ECPF can give to the members of the ECPM.
The ECPF conference "Christian Democratic Values. Europe’s Values", which took place in Timisoara (9-11 November) attracted a lot of attention.

Many people made the effort of coming and listening to lectures that highlighted many aspects of this theme. On the evening of November 10th, 300 people were present in the CRAFT conference hall to hear the speakers and to discuss with them about this theme. There was also much interest from the media for this event. Many ECPM members and associates attended the conference as well.

The dinner on the 9th of November was opened by MP Marius Dugulescu and ECPF Chairman David Fieldsend. ECPF and WorldTeach had the pleasure of hearing greeting words from Mr. Constantin Ostaficiuc, Mr. Gheorghe Seculici, Dr. Sever Voinescu, Dr. Theodor Paleologu, Pastor Ionel Tuțac, Dr. Adrian Papahagi, Senator Gheorghe David, MP Gheorghe Ciobanu, MP Dănuț Liga, MP Mircea Lubanovici, Mr. Marin Popescu, Pastor Samuel Tuțac, Mr. Leo van Doesburg, Pastor Ben-Oni Ardelean and Mr. Beniamin Lup. All of them also gave short messages regarding the theme of the conference.

Dr. Sorin Frunzăverde held the opening lecture on the following day and outlined the importance of Christian-democrat values for the development of Romania and his party. Dr. Sever Voinescu presented his vision on the definition and future of Christian-democracy in Romania and Europe. Dr. Adrian Papahagi commented on the backgrounds of Christian-democracy and stressed the importance of a clear presence of Christian values in society and politics. Dr. Sander Luitwieler presented the ECPF research project “Europe’s Values” and showed the spiritual roots of Europe and their implications for current policies. Dr. Theodor Paleologu made the case for a practical approach of Christian-democrat values in order to apply them in real policy-making and a political style that makes room for that approach.

David Fieldsend presented the way in which the ECPF promotes Christian values in Europe’s political landscape.

The ECPF and WorldTeach had the pleasure of having a group of leading politicians who were prepared to take place in the panel for the symposium in the CRAFT building. MP Marius Dugulescu, MP Dănuț Liga, Dr. Theodor Paleologu, Dr. Sever Voinescu, MP Mircea Lubanovici, Mr. Constantin Ostaficiuc and Senator Gheorghe David commented on the theme and shared their opinion in discussion with the large audience.

On the 11th of November, a number of leaders of NGO’s working at the crossroads of Christian faith and society were willing to share their experience in implementing Christian values in society. Mr. Vighil Achihaï, Pastor Dumitru Moț, Mr. Nelu Burcea, Pastor Viorel Tuț, Pastor Jean Chiforeanu and Mr. Mircea Cristian told about their day-to-day struggles in their field. Mr. Ovidiu Ciuhandu and Mr. Lucian Pop commented on the political meaning of these voices from society. Leo van Doesburg, as representative of the ECPM challenged the Romanians to be a voice for Christian values in Europe. Mr. Johannes de Jong for the ECPF and Mr. Beniamin Lup for WorldTeach closed the conference.

It is clear that during this time of crisis in Europe many people are rethinking the values of their societies and the roots of the European Union. The ECPF is pleased to have brought a beneficial contribution to that process.

The ECPF wants to thank all the speakers and the people who participated in this conference. The ECPF thanks the full staff WorldTeach, Mr. Beniamin Lup and MP Marius Dugulescu who made a lot of effort to make this conference a successful event. The ECPF also thanks all the speakers who contributed to this event and thus ensured the high quality of the content of the conference.
European Expert Meeting on "Freedom of Faith & Conscience,"
Brussels, November 29th

The ECPF organized an expert meeting with representatives from 10 organizations active at European and national level to reflect on the question "How to live in peace together with our deepest differences?" Dr. Os Guinness spoke on his new manifesto that aims to answer this crucial question.

The ECPF is glad that many organizations attended the meeting and that it proved to be a groundwork for further interconfessional cooperation in this field, with a clear open mind towards interreligious cooperation with regard to the goal of living in peace through the acceptance of our deepest differences. The ECPF is grateful that it was able to give content to further political action by the ECPM to promote these values and ideas in Europe.
2.3 Study Projects 2011

Europe’s Values

The European Christian Political Foundation and ChristianUnion’s Think Tank (‘Groen van Prinsterer Institute’) have started a project that looks at the historical and cultural foundation of Europe. The project does not focus on the EU, its role and institutions, but rather on Europe’s shared history, common values and religious heritage. Based on that, this study will describe a Christian contribution to the debate on the cultural direction of Europe. The outcome will be a publication that will be discussed at conferences and seminars. European seminars and conferences will also be used as feedback moments during the project. The project is led by Dr. Sander Luitwieler and will be finished in 2012.

Fair Taxation and Families

The European Christian Political Foundation co-operated with the “Guido de Bres Foundation” in a comparative research project leading to an extensive research file and a publication on this issue. The basic question of this project is how the family is approached in various Western-European countries in their taxation policies. The research project will therefore focus on the issue of individualism and the family as a whole within this context. The final conclusions lead to practical recommendations for taxation policy. The publication is available at request at the ECPF office.

"After Capitalism"
By Paul Mills and Michael Schluter

The world is set to be in financial turmoil for some years to come. Searching questions are being asked about the future of Capitalism in the light of the European debt crisis, exorbitant levels of executive pay, short termism in share trading, and the dominance of the financial economy over the real economy of goods and services.

The fall of communism left capitalism as the only show in town; as it grows increasingly unfit for purpose, where do we go next? "After Capitalism" seeks to rethink the foundations of the market economy and argues that the Bible’s central theme of relationships is the key to rebuilding a system that promotes economic well-being, financial stability and social cohesion.

This joint ECPF & Jubilee Centre publication can be ordered via the ECPF office or via Jubilee Centre.
2.4 Board of ECPF

The Board of the ECPF in 2012 from left to right:

Mr. Beniamin Lup, (director WorldTeach, Romania) Secretary, Mr. Walter van Luik, (policy adviser in the European Parliament, The Netherlands), Treasurer, Mr. David Fieldsend, (director Care for Europe, Belgium), Chairman and Mr. Paulius Saudargas, (MP in the Lithuanian Seimas), Board Member.

The Board thanks Mr. Gert-Jan Segers for his work as Treasurer during the first year of the ECPF.
European Christian Political Youth Network (ECPYN) Activity Report 2011

The Board of the ECPF in 2012 from left to right: Mr. Beniamin Lup, (director WorldTeach, Romania) Secretary, Mr. Walter van Luik, (policy adviser in the European Parliament, The Netherlands), Treasurer, Mr. David Fieldsend, (director Care for Europe, Belgium), Chairman and Mr. Paulius Saudargas, (MP in the Lithuanian Seimas), Board Member.

The Board thanks Mr. Gert-Jan Segers for his work as Treasurer during the first year of the ECPF.
2011 Overview

For ECPYN, 2011 was a year filled with numerous successful events and wide-range of exciting programmes. Cutting-edge trainings offered a very special series of getting together on fruitful discussions and applicable knowledge. This year is one to be remembered and a milestone on the way of ECPYN and Christian-Democracy in Europe, as a next step toward more communication and more political visibility for our values. All member parties, organisations and event participants will spread the word: ECPYN is ready to move forward on the political scene with innovative communication and continuous organizational developments.

A kick-off ECPYN winter event on the topic of morality and politics
The city of Lviv in Ukraine hosted the first major gathering of ECPYN in 2011, providing an opportunity for participants to discuss the core issues of morality and political activities. A closer look was also cast at modern political tendencies in Ukraine, positive and negative aspects of different political ideologies and economic models and the influence of postmodernism in the political elite and informational society.

Summer School & annual GA in light of a Stronger Europe, a new board was set up
ECPYN proved to be an even stronger network of young Christian people at its International Summer school in Paris the past July, based on a deep and active mutual understanding between countries. Six days in the light of Christian Democracy – with workshops, lectures, intensive brainstorming and a multitude of ambitious ideas – have led to the formation of accurate policy statements, proving that the summer gathering is the most effective way for the young generation to bring its vitality into European politics.

As a result of the decision made by the General Assembly of ECPYN, new board members had been introduced as Vladimir Plamedala quit, having fulfilled his term. The new board was extended by two active candidates: Elina Feinska, International Secretary of the political party Christian Democratic Union of Ukraine was appointed to Director of Events, Peter Danku, political advisor of the Hungarian Government was elected as Director of Communications. Besides them the ECPYN board consist out of Razvan Burleanu (Romania, president), Nutsa Shavladze (Georgia, Vice-President), Auke Minnema (The Netherlands, secretary) and Denys Dhiver (France, Political Secretary).

Illuminating and overcoming complex challenges in the turbulence of present European policy
In the course of the months of continuous activity, ECPYN kept a fully open eye on the more severe economic development of the European financial crisis. The dice had been cast: how we, European Christian democrats can evaluate the current Euro-crisis and plan a Christian-minded approach to illuminating and overcoming complex challenges in the turbulence of present European policy. This was the burning issue that represented the subject for a weekend conference for Western European Christian youth parties in St. Vith, Belgium offering a unique location and a great opportunity for ECPYN associates to gather together, enjoy each other’s company and, most importantly to have a closer, Christian-minded look in depth at the different challenges faced by EU countries – and clearly also our member organisations - within and outside the eurozone at the present time.

ECPYN offering the Emergency Exit – Humanity behind the financial crisis in Europe
In the turbulence of financial challenges of 2011, and when the European Union is still in severe distress, when dependence and complexity are rapidly increasing, ECPYN emphasized the urgent need to find for the Old Continent: the Emergency Exit – Humanity behind the financial crisis in Europe. Our party deemed it imperative to offer various opportunities for the young Christian activists and politicians to set out and explore possible exit routes for our nations and the EU from our severe financial burdens and economic turmoil, guided by clearly defined Christian policy based on people’s needs. The basic idea was to cast a spotlight on the human approach and ways to identify a rapid solution to financial challenges, while underlining Christian Democratic values and the public interest rather than material priorities.

Before democratic changes in Belarus
Also, ECPYN laid an exceptional emphasis on the moral and active support of Christian democratic parties in European countries where suppression of dictatorship is still prevailing. ECPYN together with ECPM sent an open letter to all Belarusian ambassadors in Europe expressing our concern about the unexpected detentions of political activists that occurred various times in Belarus. More than two years after the peaceful demonstrations, followed by extremely harsh measures by the Belarusian authorities, ECPYN stands up against similar tactics used again by the Belarusian government to silence members of the opposition. On the occasion of the constituent congress of the Belorussian Christian Democrats (BCD) and the Young Christian Democrats on December 17th 2011 in Minsk Peter Danku (director of Communications) was present and delivered a speech on behalf of the European Christian Political Youth Network to the public of Christian activists suppressed by the regime.
Co-organizing events with member parties also played a relevant roll in presenting regional conferences throughout the year, with a closing event in Bulgaria. Together with the UDF from Bulgaria, ECPYN organized a conference about Christian Democracy on December 17 - 18 in Sofia. Guests from the Bulgaria, the neighbouring countries and ECPYN came together to discuss the main principles of Christian Democracy.

A highlighted innovation of organizational development: in 2011 ECPYN presented CrossroadS - Christian Democratic Political Academy

We, young European Christian politicians, still have to seek and identify a common platform for a new, like-minded generation for the benefit of the European societies. Driven by this conviction, ECPYN introduced its brand new Christian Democratic Political Academy for young, like minded Christian activists who can pursue a four-round, fully professional, cutting-edge academy course with a series of events with Christian democratic political content and professional skills for young political decision makers at national or European level, who are close to the Christian democratic political philosophy. By this initiative ECPYN seeks to contribute to the commitment of young Christian activists to European Christian democracy, offering courses that focus on theoretical, organisation and political leadership, with sought-after lecturers, team building mentors and manager-like coaches.

In the light of 2011 our purpose and values defined what was and still is important in the way that we work together and perform as a young Christian democratic part in the Continent. We are intent on constantly demonstrating our commitment to being the youth organisation of Europe’s only explicit Christian-democratic party the ECPM. Our party’s reputation is imperative to our political and social success, long-term sustainability and fulfilment of our purpose of serving God in political, public and family life every day, everywhere. We all have a responsibility to ensure we strive to represent Christian values also in 2012 within young European societies and Christian decision makers for we believe that only in doing so can we protect a value based Christian Europe with a prosperous future.

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3.2 Key Events

Winterschool on "Morality and Politics. The principles of Christian Democracy"
8 – 13 January, 2011, Lviv, Ukraine

The Winter School of the ECPYN was devoted to the topic "Morality and Politics. The principles of Christian Democracy". The event took place in Lviv, Ukraine on January 8-13, 2011. The Winter School provided the participants both from EU and non-EU countries an opportunity to discuss the core issues of morality and political activities. It was an event which offered us the possibility to have a closer look at the modern political tendencies in Ukraine, positive and negative aspects of different political ideologies and economic models and the influence of postmodernism in the political elite and informational society. The focus of the conference was the moral principles in political theory and practice.

Ukrainian and European politicians, church representatives, political analysts and technologists, as well as writers and poets, shared their vision on morality in politics and on the future of Ukraine in the European political arena.

Besides this, participants had a chance to experience unforgettable winter celebrations in the west of Ukraine - unique, beautiful and ancient traditions of the country. The Winter School were held in the cultural capital of Ukraine – Lviv – a place where so many interesting things were waiting for us as this city is included in the World Heritage List of UNESCO.

The Carpathian mountains, situated not far from Lviv and hiding many mysterious attractions, were shown to our guests during the Winter School 2011.

ECPYN 8th International Summerschool – "Secularization and Integration"
11-15, July, Paris, France

ECPYN promotes a more energetic Europe at its 8th International Summer School

Over 40 young Christian Democrats from 13 European Countries signed up for the 8th ECPYN International Summer School (ISS), which took place in Paris between 11th and 15th of July 2011. Six days in the light of Christian Democracy – with workshops, lectures, intensive brainstorming and a multitude of ambitious ideas – have led to the formation of accurate policy statements, proving that the summer gathering is the most effective way for the young generation to bring its vitality into European politics. In this cause, ECPYN is now an even stronger network of young people, based on a deep and active mutual understanding between countries.

Paris is an enchanting metropolis of picture-postcard scenery on the banks of the Seine, steeped in history and teeming with remnants of the past, from the grandeur of its monuments to the smallest details of every street and square. These were inspiring surroundings for all the participants from political parties, youth organisations and NGOs from almost every European region who gathered to take part in this year’s ECPYN summer school. On the first official day, after all the participants had arrived safely in the French capital and checked into a city centre hostel, there was a welcome reception offered by Denys Dhiver, ECPYN board member, and host of the event. This was an opportunity for old and new ISS attendees to wine and dine, and gain information, joy and energy for the challenging and rewarding days ahead of them.
Secularisation and integration
The professional part of the summer school started the following
day, Tuesday: "Towards a new relationship between the private,
public and sacred domains" was the topic of a lecture given by Dr.
Bart Labuschagne from The Netherlands, professor of philosophy
of law at Leiden University. His was the first of a fascinating
series of lectures introducing an international approach on
Christian policy. According to Dr. Bart, "It is in my view a matter
of urgency that we come to a new understanding of the
relationship between public and private, which essentially means
that we should leave the worn-out liberal dichotomy of
private/public behind us and aim at regarding society as a
trichotomy." In his keynote address, he introduced the main
topics of the Summer School's workshops: Integration in Europe.
A fruitful day of teamwork and insight into relevant topics of
gravity was followed by a physical parallel later that afternoon:
Foucault's pendulum in the Panthéon was a highlight of a
sightseeing trip in the heart of Paris, together with a tour of the
interior of Saint-Louis des Invalides.

ISS runs for election
An interactive session opened on Wednesday by welcoming
Christine Boutine, leader of the French Christian Democratic
Party (Parti Chrétien-Démocrate), and candidate for the next
presidential election in 2012. Inspired by this, lively dialogue
continued when the ISS participants split into project groups to
face the challenge of the week: outlining a strategy for various
election campaigns with a PR leaflet and a promotional
presentation. Here Christian creativity proved to be
unsurpassable in political marketing also.

This summer school in Western Europe also offered the floor to
politicians from the other side of the continent – including Georgi
Rukhadze from Georgia, International Secretary of the Christian
Democratic Movement of Georgia (CDM), and lecturer at Ilia
State University. He portrayed the prevalence of secularisation in
his home country as the burdensome heritage of the former
Soviet Union, and stated that it also appeared to be an oppressive
element in most Eastern European states formerly under
communist rule.

Parade, workshops and fireworks: the ECPYN gathering
was fun as well!
Napoleon Bonaparte said, "An army marches on its stomach" and
the ISS proved his point. This may be not always the case,
however – especially in the Bastille Day parade down the Avenue
des Champs-Elysées on the 14th of July. On Thursday morning,
hundreds of armed French troops led by President Sarkozy and a
fly-past of military aircraft provided a truly French experience for
all participants, who themselves were also armed later in the day –
this time with specialist hints. Four workshops led by
professionals offered a wide range of training opportunities, from
interesting areas of European policy such as local political
anchoring, to Socratic dialogue, and ways of influencing
parliamentary work. The day ended with a breathtaking firework
display, which brought to an end the official events for the French
National Day.

A mock European Parliament
On the last official day participants were given their most
challenging task; they were asked to put all their experience at
the ISS to use in identifying adequate responses to the topic of
"Integration and Enlargement in the EU." The product was not
only in words but also in deeds: a substantial summer course
ended with two working groups putting forward their thoughts in
a plenary session on the designated portfolios in the European
Parliament. This was excellent training for the role of the
ECPYN's future Christian politicians in real European
platforms. The conference resulted in two policy statements, on
Future Enlargement of the European Union and Immigration
Policy. These called for well-balanced and respectful
enlargement, and a clearer and more equitable treatment of
immigrants coming to Europe.

The 8th Summer School has also given the ECPYN the unique
opportunity to spread its message about policies on
secularisation and on integration for a more constructive Europe
in the interest of all countries. It has gained momentum for
promoting related youth initiatives as part of a political agenda
driven by Christian principles, as this is the only path for a better
Europe.
ECPYN Conference on “Who is Going to Pay?” St. Vith, Belgium
14-16 October, 2011

This was the burning issue that represented the main topic of a weekend conference for Western European Christian youth parties, organised by the European Christian Political Youth Network (ECPYN) on 14 – 16 October 2011 in St. Vith, Belgium. This was a picturesque setting for a serious topic, which is now a real hot potato: how we, European Christian democrats, can evaluate the current Euro-crisis and plan a Christian-minded approach to illuminating and overcoming complex challenges in the turbulence of present European policy.

Young participants and speakers from several countries had a weekend of thought-provoking presentations, creative teamwork and productive workshops. With an introductory presentation given by Kris Vliegels on Friday (Vice-President of the European Christian Political Movement, ECPM), the series of sessions started with young Christian democrats being asked why we should all help Greece survive this crisis and keep an EU member country in the community.

His main point was solidarity – a much-needed word that could provide us Christian politicians with a solution for Europe’s financial problems. Being open-minded European Christians, we should find ways and means to help other brothers and sisters who are in need, and encourage others to do so.

A brief synopsis of the current state of play with an apt comparison between Europe and the speaker’s home country Belgium made the session simply stunning for all of us. Following the session we had time for a one-on-one discussion on the topic and liaise with each other while enjoying a hot cup of coffee à la Belgique.

A friend in need is a friend indeed – how to plug the Greek budget gap
The Saturday session started with one of the most challenging workshops of the conference: a business simulation game on how to allocate resources on a European scale. Players were financial decision-makers from four eurozone countries – Greece, The Netherlands, France and Germany – and on-the-spot analysts, who were given the task to set up a state budget divided into ten segments. It almost immediately became clear that Greece was the weakest point in the system, and so it was imperative for its counterparts to negotiate a win-win strategy and make resources available from their own budgets for a bailout action plan for the country. Real fun, much experience and edifying sessions made us realise that – under certain preconditions – decision-makers throughout Europe have to make every effort to stand by Greece.

The Bible and the economy: a good reference point for a clear view
In the afternoon of the second day a presentation by Marie-Caroline Leroux, representative of World Alliance, provided an invaluable insight into the situation arising from an increasing world population and how we are to curb worldwide birth-rates. After an impressive presentation, her clear conclusion was that birth-rates should not be affected by global decision-makers, because we need all people to maintain a high level of welfare in several ways around the globe.

In the afternoon Jannes de Jong, representative of the Brussels Office of ChristianUnion (the Dutch party ChristianUnion), gave a presentation about the crisis and politics, based on the Bible. After he pointed out what some experts had to say about the crisis, a logical link was made with the Bible, and one could at once realise how purely Holy Scripture can provide us with a clear view and a moral compass in the turbulence of the current economic crisis. The audience was divided into four groups and discussed several statements – this was highly informative and offered everyone a lot of fun, especially with the witty metaphors used in discussions to describe the burning topic of the euro crisis.

In the evening, participants went out to wine and dine in a local restaurant, with lively conversation and a great surprise for Jeannette Dorothea Schoonderwoerd (Deputy Secretary of ECPYN), who was celebrating her 20th birthday.

The Sunday programme began with a church service in the heart of the lovely town. It was impressive for a group of young people from different nations to give praise to God and join in common prayer. There was time to have a last cup of warming tea and then say goodbye to everyone.

St. Vith, the Belgian centre of German-speaking minority offered a unique location and a great opportunity for ECPYN associates to gather together, enjoy each other’s company and most importantly to have a closer, Christian-minded look in depth at the different challenges faced by EU countries within and outside the eurozone at the present time.
Together with the UDF from Bulgaria, ECPYN organized a conference on Christian Democracy on December 17 - 18 in Sofia. Guests from the Bulgaria, the neighbouring countries and ECPYN came together to discuss the main principles of Christian Democracy. Martin Dimitrov, MP, opened the conference together with Guido van Beusekom, General Secretary of ECPM. Hristo Panchugov, president of YUDF, gave a lecture about morality. In order to reform the current problems in Bulgaria the country needs young people.

Afterwards, Jeannette Schoonderwoerd, vice-secretary of ECPYN, presented the organisation. Niels Rijke, board member of foreign policy of Perspectief (the Netherlands), discussed Christian Democracy in the politics of today. He used the hourglass model to show how to go from a world view to practical politics.

Ivan Nachev, of the New Bulgaria University of Sofia, started his lecture by giving an answer to the question of how a constitution can be changed. In Bulgaria, political parties only want to have power, therefore it is important to work on responsibility in politics. Elena Stefanov, vice-president of the general elections committee, gave an insight on how elections work in Bulgaria. In the evening there was a traditional Bulgarian dinner with live music.

The second day started with a lecture given by Maurice Bos from The Netherlands, about Christian Democracy in practice. After him Niels Rijke continued by discussing the Christian democratic view on ethics, family, justice and economy. Many participants got new ideas and discussed the right ways to implement them in their societies in order to have the right impact.
Basic Programme of the ECPM

We are the members of the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM). This movement includes Christian-democratic and Christian-social parties, NGO's and think tanks in Europe around Christian values. In society.

The source of these Christian values are the bible and the Christian tradition. These sources are in itself not a political programme. Democratic participation enlarges the horizons of us. Therefore, it is essential to consent to the decisions taken by a democratic political authority.

The fundamental role of political authority is to ensure a healthy society. It has to protect the freedom and integrity of social and cultural institutions. It must encourage and nurture good habits. People distrust political institutions and their work. There must be a new, open, honest and corruption-free politics. Political institutions need to be strengthened by developing their mutual relationships and mutual trust.

The ECPM aims to spread these Christian Democratic views and to make them a reality. They affect individuals on their daily life. The Christian-democratic perspective on these 21st century questions. They affect individuals on their daily life. The fundamental role of political authority is to ensure a healthy society. Government must not play in the 21st century. They should be able to deal with their responsibilities for public affairs and to understand that they are not their own affairs.

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Basic Programme of the ECPM

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

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

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

The ECPM aims to spread these Christian Democratic ideas throughout Europe together with its social expression and to mobilize politicians and parties in Europe around Christian values. The source of these Christian values are the bible and the Christian tradition. These sources are in itself not a political program. These sources call us to serve the people of Europe and inspire us to work on a just government that pursues justice, freedom, peace and a well-ordered society. The basic teachings of Christian social thought appeal to everyone, irrespective of their faith, because it is founded on the pursuit of justice and liberty. If Christianity has shaped European civilization, it has done so in providing the institutions of justice, of education, of health, of help to the weak and the unfortunate.

**The Christian-social view of society and government**

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

The fundamental role of political authority is to ensure justice in the public realm. The state must create conditions that promote the common good and social connectedness. The exercise of power by the state must always be equitable and limited. The state must promote just relations between individuals, associations, communities, and other groups. The state must also respect their proper independence and interdependence. Bearers of political authority are responsible to encourage the good, and rectify injustice. Governments are not required to attempt to remedy every social ill. Government must not undertake tasks that are the responsibility of family, church, or other spheres of authority. They should be able to deal with their own affairs. We believe that churches and other religious organisations can have an essential contribution to make in society.

Democratic participation enlarges the horizons of people. It empowers them as citizens and increases their influence on governments. A responsible democracy requires the expression of opinion through representative elections, political parties, public debate and loyal opposition. These together with respect for political office and open and accountable government are essential.

The responsibilities for public affairs should be at a level as close to the citizens as possible. This is our view at subsidiarity. We stand for this balance in power between the various nations and the European Union. We must protect national identity and respect the sovereignty of states. The European Union needs solidarity between nations and peoples. The European Union also needs subsidiarity to keep its solidarity alive. The ECPM recognises the different peoples of Europe.

**The Christian understanding of the person**

The Christian tradition understands the human person as a creation in the image of God, a spiritual being with a unique destiny, that is to be respected in its inviolable liberty and to be protected in vulnerable situations – is the source of the political balance and the social enrichment. It makes life in society a network of relationships.
No party or grouping may claim special legal privileges. Christian-democrat thinking strongly rejects secularism as a public ideology. The ECPM warns of the damage that fundamentalist secularism can inflict on a society. We are weary of such fundamentalist secularism in any kind of governing role. We also do not seek a governing role for any single church denomination. We recognise the role of the Christian faith in shaping the liberties that our continent enjoys. We affirm that the state needs to acknowledge the rights of religious and cultural minorities and to treat them equitably in public policy. We welcome the diverse faith communities present in Europe. Individuals, communities and organisations must have full freedom of religion and expression of thought. This must be a priority within Europe and in European foreign policy.

A Christian-democrat view of government will always have a global perspective. In this view all the earth is God’s creation, and God made all humans in his image. This means that Christian-democracy aims to have a foreign and defence policy that works in this spirit. It promotes fair trade as well as peace and protection of the environment.

We must not allow the state, business or finance to control the economy. Democratic responsibility requires this. The state should build up the contribution and sense of mutual responsibility of all parties. Economic activity is to serve people rather than dominate them. The full personal, social and ecological implications of national and international market activity need to be recognised and should not be merely a matter of private or accounting calculations that do not recognise these implications. The state must attempt to redress inequitable and unfair patterns of trade and distribution. Christian-democrats emphasise the state’s responsibility for justice, right structures and social connectedness, rather than economic performance alone.

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

Justice
Social justice is a fundamental Biblical teaching. That makes it the basis for Christian-social policy. All men and women are due equal respect and treatment. Men and women have responsibilities to one another and to wider society.

Social justice demands an equal regard for all. That implies a special concern for the needs of the poor, refugees, those who suffer and the powerless. It requires us to oppose exploitation and deprivation. It requires also that appropriate resources and opportunities are available. In this way, we meet the basic requirements of all and each person is able to take part in the life of the community.

We firmly believe that governments have a special responsibility for those who cannot support themselves in our own countries and abroad. Opposing and eliminating social injustice asks for more action by the government than only to provide just structures. It is also important to stress the need of healthy families, good education and health-care to prevent poverty and social injustice.

Respect for life and priority to the family
The right to life is the most basic among all the human rights. In the Christian tradition, every man and woman, as God’s creation, has an intrinsic value. Each person has the right to a respectable and dignified life from conception until natural death. In our view, the government is therefore obliged to:

Protect and promote the fundamental dignity of those that are not yet born, of the weak, of the physically and mentally handicapped, of people of old age, of all those that cannot stand up for themselves.

To have recognized by law in the entire European Union, the dignity and inviolability of the human embryo.

To support the family, founded in marriage, the complementarity between man and woman, the welcoming of life and the education of children. As cornerstone of society, a place where civic and social responsibilities are learned, the family should be the axis of political life, and all political sectors should be thought through in function of it and its equilibrium.

Reconciliation
Reconciliation is a task for individuals, social and economic groups, and also for those engaged in politics. We must work towards reconciliation and healing at local, national and international levels although we recognise that we will never achieve all such goals in this world.

Humility, repentance, patience and forgiveness are political as well as personal values. They are essential in the process of replacing conflict by common understanding. These principles require that we renounce all armaments that are incompatible with the pursuit of just peace.

Active Compassion
The Christian tradition calls human beings to active loving service of others. This is to replace indifference to the distress of others due to passivity, self-concern or ignorance. Such compassionate love inspires an attitude not only of detached justice but also of open-hearted generosity.

We all bear the responsibility, individually and corporately, for such service to one another. Governments should seek to motivate individuals, families, charities and other associations to active compassion. The state should prompt and assist the community to meet the fundamental needs of the poor before satisfying the preferences of the rich.
Wise stewardship
The ECPM does not separate the responsibility of man towards the earth from his responsibility to himself. Faced with the extensive exploitation of natural resources, the wasting of non-renewable energy and the tragedy of hunger and underdevelopment, the ECPM sees the climate change an opportunity for a radical change of our approach to growth and international relations:

By means of policies of solidarity between the global North and South, aimed at reducing carbon gas emissions, by an increase in the production and use of clean energy, by restoring ecosystems; but also by promoting a balanced development that assures the access of all people to the essentials of life (food, drinkable water, education, health care... ). By means of Foreign policies and European defence policies that are aimed at promoting peace in service to a righteous development on the global scale.

Economy
In the Christian-social view, economic resources have to serve people’s needs. This is vital in order to help in developing capacities particularly for justice, co-operation and mutual care. These resources should be used creatively and with responsible concern for others (including future generations) and the environment. Markets are not a law unto themselves. People shape them by their decisions. This means that we need to structure them so that those who conduct economic transactions are fair and do them in good faith. The needs of the community must be in mind.

Concentrations of wealth and power erode responsibility and may cause market distortion. We seek an economy where banks, businesses, trade unions, professional groups and government departments work together with greater mutual understanding and public accountability. Economic development is only a means. It should not dominate over social justice and protection of the environment.

The primary task of government in relation to the economy, is to oversee the establishment of just structures in all areas of economic activity. This kind of justice includes maintaining a sound currency against inflation or deflation. It encourages wealth creation by gainful employment. Christian-democrat parties discourage gambling and continuing dependency on state welfare provision. This is to encourage and equip all to participate fully in the economy. We need to use our communal and individual resources in a manner that respects the created order of the world.

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

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

Final statement
We, Christian-democrats will promote our Christian-social values. We will do this in our own continent and beyond. We will try to implement Christian-democratic policies in our local, national and European political institutions. We acknowledge the questions and challenges ahead. We look forward with trust and hope. Our Christian faith gives us a perspective that defies negativism and pessimism. This means that we are able to work in Europe and beyond, sharing God’s love in order to work for a better future.
ECPM Member and Associates
The following political parties and organizations are official members of ECPM:

- Christian Democratic Union
- Federal Christian Democrats
- Free Christian Democrats
- Belarusian Christian Democracy
- Bulgarian Christian Coalition
- Christian Democratic Forum
- Estonian Christian Democrats
- Christian Democratic Movement
- AUF-parlei
- Party of Bible-faithful Christians
- Zentrum
- Christian Democratic Union
- Peoples Party
- Christian Union
- Dutch Reformed Party
- Union of Bulgarians in the Banat
- The alliance of Romanians from Vojvodina
- Evangelical Peoples Party
- Federal Democratic Union
- Christian Democratic Union
- Christian People’s Alliance
- European Christian Political Youth Network (ECPYN)

(The name of the political parties and organizations are listed in alphabetical order of the countries)

ECPM Associate Organizations and Partners
The following organizations are associated to the ECPM:

- Amical Service (France)
- Areopagus Centre for Christian Studies and Contemporary Culture
- Associazione "Cercasi un Fine" (Italy)
- C’axent (Belgium)
- Care for Europe (Belgium)
- Center for Public Justice (United States of America)
- Centrul Crestin al Romilor (Romania)
- Christian Democratic Association (Romania)
- Serbian Christian Democratic Movement (Serbia)
- Christian Peoples Unity of Armenia (Armenia)
- Crown Companies (Bulgaria)
- Dignitatis Humanae Institute (Italy)
- European Evangelical Alliance (Belgium)
- European Foundation of Moldova (Moldova)
- Foundation for Christian Democracy (Moldova)
- Graceful Russia (Russia)
- H-RAST (Croatia)
- Institute for ethics and values (Germany)
- Jubilee Centre (United Kingdom)
- Provita Association for born and unborn branch Bucharest (Romania)
- Research Institute ChristianUnion (Netherlands)
- Romanian Foundation for Democracy (Romania)
- Rule of Law institute (Bulgaria)
- Schuman Centre for European Studies (Netherlands)
- Stichting Vormingsactiviteiten Oost-Europa (Netherlands)
- Unione per la Democrazia e la Liberta (Italy)
- Worldteach (Romania)
Collaborators

- Advocates Europe (Bulgaria)
- Albanian Initiative for European Values (Albania)
- Alliance Defense Fund (Austria)
- Alliance for Romanian Families (Romania)
- Areopagus: Cluj Napoca, (Romania)
- Belgrade Business Initiative (Serbia)
- Berlin Gathering (Germany)
- Bible Society (UK)
- Boris Trajkovski International Foundation (Macedonia)
- Center for Dialogue and Promotion of European values (Albania)
- Christian Concern (United Kingdom)
- Christians in Politics network (UK)
- Christians in Parliament network (UK)
- Civic Initiative for the family and the right for the child (Slovenia)
- Darul Vietii (Romania)
- Economic Diplomacy Seminar (Croatia)
- Ecumenical Prayer Group in the Romanian Parliament (Romania)
- Europartners/CBMC (Switzerland)
- European Gathering (UK)
- European Dignity Watch (Belgium)
- European Leadership Forum (Hungary)
- European Prayer Breakfast (Belgium)
- Human Life International (Austria)
- International Fellowship of Evangelical Students: STEP (Croatia)
- Life Center International (Croatia)
- Pavel Shatev Institute (Macedonia)
- Philia Ministries (Montenegro)
- Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (UK)
Join the ECPM as a party or organization!
The ECPM invites all like-minded organisations to join the network as member or associate partner. With associate partner organisations the ECPM keeps up with informal relations. The members of the ECPM take active part in the life of the association and pay a yearly membership fee as it is fixed in article 10 of the statutes of the association. The membership of the ECPM is preceded by an affiliation procedure. Those interested are requested to complete the form on the website and send the original to the secretariat by post. Please note, that the application form must be signed by the president of the organisation! The secretariat will contact you after the receipt of the application and it will give you detailed information about the application process.

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

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