



Year 2013
Book

Relational thinking **Values**
Human Dignity
Sustainable economy **Family**
Human **Trafficking**
Faith Well being
Subsidiarity **Freedom of Religion**



A Europe of dignity

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A word of gratitude from our President

The year 2013 meant big changes for the ECPM. Since our foundation in 2002, we have grown both in membership and activity. At the annual meeting in Helsinki (General Assembly), the presidency of the ECPM was transferred from Peeter Võsu to the undersigned. The ECPM has, under Võsu's direction, evolved into an organisation with members from most EU countries, and has organised a host of activities and seminars on Christian values and issues important to the ECPM. Our organisation does valuable work and already has an upstanding legacy, which I humbly wish to carry forward.

At the end of the year, the ECPM organised a major seminar in the European Parliament, which ran concurrently with the official opening of our new office in Brussels. The seminar was attended by a record number of participants which was evidence of an appreciation for the work that the ECPM does. In Brussels, we were also able to see the results of the excellent cooperation with our sister organisations, the Foundation ECPF and the youth organisation, ECPYN. An additional advisory body, the ECPM Advisory Council, was also founded during this last year. Our board looks forward to working constructively with the body, which at the same time strengthens our networks in several countries. I would like to express my gratitude to the ECPM's staff for a job well done. I also want to thank all our partners with whom we were privileged to work this year. The ECPM would like to deepen such cooperation—for a better Europe and with our citizens' best interests in mind.



Peter Östman
President
European Christian Political Movement

Reflection 2013

"People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (...). But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone. You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance" (2 Timothy 3: 1-10)

2013 is characterized by changes. One of the most important changes we saw this year was a growing public interest in protecting basic Christian-Democratic values like human dignity, family, freedom and democracy in Europe.

2013: the Year of the European Citizen

In the official "Year of the EU-citizen", some national and European citizens' initiatives took place to protect and defend these Christian-Democratic values.

In France millions of people demonstrated for protecting the definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman and in the United Kingdom many people clearly showed their support for this universal definition of marriage as well. In Croatia, a national citizen initiative successfully called for a referendum to define marriage in their constitution by collecting 740,000 signatures. The referendum itself turned out to be a success since a big majority supported this definition of marriage in the constitution. The European Citizenship Initiative "One of Us" to protect and respect the dignity and integrity of the human embryo collected around 1.9 million signatures Europe-wide and became the most successful citizen initiative ever organized and in Ireland thousands of people went on the street to protect their abortion-ban. Furthermore, many EU citizens wrote emails and demonstrated against the controversial Estrela report that was discussed twice in the European Parliament. This report was not only controversial because it calls abortion a European right that should be supported, but also went against other fundamental rights like the freedom of conscience and freedom of education.

Besides this, the report brutally exceeded EU competences. Fortunately, the report did not get through in the final vote.

Post-Democratic Society

It sometimes feels like we live in a post-democratic society. In the past, people elected the parliament and a government was formed to give direction and strategy for the development of a country. Nowadays, the government acts more as a manager guided by the experts of the so-called 'civil society'.

Unfortunately, experts in all different humanitarian projects are not included and religious-based organizations are becoming fewer. The civil society consists more and more of large international lobby organizations which (based on their fundamentally secular ideology) try to redefine rights (like the right of abortion, the right to die etc.) or neglects fundamental rights like the freedom of conscience and expression. It is interesting, but also worrying, since these organizations do not only receive extensive European funding, they also have a major impact on the decisions in the European Parliament and in different national parliaments.

Increasing intolerance in European Public Debates

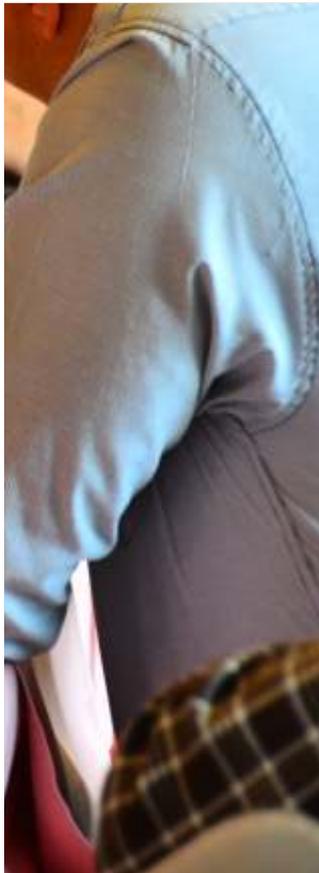
Another tendency that we notice is the increasing intolerance against Christians in public debates. In public, the lobby of Christian organizations was compared with the tobacco lobby and while our opposition wanted to limit the freedom of conscience in cases of abortion and euthanasia, they accused us of intolerance and forcing our ideology upon others. By trying to frame opposition as "religious or conservative extremism", they try to strip us more and more of our democratic rights. It seems that European values like tolerance, respect, freedom of expression and diversity are less and less valid for Christians.



Leo van Doesburg
(Director for European
Affairs and Policy Advising)

Guido van Beusekom
(General Director)





Activity Report 2013



Key events organised with the support of ECPM

1. ECPM General Assembly

Location: Helsinki, Finland

Date: 7 June 2013

Main Lecturers:

- Peter Östman, ECPM President
- Endre Spaller, ECPM Board Member
- Stieneke van der Graaf, ECPM Board Member
- Sari Essayah, MEP Finland

The members of the European Christian Political Movement officially elected Peter Östman as the new president of the ECPM during the General Assembly in Helsinki on June 7th. As Östman brings his experience in both business and politics to bear on the new position, the members expressed their great confidence and unanimously voted in favour of his candidacy.

Peter Östman is the successor of Peeter Vösu who retired after serving the maximum number of two terms as president. He has been a member of the ECPM board since June 2012 and has been involved in the ECPM network for many years. He is currently a member of the Finnish Parliament and leader of the parliamentary group of the Finnish Christian Democrats. Östman looks forward to both leading and serving the ECPM in the coming period.

The ECPM General Assembly also elected Stieneke van der Graaf (Netherlands) and Endre Spaller (Hungary) as new board members. Vladimir Plamadeala (Moldova) was re-elected for a second term. Both new board members expressed that they were highly motivated to contribute to the work of the ECPM during their terms.

Van der Graaf, regional MP and 3rd on the candidate list for the 2014 European elections for the Dutch ChristenUnie, expressed her desire to move the organisation forward and to become more visible on topics such as social justice and sustainability. Van der Graaf explains: "It is my wish to contribute to the political relevance of the ECPM and to strengthen and expand the network of Christian democratic politicians. With the European elections coming up, there are opportunities for the ECPM." Endre Spaller shared with the members his experiences as an MP in Hungary for the KDNP (Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt) and stressed the importance of Christian values in Europe. He expressed his gratitude to the ECPM, with it being the only principled Christian-Democratic European political party. Furthermore, he voiced his commitment to contribute to the ECPM in order to promote human dignity and the role of the family in European societies.

The General Assembly also installed the first ECPM Advisory Council. Heiner Studer (EVP, Switzerland) was elected as first President of the Advisory Council. This council will engage with the ECPM board at least twice a year to discuss various items.

During the dinner, the members and associates were joined by MEP Sari Essayah, who shared with us her experiences in the European Parliament. As an MEP of the KD Finland, Essayah has been very active in promoting Christian values in the European Parliament.



2. Revealing the benefits of the family

Location:Helsinki, Finland

Date:8 June 2013

Main Lecturers:

- Richard Kane, Blogger, President of Marriage Week International
- Annelie Enochsson, MP Sweden
- Päivi Räsänen, Minister of Interior, Finland
- Stephen Baskerville, Professor of Government, USA
- Jet Weigand – Timmer, Educationalist, The Netherlands

On Saturday June 8th, the Finnish Christian Democrats and the European Christian Political Movement hosted the conference "Revealing the benefits of the family". The conference was opened by the newly elected ECPM President Peter Östman. Around 100 participants gathered to hear prominent specialists from the fields of politics, education and journalism such as Richard Kane, Annelie Enochsson and Päivi Räsänen.

The lectures touched upon issues like the importance of marriage itself (Kane), the need to be sometimes politically incorrect (Enochsson), the role of children (Baskerville), the safety of the family (Räsänen) and the value of the family for children as they grow up (Weigand-Timmer).

Päivi Räsänen



The goal of the conference, to reveal the benefits of the family, was clear in all the lectures. It highlighted, however, the fact that it still remains a challenge to effectively communicate these benefits and values. One of the closing remarks of the ECPM Vice-President George Rukhadze addressed this issue. Rukhadze stated that there is an urgent need to promote the family in a positive way. This was given as homework to all attendants during the well-attended conference.

Together with the research institute ECPF, the ECPM and its members and its associates will definitely put a focus on this issue in the coming years.

The conference was streamed live at www.ecpm.info and the ECPM will make all video material available on our website this summer. If you wish to know more, please check out our site at:

<http://www.ecpm.info/en/page/32887>

Annelie Enochson



3. The impact of Christian thinking on the European project: past, present and future

Location: Brussels, Belgium

Date: 3 December 2013

Main lecturers:

- Peter van Dalen, MEP ECR
- Sari Essayah, MEP EPP
- Ewald Stadler, MEP NI
- Margriet Krijtenburg, Schuman Centre for European Studies
- Giuseppe Zorzi, Fondazione Trentina Alcide De Gasperi
- Philippe de Schoutheete, Board Member of the Centre for European Policy Studies (Brussels)
- Miguel Á.M. Ramos, Member of the Administration Council of the Jean Monnet Association
- Étienne Deschamps, House of European History
- Peter Östman, ECPM President
- Peter Briscoe, Vice-President Europartners
- Jonathan Tame, Director Jubilee Centre

The European Union is still viewed as a project inspired by a Christian heritage that weighs heavy on its citizens' way of thinking and acting. In politics, some decades ago, we could hear great politicians speaking out from their Christian beliefs without the fear of being politically incorrect. Their actions were inspired by their faith and they genuinely believed that these Christian values were beneficial for all aspects of public life, not being reserved for the private sphere alone.

However, in the 21st century the deafening cry is that Christian values are to be upheld only in private life. On December 3rd, the ECPM together with MEP's Peter van Dalen (ECR), Sari Essayah (EPP) and Ewald Stadler (NI) organised a conference in which this issue was addressed.

Peter van Dalen and Ewald Stadler hosted this two-session event in which prominent speakers such as Dr Margriet Krijtenburg, Dr Giuseppe Zorzi, Philippe de Schoutheete, Miguel Ángel Martín Ramos and Étienne Deschamps shared their views with other MEP's, MP's and politicians. In the first session Étienne introduced the audience to the history of the founding fathers of the European Union. After this introductory speech, the other speakers delivered more detailed talks each concentrating on one of the founding fathers—such as Alcide de Gasperi, presented by Mr Zorzi; Jean Monnet presented by Ramos; Paul-Henri Spaak presented by de Schoutheete, and Robert Schuman presented by Krijtenburg. Even though not all of these founders had a Christian identity, their set of beliefs was not contradictory to Christian values and this made it possible for them to collaborate.

The second part of the conference, entitled "Contemporary currents: The need for a new Christian-inspired paradigm in an age of social and economic confusion" concentrated on the active application of Christian inspiration in today's politics and society. Sari Essayah addressed the pressing issue all EU nations face: human trafficking. She elucidated the fact that the statistics only scratch the surface of the real number of people involved in human trafficking.

Peter Briscoe addressed another issue on the EU agenda in the last years and that is the economic crisis: "We cannot let the system lead our values as it has done in the past five years" was one of his conclusions after assessing EU economics over the last decade. Briscoe drew our attention to the fact that we should not try to get out of the crisis in isolation because "the individual wellbeing is closely connected to wellbeing of others". In agreement with Briscoe that our wellbeing is connected to the wellbeing of others, Jonathan Tame presented a talk on "The relational view on society". The human person lives within a society and in relation to others. This way of thinking "gives a solution to the toxic individualism, gives a way to border our lives at the personal level but also social level" he explained. The relational view on society is a major inspiration to the work and vision of the ECPM and will be incorporated in our goals in the coming years.

The forum was organised in collaboration with the Fondazione Trentina Alcide De Gasperi, the Schuman Centre for European Studies, the Jean Monnet Association, and the Fondation Paul-Henri Spaak. The sessions were supported by both the ECR and the EPP European political groups.



4. Squeezed between European and national legal orders: Is there room for Christianity?

Location: Rome/Vatican City

Date: 27 June 2013

Main lecturers:

- Cardinal Martino, Honorary President of the Dignitatis Humanae Institute
- HE Cardinal Martino
- Cardinal Turkson
- Cardinal Monterisi
- Cardinal Battista Re
- Cardinal Burke
- Lord David Alton
- Leo van Doesburg, External Affairs manager
- Luca Volontè, President of the EPP-CD group of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- Mircea Lubanovici, President of the Romanian Parliamentary Subcommittee for Human Dignity
- Florica Chereches, Romanian MP
- Endre Spaller, Hungarian MP and ECPM Board Member
- George Rukhadze, ECPM Vice-President
- Benjamin Harnwell, founder of Dignitatis Humanae Institute and ECPM Board Member

In the serene setting of Casina Pio IV, located in the Vatican gardens, the Dignitatis Humanae Institute hosted politicians, academics and NGOs from across the world for the Second International Conference on Human Dignity. The Dignitatis Humanae Institute was founded by Benjamin Harnwell and aims to promote a vision of authentic human dignity since man is born in the image and likeness of God. The institute works mainly by supporting Christians in public life.

The full-day conference sought to address the marginalisation of Christian values within political discourse and the ostracism of those within the public square who seek to promote them.

In his opening speech Cardinal Martino brought to light the fact that the Christian voice is being suppressed in an overwhelmingly secular public dialogue.

ECPM External Affairs Manager, Leo van Doesburg, acted as the day's moderator, presiding over several modules. These modules explored the impact of legal orders on national family policies, the protection of life and human dignity. Further modules touched on the suppression of freedom of religion, expression and conscience, and drew conclusions based on these discussions.

In the afternoon section of the conference, Luca Volontè chaired a roundtable discussion. Legislators from across national and supranational parliaments offered insights into their own experiences of Christian marginalisation within politics and the way in which militant secularism is now shaping policy.

In his after-dinner speech, Cardinal Burke praised the Institute for its commitment to the preservation and promotion of human dignity: "It is because of leaders like yourselves that the new evangelisation continues and grows. It will continue to spread so long as we work together and let our Christian faith guide us."

Exactly one year after the official opening of their Rome office, this Vatican-based conference was a sure demonstration of the rapid growth in stature of the Institute, dubbed by Cardinal Burke and Lord Alton as "the most important organisation promoting human dignity in the world today."



5. How to win the elections without selling your soul

Location: Leissigen, Switzerland

Date: 26-30 August 2013

Main Lecturers:

-Dr Hanswalter Staeubli, Executive Director of the Berg Institute, Lecturer

-Irene Hirzel, Project Manager against human trafficking at Christian East Mission

-George Rukhadze, ECPM Vice-President

-Leo van Doesburg, External Affairs Manager

-Matteo Piano, Founder Narroway

-Gregor Küpper, Founder Narroway

Dr. Hanswalter Stäubli



Do you really have the time to get to know people better in a short conference? Is the programme really interactive and do you get to know a person and his ideas just by meeting him during a small coffee break?

In order to authentically build stronger relations between people, to have something extraordinary for our members which catches both the spirit and the aims of the ECPM in a totally different atmosphere, the ECPM organised its first leadership retreat.

Hosted by the Swiss EVP, and far-removed from any distractions, the participants had the time to get to know each other, participate in the programme and enjoy the beautiful surroundings.

The first evening started with an informal programme that allowed all present to ask questions to the new ECPM President, Peter Östman. Östman shared about his life, his experiences in politics and his vision for the ECPM. On the following evening, the President of the ECPM Advisory Council, Heiner Studer, shared his political and private experiences with those present.

Each morning there was time for devotional contemplation, with prayer and a short message from Scripture. Branislav Škripek (MP Slovakia), Donald Boyd (Leader of the Scottish Christian Party) and Valeriu Ghilechi (MP Moldova, Member of the Council of Europe) each delivered messages during the course of the retreat. Dr Hanswalter Staeubli gave a thought provoking speech on how Nietzsche analysed flaws in modern Christianity. This speech opened the minds of all for a week of fresh and inspiring ideas. Irene Hirzel conducted a workshop on human trafficking, George Rukhadze on media and Leo van Doesburg on the language in the European debate and its implications.

Matteo Piano and Gregor Küpper offered insights on how to win elections without selling your soul. In their presentations they connected branding and communications strategies with many examples of how Jesus communicated when he was proclaiming the Kingdom of God.

During the evaluation session it became clear that these kinds of retreats are important for the ECPM and its members. Both strategically and spiritually, it is necessary to come together in an informal setting to really discuss core problems and solutions, common strategies and feel really connected by our Christian faith.

Matteo Piano



6. Christian Democracy in Nordic public life

Pieter Moens

Location: Tallin, Estonia

Date: 14 September 2013

Main lecturers:

- Urmas Reinslau, Minister of Defence
- Siim Valmar Kiisler, Minister of Regional Affairs
- Tunne Kelam, MEP
- Annelie Enochson, MP Switzerland
- Avo Üprus, Member of the Board of IRL CF
- Pieter Moens, Governor of the VGS Netherlands

In September, more than seventy people from Estonia and other neighbouring countries gathered to discuss the role of the Christian in the public life. The speakers came from different backgrounds in theology, politics or education. After each session there followed a panel discussion in which participants had the opportunity to share their views and also ask more specific questions to the speakers.

In the first session, several church representatives shared their concern over the way that Christian values are fading from the European identity. They also emphasised the role Christians have in showing non-believers that Christian values are not counter to democracy but are instead a fundamental and a vital component to democracy. Urmas Reinslau and Siim Valmar Kiisler encouraged us to gather together as Christians and set Christian principles in practise. Reinslau stated that being Estonian carries with it responsibilities and citizens are bound to fulfil them. That's why we have to set practical goals and set Christian principles into practice.

During the second session, Tunne Kelam pointed out the inconsistency of being a democracy and yet being against religious inspiration. A real democracy is non-violent and builds its people up. Religious inspiration is vital for helping its citizens fulfil their duties— democracy is and cannot be against that. In his two conclusions Kelam first drew the connection between the economic crisis and morality. He explained that the economic crisis was caused by a lack of morality and that it brought the issue of family values to the fore. Kelam's second conclusion was that the Ten Commandments are our foundation—they cannot be interpreted subjectively in the way it suits us, and neither can we leave some out. Christianity in Europe is not something of the past, it is something that still exists today and we cannot be against it or ignore it. Annelie Enochson, in the same line of thought, encouraged us not to be afraid of being politically incorrect. By this she meant that Christian politicians should proclaim Christian values even though secular society sees them as groundless. She also accentuated the importance to form networks with like minded people in order for our voice to be louder.



In the last session, Avo Üprus emphasised the idea that Europe needs a soul and that we need to work together towards a humane Europe. The reality that politics can change the culture highlights the importance of a politician's decisions. It seems that liberals are failing to protect the society from liberalism. The central values of Europe, Üprus said, are to protect human life and to recognise the sanctity of life. This is done by staying true to our own values and beliefs.

Pieter Moens went further and stressed the necessity to form a clear Christian voice to participate in public debate. We should be more focused on giving information about our views and not defending our position. This imparts a positive expression and positioning of our views. Instead of saying we are anti-abortion we should say we are pro-life. It is very important that society is informed about Christian values and this is why it is crucial that Christians cooperate with different organisations as well as with the media. Participating in debates can be difficult but it's an excellent way to inform people about who we are and what we believe in. In his closing remarks, Moens held that the position of Christians is increasingly under pressure and we need to cooperate together, build on personal relationships, have clarity in our opinions and, last but not least, pray for each other.



7. Principles of Jesus in times of financial crisis



Location: Brussels, Belgium

Date: 4 December 2013

Main lecturers:

-Peter Briscoe, Founder of Europartners

-Leo van Doesburg, External Affairs Manager ECPM

-Arttu Makipaa, Cornerstones

In December, a day was spent at the European Prayer Breakfast where people of different advancements in their professions could meet, share and learn from each other. Later that evening, the ECPM together with Cornerstone held an event in the same vein but focusing on young professionals in particular. Participants came together and shared their impressions of the day and also talk about the theme of the evening. Around sixty young leaders, mainly working in European institutions in Brussels, participated in the event. The evening was chaired by Leo van Doesburg and Arttu Makipaa.

This social event focused, as the organisers put it, "upon the leadership principles of Jesus and their modern day application". Young and talented experts from different fields had the opportunity to listen to Peter Briscoe, the main speaker of the evening and an accomplished Christian businessman, founder of Europartners, a European umbrella of Christian Business Managers' Committees that has as its main aim the equipping of Christian managers to develop their sphere of influence.

Peter Briscoe



Briscoe wittily addressed his audience with a perceptive and practical message about the principles one must have in order to succeed in a career. First of all, he made it clear that money is not the measurement of success but that the true measurement is instead the love for God. "We must never love money more than God" he said. How exactly this is done is not always simple but Briscoe offered four principles that could help us achieve this.

The first principle is to always remember that God is the owner of everything. This kind of thinking means that when we lose something, we lost something that was not ours in the first place. Nevertheless, when we gain something we must remain modest knowing we did not gain it for ourselves but for God. The second principle is to always spend less than you own so that you can save every time. "This means discipline in your life", he said. In this way you build up assets. The third principle is to learn to be content with what you have. This contentment refers in particular to the goods you have and not to the work you do or the aspirations you have. "Be satisfied with the house you have, the car you have, etc." he advised the audience.

The fourth and last principle is somewhat connected to the second and third ones and it is to avoid debt. This can be done by being content with what you have and spending less than you have. Briscoe presented all these principles with examples from his own life and experience. As an experienced professional he tested these principles in his own life and, given his success in business, the results are seen by all. Closing his speech, Mr Briscoe advised those listening to "set long term goals because if you don't do that, then your long term goals will become short term goals without sufficient time to complete them".

The atmosphere of the event was informal and this made it easier for participants to ask Briscoe questions after the speech and also in private later that evening.





8. Building communities through transformative leadership

Eunice Vatron

Location: Fuzine, Croatia

Date: 13-28 July 2013

Main Lecturers:

-Eunice Vatron, ECPM General Projects Assistant

-Brett McMichael, Executive Member of the Forum for Leadership and Reconciliation

A group of sixty young leaders, facilitators, speakers and mentors, from fifteen countries, representing diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds attended the two-week leadership and reconciliation gathering in Croatia. The objective of the convention was to teach young leaders about forgiveness, reconciliation and leadership of integrity and service by exposing them to the teachings of Jesus.

ECPM General Projects Assistant Eunice Vatron joined the ROM team this year and engaged participants in vibrant discussions about human dignity and leadership development in her capacity as small group facilitator and speaker. The gathering also provided a great opportunity to inform young European leaders about the activity of the European Christian Political Youth Network (ECPYN) and the possibility to join its political and academic programs.

"We learned about conflict resolution and questioned aspects of our identities. Looking beyond just our ethnic and national identities, we considered our unique identities as creations of God. Indeed the principles of Jesus were at the centre of all we learned about and did," writes Brett McMichael.

Renewing our Minds (ROM) initiative is an international movement of young leaders, with the roots in Southeast Europe (Balkans) that teaches young leaders how to embrace each other and develop lasting friendships despite their religious, national and ethnic differences. For the past fourteen years ROM has been encouraging young Balkan leaders to adopt a new paradigm – one of forgiveness, reconciliation, peace-making, humanity created in the image of God, loving one's neighbour as oneself and leadership of integrity.



9. Succeeding in elections without losing core Christian Democratic values

Location: Tbilisi, Georgia

Date: 11-13 July, 2013

Main lecturers:

- George Rukhadze, ECPM Vice-President
- Armands Agrums, Secretary General of the Christian Democrats of Latvia
- Armine Khamalian
- Peeter Võsu, ECPM former President
- Levan Vekphvadze, Secretary General CDM Georgia
- Giorgi Targamadze, CDM leader

This two-day event, hosted by the ECPM and CDM Georgia, focused on election results and the campaign management of the Christian Democratic parties across Eastern Europe. The event gathered more than fifty representatives from six different countries. During this conference, results of the Georgian, Armenian, Ukrainian and Latvian elections were analysed, with lessons learned and experiences shared. The main topic of the conference became how to deal with the challenges of succeeding in elections without losing core Christian Democratic values. The ways in which Christian Democratic parties of the region could help each other with election campaigning was also widely debated.

The conference was opened by George Rukhadze, who reported on Georgian general election results, mistakes made and lessons learned. As the Ukrainian delegation was unable to travel to Georgia, a detailed report about the 2012 Ukrainian general elections was read. After this, Armands Agrums, gave a speech about Latvian local elections. Speakers on the first panel also included Armine Khamalian who gave a comprehensive description of Armenian general elections and the CDU's election strategy and campaign plan and the leader of the Estonian Christian Democrats Peter Võsu, who outlined his party plans for Estonia's upcoming local elections.



After the first panel on the election results was over, a general discussion followed on how Christian democratic parties across Eastern Europe could coordinate their campaign plans and help each other. Levan Vekphvadze suggested using cross party delegations/teams to work on national minorities during the election campaigning. The Estonian Christian Democrats suggested that Christian parties across Europe could help each other in writing manifestos and sharing strong points. A joint campaign managers meeting from Christian Democratic Parties of Eastern Europe was planned to be held in Tbilisi in summer 2014.

Following the discussion, Georgian experts on PR and campaigning strategy held a short seminar on how to plan and prepare election campaigns without losing core values. The second part of the conference was opened by Giorgi Targamadze who covered a wide range of topics from the general political situation in Georgia and the surrounding region to his election campaigning experience. The conference culminated in selecting him as a presidential candidate for CDM Georgia in the upcoming presidential elections.

The second day of the conference was dedicated to the bureau meeting of the Association of Christian Democrats of Eastern Europe (ACDEE). After an overview of activities in the first half of 2013, necessary corrections were made to the yearly plan and the preparations for the 2014 congress of ACDEE were discussed. The decision was made that the next ACDEE congress would be held in the Latvian capital in the first part of 2014, where KDS Latvia would take over the leadership of the association from the Georgian Christian Democrats.





10. Christian Democracy: Theory and Practice

Location: Tbilisi, Georgia

Date: 21-22 September 2013

Main lecturers:

- Giorgi Targamadze, CDM Leader
- George Rukhadze, ECPM Vice-President
- Giorgi Akhvediani, former MP Georgia
- Leven Vepkhvadze, former MP Georgia
- Nodar Sarjveladze, Chairman of the Christian Democratic Institute (CDI)
- Ratie Maisuradze, Head of the Christian Democratic Centre (CDC)
- Nikoloz Laliashvili, former MP
- Magda Anikashvili, former MP
- Andea Kirbs, Director IRI Georgia

The conference was attended by all national and forty-five local CDM leaders from five regions of Eastern Georgia. Namely, heads of the regional and local offices in Shida Kartli, Kvemo Kartli, Mtsketa Mtianeti, Kakheti and Samegrelo Zemo Kartli attended the conference and seminar. The local leaders listened to the CDM national leaders as well as to specially invited lecturers to grasp a better understanding of Christian Democracy as a political ideology.



Lectures and seminars focused on how to answer the basic questions about Christian Democracy at a local level, how to deal with media representatives and how to put on so-called 'Christian Democratic glasses' when talking about national or local political issues.

The conference was opened by Giorgi Targamadze and George Rukhadze. Giorgi Akhvediani and Leven Vepkhvadze were among the speakers.

Nodar Sarjveladze and Ratie Maisuradze gave lectures on the theoretical aspects of Christian Democracy, while Nikoloz Laliashvili and Magda Anikashvili took over of seminars on the practical aspects of Christian Democracy. Canin Atilgan and Andea Kirbs were invited as lecturers on German Christian Democracy and US conservatism respectively.

The event was an excellent opportunity to enrich the knowledge of theoretical and practical aspects of Christian Democracy at regional and local levels of CDM Georgia. And the final dinner which followed the conference helped to build team spirit within the party.



11. Ethics: Public integrity

Location: Podgorica, Montenegro

Date: 11 October 2013

Main lecturers:

- Lav Lajovic, CMoM coordinator
- Eunice Vatran, ECPM General Projects Assistant,
- Drazen Cerovic, Faculty of Law Subdean and Professor
- Ivan Sikmanovic, Advisor to the Minister of Interior
- Pedja Davidovic, Human Resources Bureau Assistant Manager
- Slavko Milic, Montenegrin Defendology Centre Representative
- Omer Markisic, Auditor General
- Edina Melania Hadnagi, Research Assistant at Saxion University

This conference aimed at raising awareness of the importance of strengthening civil servants in their conviction to act in accordance with ethical and moral values, and making them more resilient against corruption. An individual of high integrity is crucial in fighting corruption. Such a person can help in building and maintaining integrity through planning in each institution, then through adopting codes of ethics, and applying ongoing education and proper control of the system. The conference also addressed the need to strengthen the current legal framework to secure the fight against corruption. Cooperation with other NGOs is important to enhance this legislative work. Regional cooperation and exchange of experiences between countries in the region are crucially needed in order to curb corruption.

Eunice Vatran pointed out that mere adoption of laws against corruption is futile without enforcing them. The balance of the three branches of government is essential for the prevention of corruption—and special emphasis needs to be placed on the promulgation of independent judiciary. Ivan Sikmanovic spoke about novelties in institutional and normative frameworks and said that all government bodies are obliged to adopt integrity planning which will contain measures for prevention and eradication of corruption.



A Ministry of Interior representative stated that: "Various reforms in public administration, with human resources management mechanism in particular, aim to secure high ethical standards in the public services. Of course, a great leap forward is establishment of the Board of Ethics which is to oversee the application of the codes of ethics". Drazen Cerovic deems that the codes of ethics should be attached to the laws as appendices so they could 'signal' the state administration as to which norms are not to be violated. He stated that laws, in their essence, are based on ethical codices.

Pedja Davidovic added that the new Law on State Officials and Employees was necessary as it is meant to improve employment and career opportunities based on a system of merits, and at the same time to strengthen internal capacities of the Human Resources Bureau.

Slavko Milic stated that police should be keen to protect the privacy and confidentiality of information of children who get into trouble with the law. He said that high ethical criteria should be a sign of maturity for any society and the institutions thereof.

Omer Markisic also addressed the gathering and stressed the importance of ethics in managing public finances. He pointed to irregularities in this which have been acknowledged in Montenegro. Edina Melania Hadnagi from the ECPM presented the research results of a study she had conducted on corruption together with her university colleagues in Romania.





12. The future of Europe

Peter Östman

Location: Jurmala, Latvia
 Date: 10-11 May, 2013
 Main Lecturers:
 -Peter Östman, ECPM President
 -Peeter Võsu, Advisory Council ECPM Member
 -Jonathan van Tongeren, ECPM
 -Y.E. Catholic Archbishop Zbignevs Stankevics
 -Y.E. Metropolitan Aleksandrs
 -Y.E. Evang. Archbishop Janis Vanags
 -Norbert Beckmann-Dierkes Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
 -Mara Viktorija Zilgalve, Chairman of the Board KDS
 -Dr Bernhard Worms, German politician of the CDU

On the 10th and 11th of May 2013 in Jurmala, the ECPM organised a conference together with the Social Market Institute of Latvia and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in collaboration with KDS Latvia.

The purpose of the conference was to discuss the present state in which the European Union finds itself and what steps must be taken to move forward.



Peeter Võsu



On behalf of the ECPM, Peter Östman, Peeter Vosu and Jonathan van Tongeren delivered their views on the current state of Europe.

Peeter Vosu explained how the Estonian economy could grow in a stable and healthy way, and he outlined which values and theories fuel this policy. Peter Östman described the political and economic situation in the EU, pointing at colliding stances between big and small member states and the issue of constructive cooperation versus individual interests.

Jonathan van Tongeren introduced the core values and vision of the ECPF publication, "Beyond Capitalism". For the future of Europe we need an economic system based on three key principles: no reward without responsibility, no investment without involvement and no profit without participation. Religious officials and representatives participated in the discussions and gave their visions for the future of Europe.

As a conclusion to this event, the CDU Latvia chairman, Dr Mara Viktorija Zilgalve said that "in the future Latvia has to stick to the political culture of the Christian Democratic foundations".



13. Economic Diplomacy and Integrity

Location: Sighisoara, Romania

Date: 11-13 October 2013

Main lecturers:

-Lars Rise, former Norwegian MP

-Robert Maricak, International Business Entrepreneur

-Jack Fallow, formerly a director in one of the UK's largest utilities

What do we think about successful businessmen or politicians? Do we see them as honest people who built their success with toil and sweat? Or do we see them as more or less corrupt people who managed to beat the system without being caught?

Saying that you cannot be a good Christian and also a successful, honest businessman or woman is like saying that Christian principles are good for the private life but don't help you much in your professional career. For this purpose Mihaela Kovacs, Director of Foundation Beraca together with the ECPM and For Leadership and Reconciliation Forum organised a three-day conference from October 11th to the 13th. During this conference a few successful speakers from the business and political fields shared with us the truth that Christian principles are not only very helpful in a professional career but they are also the only principles that can help you have a long and successful career. One of the speakers, Lars Rise is a former Member of Parliament from Norway and also a political scientist. He described four Jesus principles which have helped him in his career and in dealing with people around him. These principles are:

1. We are all equal—all human beings have the same inherent value.
2. We forgive each other.
3. We clearly express our expectations to each other. By this Rise means that we do not lie to each other nor do we talk behind each other's backs.
4. We love each other. This principle is important not only in familiar relationships but also in business relationships. This love is expressed by caring for the poor and placing the interests of others above those of oneself.

The conference also addressed the negative aspects and/or temptations of being successful. Corruption is not something a young entrepreneur has to look very far for when doing business.



Opportunities for corruption are served up regularly on a silver platter and you must have very strong principles and a willingness to fail, if required, in order to refuse it. Even though Jesus's principles are helpful and are the only way to achieve stable success, often they also bring their challenges and difficulties. The road to success is much harder and you must be ready to encounter failures. The higher you climb on the ladder of success, the more you are confronted with corruption and saying no to it will sometimes stagnate you.

Robert Maricak, a successful international business entrepreneur is a living example of a person who applied the principles Jesus taught us to his own business affairs. He admits that it is not easy to stay upright when others around you expect you to bend the rules. However, the deep conviction that God has a plan for his life and the contact he has kept with other people of the same convictions has helped him advance. When you live by the principles God sets He rewards you. Maricak encouraged the people attending the conference—people ranging from upstart entrepreneurs to well-weathered professionals—to respect the government even though it is a corrupt government. Jack Fallow, formerly a director in one of the UK's largest utilities in three different functions - human resources, operations and service engineering. Fallow explained Jesus's principles, giving examples of great men in history who applied Christ's teachings. He also described the characteristics of a leader and the importance of integrity at all times—not only when in the public eye. In order for your behaviour to be right there must take place a renewing of your mind because your thoughts dictate your actions.

Offering an example of an organisation that follows Jesus's principles in its dealings, the ECPM's honorary president Peeter Vösu presented a short history of how the ECPM came into being and how it grew to be what it is now. His presentation brought about a series of discussions about Christian Democratic ideas. Each day of the conference a time for small group discussion was reserved in which participants could discuss in depth the ideas encountered during the discourses.



14. Romania at the crossroads: Development of real democracy or ...?

Location: Moneasa, Romania

Date: 7-11 August 2013

Main Lecturers:

-Cristian Moisescu, Teacher at the Vasile Goldis University and former Mayor of the city of Arad

-Jacques Bazen, International Relations Officer at Saxion Hogescholen and Researcher Regional Economic Development

-Geert Kraaijeveld, Treasurer at Foundation Training Eastern Europe

-Nelleke Kraaijeveld, Biology Teacher at Van Lodenstein College

-Maria van Oost, General Manager Assistant at ECPM

Between the 7th and 11th of August 2013 in the beautiful Moneasa mountain resort of Arad county, around forty students and speakers gathered to discuss Romania's political situation and the way forward. Because of the heat wave at the time and the lack of air-conditioning in the conference room, the lectures were held in the morning and the evening. During the four-day period, lectures, documentaries and educational movies were presented. Cristian Moisescu started with a general presentation about true democracy in comparison with what is happening in Romania under the name of democracy. The stark contrast between theory and practise led to heated discussions on the problems that are being faced. Debates continued during the whole period of the conference. Political corruption was initially seen to be the one and only problem, but as discussions continued other problems were revealed.

Nelleke Kraaijeveld



A lack of moral education and/or a distorted morality seems to germinate the corruption that infiltrates all areas of livelihood in Romania. This leads to a lack of exemplary leaders that young people can follow. The solution is not to wait for the political situation to change and but to raise up exemplary leaders. We must act immediately against the corruption each of us faces at the lowest levels, acting as exemplars ourselves.

Another stark contrast presented in one of the lectures held by Jacques Bazen on entrepreneurship was that between the wealth in resources Romania disposes of and the country's economical poverty. Inept administration is seen as one of the causes of this disparity but it is not the only cause. Bad investments and a low standard on quality levels ensure Romania does not stand out despite its riches. The Netherlands can be an example for Romania in how they managed to survive along the centuries despite its own disadvantages. The conference was successfully concluded with a workshop in which the students had the opportunity to present their ideas on the problems Romania is facing and their possible solutions. This workshop led to interesting discussions in which the students engaged actively.

Jacques Bazen



15. Bulgarian Culture Days

Location: Banat, Romania

Date: 11-18 August 2013

Main lecturers:

-Nicolae Mircovici, UBB-R President

-Leo van Doesburg, ECPM External Affairs Manager

From the 11th to 18th of August 2013 a special event took place in Banat, Romania. The Bulgarian Culture Days, the 20th edition of the Bulgarian Garment, Song and Folk Dance Festival in Banat is a jubilee celebrating 275 years since the first Bulgarian establishment in Banat.

On the first day of the event, the UBB-R president Nicolae Mircovici together with several hundred guests participated in the opening of a painting exhibition which took place in the city hall. On the 14th of August the first stone was laid at the site of the first Bulgarian house that is going to be built and the religious officials offered blessings over the work that is to be done.

On this occasion Mircovici and other representatives held speeches. The 15th of August began with a church service in which all significant guests took part. After this, several commemorative events took place, such as the placing of wreaths at the monuments built in honour of those fallen during the World Wars, and the unveiling of a new statue important for the community.

The evening was filled with cultural concerts and artistic programs. On Friday a debate took place on the theme of "Religion and its role in sustaining the Bulgarian identity in Banat". Here Mircovici, Leo van Doesburg the ECPM representative and other religious leaders made addresses. After this debate a symposium took place about the archaeological discoveries made in this area. The rest of the days were filled with artistic programs including a traditional Bulgarian wedding and sports and music concerts.



16. "I am not for sale" – STOP human trafficking

Location: Novi Sad, Serbia

Date: 23rd of October 2013

Main lecturers:

-Dobriła Pejin, Project Manager in NSHC

-Marko Stupar, Coordinator for EUS in Novi Sad

-Mitar Djuraskovic, Coordinator for anti-trafficking fight in Serbian police

- Sinisa Hrgic, Coordinator for anti-trafficking fight in Novi Sad

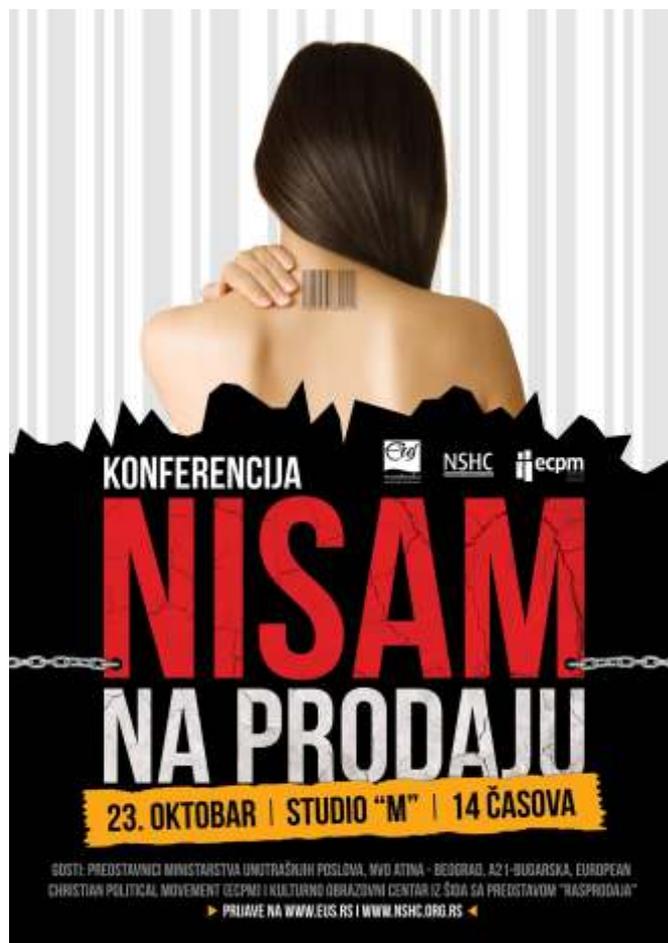
-Nick Rough, leading A21 in Bulgaria

-Jelena Hrnjak, from NGO Atina from Belgrade

-Andreea Gabriela Gavrila, Public Manager in Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration in Government of Romania

The main goal of this event was to raise awareness about problem of human trafficking in Serbia. Through talks, videos and plays participants learned more about the horrors of human trafficking and the devastating effects it has on society in Serbia. Dobriła Pejin and Marko Stupar welcomed the participants and gave a short introduction to the conference and outlined what their volunteer group has done so far.

Mitar Djuraskovic and Sinisa Hrgic talked about labour exploitation; how to recognize and prevent it. They also gave an overview of police work in Serbia.



In the second part of the conference, Nick Rough, an Australian living in Bulgaria gave a talk on the importance of cooperation between non-governmental and governmental organisations. Jelena Hrnjak spoke about work of the NGO Atina and about a safe house they have in Belgrade. Closing the proceedings, Andreea Gabriela Gavrila spoke of the responsibility of political parties and organisations to fight more actively against human trafficking. This event is believed to have increased the awareness about the problem of human trafficking in Serbia. All speakers did an excellent job creating awareness among the participants about problem of trafficking and how to fight it.

The event brought together around 130 participants, both from Novi Sad and from abroad. It was organised by the volunteer program "Freedom is priceless" which is composed of volunteers from the NGOs "Evangelical University Students (EUS)" and "Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre (NSHC)". The ECPM also partnered in supporting and organising this conference.

17. Christian faith in the public sphere: local and European perspectives

Location: Timisoara, Romania

Date: 6 May 2013

Main Lecturers:

-Laurentiu Timis, Executive Director of "Jesus the Hope of Romania."

-Leo van Doesburg, ECPM External Affairs Manager

-Yun, Chinese Pastor

-Lucian Chis

-Petru Bulica

This event brought together around seventy-five participants, both from Timisoara (political leaders, pastors, representatives from the educational field) and from abroad. It was organised by the Evangelistic and Charitable Association "Jesus the Hope of Romania", in collaboration with the ECPM.

The main goal of the event was to raise awareness regarding the importance of ecumenism in the creation of unity in Timisoara and the bringing together of local political and religious leaders from all spectrums. The aim here was to identify means of further developing mutual understanding and peaceful relations among members of diverse cultures, ethnicities and religious beliefs.

The host of the conference was Laurentiu Timis. He welcomed the participants and encouraged them to act on Christian values and principles and, by doing so, to foster a spirit of toleration, love and ecumenism between the people of the city of Timisoara.

The event was structured into two sessions. The first was opened by Timis, who was followed by the keynote speaker of the event, Leo van Doesburg. In a very eloquent way, he emphasised the need for models among political and religious leaders, models that the young generations can look up to and follow. He gave the example of Nehemiah in the Old Testament, who served as a great example of genuine leadership, both in his personal and family life.

In the second part of the conference, participants were addressed by several speakers. The first one was the Chinese pastor Yun, who spoke about persecution in communist China and underlined the importance of personal testimony when facing suffering and hardships. Yun was followed by two Romanian pastors, Lucian Chis of Alethea Church and Petru Bulica of Bethel First Baptist Church. They spoke about the current situation in Romania and what we can do today in order for our children to live with dignity tomorrow, guided by values and Christian moral principles.

The event is believed to have increased the awareness of those present regarding the positive-active implications of Christian cultural and political engagement in contemporary society and to have made political and religious leaders more aware of the fruitful relationship that can exist between the religious and political dimensions of society. A dinner was served to close the conference in order to give both speakers and participants the opportunity to connect, exchange ideas and seek possibilities for collaboration.



18. European leadership forum

Location: Wisla, Poland

Date: 25-30 May, 2013

Main lecturers:

- David Fieldsend, ECPF Chairman
- Charlie Hoare (CARE)
- Nola Leach (CARE)
- Lennart Sacredeus
- Timothy Laurence
- Lord Mackay of Clashfern
- Leo van Doesburg, ECPM External Affairs Manager
- Sandra Sykes
- Matthew Price
- Christina Summers
- Arttu Makipaa
- Roger Kiska

ECPM collaborated with CARE in organizing the European Leadership Forum which consisted out of four network sessions in May in Poland. The four Network sessions were divided into three parts: a lecture from a leading Christian in public life, multi-disciplinary tutor groups and two specialist sub-networks in the fields of politics and law.

Lennart Sacredeus talked about serving Jesus as an elected representative of the People: a practical approach and personal testimony. The session touched on the issues Christians must consider when entering the political sphere.

Following him, Timothy Laurence discussed the realities of representing electors. On the second day, Lord Mackay of Clashfern led the Network on equality in law, reflecting on current developments in the area. Leo van Doesburg led the discussion about developing a Pan-European Christian Political Network focusing on the necessity of establishing such political networks as platforms that will allow Christian politicians to work together to promote and develop Biblically-based politics.

The third and fourth days focused on the subject of media and how to get your message across the way you want to say it and, most importantly, how to avoid becoming a victim of the journalistic feeding frenzy. Further, the crisis in Europe was discussed, re-examining the economy in terms of stewardship.

Sir Charles Hoare



B. Events in which the ECPM took part

1. European Prayer Breakfast

Location: Brussels, Belgium

Date: 4 December 2013

Main lecturers:

-Frigide Barjot, Humourist and Political Activist

-Johannes Selle, German Politician

-Tunne Kelam, MEP

-Florica Chereches, Romanian MP

Every year in Brussels, hundreds of officials, diplomats, politicians and business people who share in common their faith in Jesus come together to learn from and encourage each other. This year the 16th such annual Prayer Breakfast took place in the European Parliament on the 4th of December. The main speaker was the humourist and political activist Frigide Barjot.

The purpose of this event, according to the EPB organisers, is to gather together believers around the person of Jesus and to "deepen friendships and pray for European leaders and the issues we face on our continent".

On the evening of December 3rd, the event was opened by a welcome dinner where the attendants could meet each other and talk. A few of the organisers offered words of welcome and also highlighted the need for prayer for the political situation within certain EU countries and those outside, such as Ukraine. At the end of the evening the attendees were invited to pray each in their own language for these issues and also other concerns pressing on their hearts.

The main session of the whole event occurred at the Breakfast itself on the morning of December 4th. Barjot was not the only speaker during this session but as the main speaker, she captured everybody's attention with her heartfelt and inspiring discourse.

She openly gave her testimony as a Christian and how she came to faith. Most of those present were acquainted with her political activism in favour of traditional marriage between man and woman. However, one thing perhaps not everybody knew initially was that one of the people who helped her find God was a very good friend of hers who was homosexual. Barjot gave utterance once more to the truth that Christianity is not against gay people but in favour of the laws given to us by God, such as marriage between man and woman. "It is a mystery" she said about why God sees it like this, but as Christians we must obey God first of all. Barjot encouraged everybody to show love to our neighbour no matter who they are because this is also what God commands us to do. Before the morning was closed by a panel discussion, Johannes Selle delivered a short speech in which he exhorted listeners to practise humility. In this motivational talk, Selle spoke from own experience as a Christian and politician: "For me being a Christian in politics means following Jesus's principles, it means to ask what Jesus would recommend".

The last session of the Prayer Breakfast was the lunch which ended with a few short but motivating speeches. Members of the European Parliament such as Tunne Kelam but also other members of national parliaments such as our ECPM member Florica Chereches had the opportunity to share with the others their hopes and visions.

The European Prayer Breakfast is the only event of such size that manages to gather together people of different nationalities, political affiliations, social or economic views and even different church denominations all under the same umbrella of the Christian faith.



2. Roundtable on referenda and marriage

Location: Zagreb, Croatia

Date: 27 November 2013

Main lecturers:

-Branko Hrg, MP and President of the Croatian Peasant Party

-Ladislav Ilcic, Leader of HRAST

-Heiner Studer, President ECPM Advisory Council

-George Rukhadze, Vice-President ECPM

-Guido van Beusekom, General Manager ECPM

On November 27th, just a few days before the referendum on the definition of marriage in Croatia, the ECPF co-hosted a conference in the Croatian Parliament in Zagreb on the importance of the referendum and of marriage as an institution. The roundtable was initiated by the Croatian party HRAST and many other opposition parties were present as well.

Unfortunately, the parties of the ruling left-wing coalition, although all invited, did not take part in the event which took place in the Croatian Parliament.

The event was opened by Branko Hrg and moderated by Ladislav Ilcic. Also present were Zeljka Markic and Kresimir Planinic of the initiation committee "In the Name of the Family" that managed to collect over 700,000 signatures in support of traditional marriage in just two weeks.

On behalf of the ECPF, Heiner Studer delivered a compelling speech on the importance of a referendum and the need for politicians to respect the wishes of the people whom they are serving. Maria Hildingsson (Federation of Catholic Family Associations) spoke passionately about why promoting marriage as a union between one man and one woman is vital for families and society as a whole. On behalf of the ECPM, George Rukhadze and Guido van Beusekom were present to express their support of the initiative.

On December 1st, four days after the roundtable, approximately two-thirds of Croatian voters were in favour of amending the Croatian Constitution in order to safeguard the rights of the natural family.



3. Washington National Prayer Breakfast

Location: Washington, USA

Date: 7 February, 2013

Main lecturers:

-Dr Benjamin E. Carson, Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital

-Barak Obama, US President

-Jeff Sessions, Senator

-Mark Pryor, Senator

-Louie Gohmert

-Janice Hahn

-Charles E. Schumer, Senator

-Elizabeth Dole, Senator

-Admiral Jonathan Greenert

-Ken Salazar, Secretary of Interior

The 61st National Prayer Breakfast had as its main speaker Dr Benjamin E. Carson. Reading from Proverbs, he expressed the importance of education and knowledge. Dr Carson also spoke of freedom of speech as a founding principle of a free society and how this must be accompanied by the active involvement of its citizens.

His speech was incisive and enjoyable, and due to his extraordinary speaking skills he never crossed the line of tastefulness and politeness.

President Obama spoke about two great examples in his own life, President Lincoln and Martin Luther King. He described how he has encountered many challenges during his terms of presidency and how these remind him of the fact that "the most powerful people need to be the most humble".

President Obama encouraged his political opponents to not forget after the event all the good intentions and prayers that were expressed during the Prayer Breakfast. "The Bible tells us to love our God over all, and our neighbours as ourselves," he said in conclusion.

The National Prayer Breakfast has recently expanded into a four-day conference full of meetings and networking opportunities. Among the participants are politicians, civil servants and opinion leaders from all over the US and guests from around the globe.





4. How to implement Christian values in Europe's secularisation process

Location: Lakitelek, Hungary

Date: 12 May, 2013

Main lecturers:

-Leo van Doesburg, External Affairs Manager

-Endre Spaller, ECPM Board Member

This event offered up thought provoking ideas and revitalising discourse in the conference centre of the Lakitelek Academy in Hungary. One of the contributors to this meeting was Leo van Doesburg who gave an account of the prevailing secularisation of Europe. The Christian-Democratic political academy of ROKK urged like-minded Christian delegates from across the Carpathian Basin to be prepared for servant-hearted, Christ-centred leadership in public life. By way of introduction, the ECPM offered a presentation about its visions, future goals and achievements of the past years.

Van Doesburg continued his talk about the growing secularisation and the globalisation of values as well as the existence of a new global ethic in the public terrain. Key areas such as human dignity, solidarity, responsibility and community are indicators which diagnose to what extent anti-Christian political interest has been developing and prevailing all over Europe.

However, the training was not focused on only diagnosing the problem. The participants were armed with practical advice about how to overcome ignorance, articulate one's opinion in public discourse, use solid arguments and build up and extend networks of Christian NGOs on both national and European levels. Current challenges in terms of wrong mentality, non-professionalism and lack of compromises were also emphasised as drawbacks to the course of moving Christian projects forward.



5. 8th Congress of the International Romani Union

Location: Sibiu, Romania

Date: 7 and 8 April, 2013

Main lecturers:

- Leo van Doesburg, external affairs manager ECPM
- Florin Cioaba, former IRU president
- Mr. Stanislav Stankiewicz, former IRU President
- Roman Chojnaki

On the morning of April 7th, those present participated in a religious program, held at the Roma Philadelphia Pentecostal Church. Leo van Doesburg, emphasized on the Christian faith as an important factor in the process of social integration of Roma people.

The official opening of the Congress was done by the IRU President Florin Cioaba who addressed a word of greeting to the guests. In this part of the program, diplomas were handed out as a token of appreciation for hard work in the IRU. The second part of the program was dedicated to the presentation of reports on the functions and activities of the committees.

The majority of speakers have highlighted the problems faced by the Roma ethnicity worldwide. Here we mention the lack of governmental involvement in strategies to improve the situation of the Roma people, and the European Union's lack of social protection programmes for the Roma. It was pointed out that the problems faced by the Roma in the countries of origin are the main cause of their migration to other countries.

On the second day of the Congress, Florin Cioaba was elected as the President of IRU. Elections of other candidates for different positions within IRU also took place this day. Another important moment of this day was the launch of the book of Luminița Cioaba.

In the evening the organizers offered a dinner party in honour of the participants.

This event was attended by approximately 250 participants, delegates and guests. At this international forum, the number of delegations, was about 160 people representing Roma people from 34 countries on three continents: Europe, Asia and America. The event was reported by the media in 9 countries, including major television stations.

On the 18th of August 2013 Florin Cioaba passed away. ECPM is saddened by the sudden loss of a friend and partner. Our hearts go out to the family he left behind.

Leo van Doesburg and Florin Cioaba



6. National Prayer Breakfasts

Location: Riga, Latvia.
Westminster, UK and Berlin, Germany

Date: June and November 2013

Main lecturers:

- Leo van Doesburg, External Affairs Manager
- Inese Slesere, Chairperson of Latvian National Prayer Breakfast Committee
- John Lennox, University of Oxford
- Tim Farron, MP

The annual Prayer Breakfast is becoming a tradition in more and more EU countries every year. The ECPM was pleased to be invited to several Prayer Breakfast in Europe: In Berlin, Latvia and Westminster. Entitled "God is good", the Latvian Prayer Breakfast took place in the House of Riga Latvian Society. Similar to previous years, state and municipal leaders were invited along with representatives from various spheres of education, art, culture, sports and business. The event was a time of mutual encouragement, spiritual support and fellowship. In Latvia, they have now established the tradition of the Prayer Breakfast;

it is held on the first Friday of November every year. Last year the focus was on Peace. This year the theme was based on the quote from Philippians 4:8: "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things". Leo van Doesburg, was invited to participate in the Prayer Breakfast. He took part in a special fellowship lunch that was organised on behalf of the international guests and he had additional meetings with politicians in attendance. In the evening, he had a meeting with the leadership of the Latvian Christian Democrats. Together they evaluated the conference they had organised earlier this year on the 28th of May about the Future of Europe. They also discussed future plans.

The English National Prayer Breakfast took place in Westminster. The theme for this year was "God and Society: Belief in God in 21st Century Britain". The main speaker was Professor John Lennox from the University of Oxford and the Chair was Tim Farron, MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale.

Westminster Prayer Breakfast



Berlin Prayer Breakfast



Latvian Prayer Breakfast

7. Private Papal Audience

Location: Vatican

Date: 8th of December

Main lecturers:

-His Holiness Pope Francis

-Honorary President Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino

-Luca Volontè, Chairman of the Dignitatis Humanae Institute

-Nirj Deva, MEP

On December 8th the Dignitatis Humanae Institute (DHI) celebrated its fifth anniversary and was marked by a private audience with His Holiness Pope Francis.

Benjamin Harnwell, Board Member of the ECPM is the secretary of the DHI. Together with him, George Rukhadze, Stieneke van der Graaf and Endre Spaller (Board Members of the ECPM) were present at this event, also accompanied by Leo van Doesburg, External Relations Manager of the ECPM. Calling on the assembled politicians, Pope Francis warned of a modern-day “throwaway culture” that threatens “to become the dominant mentality. The victims of such a culture are precisely the weakest and most fragile human beings—the unborn, the poorest people, sick elderly people, gravely disabled people...[those] who are in

danger of being ‘thrown out,’ expelled from a machine that must be efficient at all costs.” Since its creation five years ago, the Dignitatis Humanae Institute has forged a network of parliamentary working groups with the purpose of promoting human dignity based on the recognition that man is made in the image and likeness of God, as codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Dignity. Addressing all those present, Honorary President Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino opened the Papal Audience by attesting to this steadfast commitment “to return our society to the belief that man is made in the image and likeness of God, and that because of this, he has an infinite human dignity which demands to be respected”. The consequences of failure in this duty were elucidated by Luca Volontè, Chairman of the Dignitatis Humanae Institute, when he addressed the Holy Father on behalf of the Institute. Following the Papal Audience, the Dignitatis Humanae Institute announced the impending creation of the latest Parliamentary Working Group, in Hungary. President of the International Committee on Human Dignity, Nirj Deva MEP, cited a further need to focus on Scandinavian nations where a liberal abortion and euthanasia framework is in place that does not promote life nor human dignity.



8. Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy

Location: Bethlehem and Jerusalem

Date: 19-22 October 2013

Main lecturers:

- Sergei Popov, President of the I.A.O. General Assembly
- Anastasios Nerantzis Secretary General
- Fr. Aswin Fernandis, the Orthodox Syrian Malankara Church, India
- Leo van Doesburg, ECPM External Affairs Manager
- Fuad Kokaly, member of the I.A.O. Committee on Human Rights

Leo van Doesburg participated at the Meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy (IAO) Secretariat and Committee Chairpersons in Bethlehem from October 19th to 22nd. The IAO is an inter-parliamentary network of Members of Parliament and members of the Orthodox Church. They represent the parliaments of Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovakia and Ukraine, as well as groups of MPs from Australia, Asia, Africa and the USA.

It is initiated by the Hellenic Parliament and has as its target the promotion of unity amongst the different orthodox churches and the promotion of freedom of religion and conscience. More information can be found on their website: www.eiao.org

Fuad Kokaly presented a report on the Christians' situation in the Middle East.

During the Secretariat meeting, van Doesburg gave a short presentation about the ECPM, its vision, aims and objectives. Furthermore, he sat down with the leadership to examine concrete ways to create meaningful collaboration.



Vision document



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 its beginning in the 19th century with politicians like Groen van Prinsterer. 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 pursuits 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 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. 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 inter-dependence. 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. 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 in 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 Gods love in order to work for a better future.



European political program of the ECPM

A Christian-democrat voice in the European Union

This EU programme was accepted by the ECPM members on June 12, 2009, and therefore an official ECPM policy document.

Preface

This program intends to voice the most basic notions of the ECPM concerning the European Union as we see it and how it should develop in the future. The ECPM has developed to a broad and pan-European organisation, active in and beyond the EU. This development calls us to present a general vision on the European Union and how its Christian roots can have a meaning for the EU in the 21st century. This program does not intend to cover many details in a wide range of policy fields. From our basic view at the EU some of the most important issues will be generally touched. This will also reflect what, in our view, the priorities of the EU should be in the years to come. This program is also 'under construction' and open for review and further elaboration in the following years as the EU and the ECPM will continue to develop. We as ECPM hope that this vision at the EU will inspire parties and politicians around the EU to continue their efforts for Christian-inspired politics and policies.

The identity of the European Union

Christianity entered Europe nearly 2000 years ago and has since then had a profound influence in our continent. Even though Europe is rich in its cultural diversity, the Christian faith runs as a red thread through all European nations and cultures. In all these cultures Christianity has had a deep impact on ethics, religion, view at humanity and freedom. The very notions of individuality that are present in today's Europe are directly linked to Christianity. Even later developments in thought like the enlightenment and secular philosophies stem from very basic Christian notions.

It is therefore not an accident that modern democracy developed in those parts of the world that have been under influence of Christianity. Democracy as it developed in the Western world embodies these values of individuality and freedom held together in a community. The need to protect democracy and maintain freedom and individuality in a peaceful Europe were driving forces behind the creation of the European Union. The EU is in its core a Christian-democrat answer at the totalitarian systems that brought so much devastation and oppressed millions of people in 20th century Europe.

The leaders who founded the European Union envisioned a union of nations that would preserve, protect and spread the values that are the foundation of our freedom and democracy. These are the Judeo-Christian values that determined the very fabric of our European societies; respect for the individual, respect for diversity and solidarity.

The history and values of Europe cannot be separated from the person of Jesus Christ and the Christian movement. They determined the soul and dynamics of Europe and the development of the ideas that shaped our continent and the history of the European nations. We as ECPM are convinced that there can be no future for a free and democratic EU and a Europe of solidarity without the recognition of the source of these values. We are also convinced that more is needed than just a recognition of the past. The Christian faith and values are also a needed source for the European Union of the 21st century.

These values are needed resource in a time of new challenges in our ecology, economy and the social cohesion of our societies. As ECPM we are determined to bring these values in the political discourse of the European Union in order to contribute to the wellbeing of our European society.

The European Union as a democratic union of nations

For us a free and democratic Europe implies a European Union that is a union of member states and subject to the peoples of these member states. We wish for a European Union that respects the independency of the member states. The EU is necessary as co-operation of European nations in facing the problems of the today's global village. However, the nations are the institutional foundation of the union. They lend tasks and authority to the Union and decide the direction of the Union. The EU institutions have to respect this democratic order.

This does not lead to a mere technocratic and economic co-operation since the EU is more than a mere sum of its parts. The EU has an own role as union of these nations, representing their peoples and the values of the EU. This acquires a democratic and transparent process that is accessible by all those who live in the EU. This ensures a free and democratic Europe that respects its peoples and their values.

The new Lisbon treaty is meant to provide a growing EU a framework that allowed the institutions to work after the enlargement. In some ways this treaty has been an improvement of the former so-called 'constitution'. We expect that in the future the treaty will undergo amendments. This amendments should again emphasize the role of the member states and reduce the number of policy fields the European Union is involved in, especially those fields that can also be directed by the member states. These changes would also give the EU more decisiveness on many major issues where the EU should take the lead, especially those issues that cannot be solved by individual member states.

On these fields the member states should not pursue their national interests but find common solutions for our common problems. Future amendments to the Lisbon treaty should also make the decision-making process of the European governing bodies more transparent.

The ultimate goal of the Union should not be to become a new economical or military 'global power block'. The ultimate goal of the union should be to apply the values where this unique co-operation of nations is found upon. These are key values as respect for life, freedom, solidarity, respect for diversity, democracy and peace. They should be applied in a way that will lift up the peoples of this continent and beyond.

Respect for life

No democracy can function without respect for life. Respect for life is the very cornerstone of respect for the individual and individuality is the cornerstone of democracy. It is a Christian value that shaped Europe's legal system and is one of the key values of the international human rights declarations. However at the same time this value needs to be emphasised again. There is a growing pressure to put absolute autonomous freedom before the value of life. But freedom of choice depends on the value of the individual. The EU institutions should uphold respect for life and not promote abortion or euthanasia in or outside Europe. The EU should also take a stand against the utilisation of human life. Utilisation of human life for economical or scientific reasons is opposite to respect for life and therefore also not acceptable in a free and democratic society.

Respect for life also includes respect for the creation. It is clear that we live in a growing ecological crisis. The EU has an important role to play to find answers to this most important challenge of our time. The EU should promote green technologies, green energies, conservation and care for environment in the union and globally. Care for creation is not an isolated issue, it needs to be integrated as a principle in all policy fields. In those policy fields that are in the hands of the member states, the EU can assist in sharing and promoting 'green solutions'. European and national political parties can play their role in bringing scientists and national, regional and local politicians together. This ecological crisis also requires a fundamental turn in economic policies. Continuity and the role of all stakeholders has to become more important than the profits of the shareholders. These can be foundations for a sustainable economy in its ecological and economical meaning.

Freedom

Freedom of speech, conscience and religion are vital for today's Europe. The role of Christianity and Christian-democracy in shaping the liberties that our continent

enjoys can hardly be underestimated. Individuals, communities and organisations must have full freedom of religion and expression of thought. This must be a priority within Europe and also in European foreign policy. The EU should promote these values also among the neighbouring states on our continent. Christian-democrat thinking also strongly rejects secularism as a public ideology. We reject any kind of 'obvious' dominance of secularism in government and policies. Neither can be there a role for domination by, or of, any single religious denomination or group in any EU member state.

Freedom of religion implies respect for plurality that should be shared by all people of all religions and those who have no religion. Freedom of speech and conscience are fundamental for our democracies. These freedoms can only be real if there is also a freedom of press. The freedom of press has to be protected throughout Europe. People are free to express their critique on other actions, views, faiths and beliefs without leaving any argument. But democracy means that they need to respect the dignity of those criticized.

Freedom and the right at privacy cannot be separated. Privacy should at least be as important as safety. New safety policies and the used technologies have to be examined thoroughly before they are introduced.

Solidarity

Solidarity is a core Christian principle and has always been a hallmark of the European Union. The EU itself would not exist if there had not been a notion of real solidarity between the free nations on our continent after WW II. Solidarity is an idea and ideal that is shared throughout Europe. Solidarity also means social justice. Social justice is a fundamental Biblical teaching and Christian-democrat notion. 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.

That solidarity and social justice are needed in 21st century Europe became clear during the 'credit crunch' of 2008 and its consequences in the years after. The EU should continue to emphasise the solidarity between the member-states and apply this principle and social justice in its economic policies. The common market has to rest on these values if we want it to function in the years to come. The EU can also only be a real union of values if it acts in solidarity for our global village, especially in its economic policies.





Respect for diversity

The value of the individual invokes the need for respect for diversity. The European Union is home for many nations, cultures, languages and religions. This diversity is the strength and future of the European Union. This does however not lead to cultural relativism. The reverse is true, namely that the Christian values are the source for this openness for a diverse society. This also means that even in a diverse society people can hold beliefs as 'the truth' and communicate these with others. This leads to a concept of diversity in which differences on all fields should be open for debate. The law and good manners provide the space within this debate can take place. In this way differences can be discussed in a fruitful way; we see this as the best prevention against discrimination.

Peace

Peace was one of the most important goals of the EU and is one of its most remarkable results. Peace is not just the absence of war. It means an environment where there is no fear between peoples and nations. Mutual understanding is necessary to maintain the peace we enjoy in Europe. The EU should encourage reconciliation where this is necessary. Humility, repentance, patience and forgiveness are political as well as personal values. They are essential in the process of replacing conflict by common understanding.

As stated we do not wish to see the EU to become a new global 'power block'. This means that the EU should not develop a military apparatus independent of the military forces of the member states. The NATO remains the military co-operation to keep Europe safe. Through the NATO the EU member states will engage in peace-keeping missions. If necessary EU member states can co-operate militarily. However, this does not require a new EU military command.

Vision and strategy towards EU neighbours in Europe

The ECPM sees the EU enlargement process as an ongoing phenomenon that should not, however, be regarded as an indefinite move without clear strategy and limits. We believe in a larger Europe without customs and discrimination and look forward to see all European sovereign nations united in the same institutional framework, for the sake of Europe's peoples well-being

and re-establishment of the continent's unity, disrupted by decades of dominance of totalitarian regimes.

The ECPM makes a clear distinction between EU European and non-European neighbours and deems the EU strategy should clearly differentiate between these two groups as to their European vocation and perspective. At the other hand, we believe the new prospective members should correspond to all accession criteria (Copenhagen criteria), but be allowed to join EU preserving their values. The existing EU members will only have to gain from the influx of new members, as presently the EU undergoes a demographic and ideological crisis. As the last wave of EU enlargement has proven, the accession of new East-European members did not confirm pessimistic scenarios drawn by adversaries of Eastern countries accession. Therefore, the ECPM believes EU should not halt its expansion once the enlargement process has reached the old "Western civilization frontier."

Each European nation, which bases its perspectives on democratic values and respects human rights and the rule of law should be given real chance to join the EU without discrimination. Otherwise, the new iron curtain will part the continent and the aspiring European nations will be left in despair and disillusion. In the longer term, this would gravely damage the interest of the EU. The "enlargement fatigue" should not therefore be a reason to stop the enlargement process, but the EU should invest its best practices and efforts to support the EU European neighbours in their accession endeavours. As mentioned, the EU should promote and encourage diversity, without falling into extreme of cultural relativism but basing its strategy on a principal approach for the sake of United Europe, originating from the same roots and developing under the same roof.

Closing statement

In a time of growing distrust in the European political institutions it is time to reconnect the EU with its peoples and the values they recognise as vital for their personal life and their societies. This requires that these values will be in the core of EU policies and it also requires an explicit connection with the source of these values in order to keep them fresh and strong in our Union. With this program we intend to build these connections and by doing so, helping to build the EU.

Join the ECPM as a party or organisation!

The ECPM invites all like-minded organisations to join the network as member or associate partner. With associate partners the ECPM keeps up with informal relations. The members of the ECPM play an active role in the movement 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 mail. Please note that the application form must be signed by the president of the organisation! The secretariat will contact you after receiving the application and it will give you detailed information about the further application process.

Join the ECPM as an individual politician!

The ECPM welcomes individual elected MPs and provincial councillors as members. As an individual politician you can be a full member and participate actively in the movement. You can register by completing the application form. The secretariat will send you this form and provide you detailed information about the application process.

European Christian Political Youth





1. Crossroads – Raise a new generation, raise the expectations

'Crossroads – Christian Democratic Political Academy' is the ECPYN political Academy, a new step towards lively Christian-Democracy in Europe by shaping the Christian-Democracy leaders of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. The idea to organize such a political training dedicated to young people is definitely an investment in the future. Addressing both theoretical and practical aspect of politics, Crossroads indeed offers to young Christian-Democrats a unique chance to become (even more) successful politicians.

And what is better for receiving training than travelling and meeting experts where they are? During four successive week-ends across the continent (Romania, Croatia, Ukraine and the Netherlands), the participants received a strong basis into Christian-Democratic worldview, principles, policies, and practical skills. Participants between 18 and 35, from 12 different countries, all eager to get ready to spread the Christian-Democratic mindset.

And they did get ready! This achievement was not to be easy, and indeed, much work was expected from them: workshops, presentations, draft policies, etc. Out of the dozens of candidates applying for the Crossroads, 11 of them successfully graduated. They received their certificates in Soest, The Netherlands, in February 2013, from the president of ECPYN; with delegations of ECPM and ECPF as main sponsors present. The first Christian-Democratic Academy Alumni group ever, an historic moment.

Investing in youth is the best thing you can do in politics "Crossroads successfully demonstrates the hope and the determination of ECPYN to raise a new generation of political leaders into Christian-Democracy!" says Denys Dhiver, president of the ECPYN. Last but not least, this political adventure is also a human adventure where friendships build up and community feeling grows. Of course, the story does not end here, and the Crossroads will start again, in October 2013. And again, and again, so far there will be people in Europe to believe in the dignity of the human being and Christian-Democratic values.



2. Morality in Politics

Location: Soes, the Netherlands

Date: 16th – 20th February 2013

Main lecturers:

-Jenne Minnema

-Peter Östman, ECPM president

-and Niels Rijke, former board member of Perspectief

-Johannes de Jong, pastor and manager of the ECPF

-Paul Diamond, British lawyer and involved with the Lobby group Christian Concern

-by Roel Kuiper, Senator of the Dutch political party the ChristianUnion

From 16th until 20th February this third Winterschool on Morality in Politics was held in Soest, the Netherlands. With a representation of participants from 15 different European countries, the participants have had the opportunity to think and discuss about Christian morality in politics.

Who is the 'driver' of your car? This question was asked by the first lecturer on Sunday morning, Jenne Minnema. If you want to use your Christian morals in a political life, God firstly has to live in your heart. Subsequently, Peter Östman and Niels Rijke lectured during the rest of that day. Monday began with a lecture of Johannes de Jong who unfolded relational thinking "we call ourselves individuals, but at the end it is impossible to achieve something without other people". In the afternoon Paul Diamond gave an inspirational lecture. Diamond shared his concerns about the Christian morality in Europe; Christians become more and more a minority every day, and we have to stand up for our rights. He gave several examples of situations in which the Christian rights and freedom are rejected.

The participants did not only attend lectures, they were also active in the several workshops.

Johannes de Jong asked the participants how they could use Christian morals practically by designing a practical proposal for their country.

The evening ended with a political café led by Roel Kuiper, Senator of the Dutch political party the ChristianUnion. There was room to ask questions and to start an open discussion about Christian Morality. Several members of Perspectief, the ChristianUnion-youth, were present and had the opportunity to become acquainted with the ECPYN. The lectures and workshops inspired the participants with new thoughts and gave them the opportunity to share their experiences.

Visit Dutch House of Representatives

Where do Dutch politicians practice their job? Where do their debates take place? Indeed, in the parliament. After talking about politicians it was time to see the workplace of the Dutch politicians. On Thursday a visit to the Dutch House of Representatives in The Hague was planned. The participants had the opportunity to talk with Eimert van Middelkoop, former minister of Defence. Afterwards, a guided tour was arranged as well as a typical Dutch lunch with bread and soup, which was consumed in the Dutch House of Representatives.

Real winter

A winterschool is of course not a real winterschool without cold temperatures. This winterschool ended with a winter-barbeque outside and a campfire. Despite the low temperatures, there was a high rate of active participation in the exchange of political ideas. New friendships were made and the participants had the chance to gather new ideas to bring to their country. The lectures and workshops on Christian morality in politics was an inspiration for the participants for a future with Christian politicians throughout Europe.



3. Sustainability: A Christian-Democratic Approach

Location: Helsinki, Finland

Date: 1st -5th July 2013

Main lecturers:

-Sari Essayah, MEP, EPP

-Souni Suonpää, President of the International Christian Chamber of Commerce- Finland

-Kimmo Lylykangas, architect

-Bruno Erat, architect

-Paavo Järvensivu, researcher

-Marko Keskinen, Water and Development Research Group

-Harri Hakola, Fida International, Executive director & Jouko Jääskeläinen

-Päivi Räsänen, Minister of Interior

The European Christian Political Youth Network organized its 10th International Summer School from July 1st to 5th 2013 on the topic of Sustainability: A Christian-Democratic Approach.

The event was organised in cooperation with the Christian-Democratic Youth of Finland (Kristillisdemokraattiset Nuoret) and gathered around 40 young leaders from 13 different European countries. Through engaging lectures and interactive workshops offered by both Finnish and international experts, participants had the opportunity to exchange ideas and identify solutions to the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability in today's world.

"Christian Democracy has much to say about Sustainability. A truly sustainable approach shall take all dimensions of the human person into consideration. The Christian Democratic focus on Human Dignity makes it possible to understand the big picture: Environmental, but also Social and Economical aspects," said ECPYN President, Denys Dhiver.



4. Between European Union and Customs Union

Location: Kyiv, Ukraine

Date: 5th – 8th December 2013

Main lecturers:

-Inna Panchuk, ECPYN Director of Events

-Auke Minnema, ECPYN Vice-President

-Anna Masna, EDS Vice-Chairwoman and International Secretary of the Ukrainian Students' Association

-Daniel Wisniewski, Regional Director in World Youth Alliance Europe

-Taras Byk, European integration expert

-Oleksandr Golubov, journalist and active leader of EuroMajdan

-Dr. Volodymyr Stretovych, Chairman of the CDU Ukraine

-Stanislav Kutsenko, Chairman of Ukrainian Students' Association

The Regional Conference “Between European Union and Customs Union” of political association of youth organizations “European Christian Political Youth Network” (ECPYN) was organized from December 5-8th, 2013 in Kyiv, Ukraine. The hosting organization was Christian Democratic Union of Ukraine, a full member of “European Christian Political Movement” (ECPM) since 2009. During the Regional Conference participants had an opportunity to get more information on the situation in Ukraine, become a part of this big union and make some conclusions. They could learn about Ukrainian history and experience the Ukrainian soul and values that the Ukrainian nation struggles to keep for years.

The second day of the event participants of Regional Conference started the day with a welcome speech from Inna Panchuk and Auke Minnema who presented ECPYN to the participants. Later on, special guest lecturers were invited such as Anna Masna who gave the lecture “Between Europe and Customs Union” and showed the difference of life from every angle; Daniel Wisniewski with the lecture “Poland as an example of successful European progress”, who showed how joining the EU influenced Poland; Taras Byk who gave the lecture “Foreign policy priorities in the eyes of Ukrainians” and showed statistic data of inquiry of civil opinions; Oleksandr Golubov with the lecture “Civil society” – the curse or blessing for the Ukrainian democracy”. Participants of the event had the opportunity to watch and discuss documentary movie “The Soviet Story” and finished the day in the company of honorary guest – Dr. Volodymyr Stretovych, who told about historical events in Ukraine and how this is related to the latest events

happening in the country, about the political situation inside and the lack of Christian values among powers.

On the third day Stanislav Kutsenko presented a speech on the topic “Ukrainian youth policy and NGO activities towards European values” after which he had an active discussion with participants. After this everybody was able to visit popular places in Ukraine, where there were gathered thousands of Ukrainian and foreign protesters – EuroMajdan - and become a part of this historical event, support Ukraine and experience the atmosphere of peaceful and hospitable Ukrainians fighting for their nation and freedom. Next step, after trying traditional Ukrainian cuisine in a folk restaurant, participant left to explore Kyiv history and had excursion around the city. This helped them to understand the culture of the city and its traditions. The day finished with the evaluation of the event and a Ukrainian Gala dinner.





5. General Assembly 2013

ECPYN members gathered at the General Assembly in Helsinki on July 6th 2013 unanimously elected four new members for the ECPYN Board as it said farewell to its leaving trustees. Representatives from Poland, Ukraine, Romania and Finland have been elected and are now installed as board members in addition to the two members continuing their mandate.

The new ECPYN board thus consists of the following members:

- Denys DHIVER (France, President)
- Auke MINNEMA (The Netherlands, Vice-President and Crossroads Academy Manager)
- Iina MATTILA (Finland, Secretary)*
- Daniel WISNIEWSKI (Poland, Political Secretary)*
- Inna PANCHUK (Ukraine, Director of Events)*
- Eunice VATRAN DUGULESCU (Romania, Director of Communication)*

*New board members elected in Helsinki on July 6th 2013.

“This new team makes us stronger towards not only expanding the impact of our network geographically across Europe, but also in deepening our partnerships in countries already connected to our work. Europe indeed needs a Christian Democratic approach to face current challenges such as social justice and sustainable growth,” stated ECPYN President, Denys Dhiver.

Year Book



2013

Contact Information

General Director - Guido van Beusekom
+31 33 3040011
office@ecpm.info

Office Address
Utrechtseweg 1a
3811 NA Amersfoort
The Netherlands
www.ecpm.info

Director for European Affairs and Policy Advising - Leo van Doesburg
+40 723 987 845
lvdoesburg@ecpm.info

Office Address
205/14 Rue Belliard
1040 Brussels
Belgium
Blog: *www.leovandoesburg.blogspot.com*

Bank Details
Account holder: ECPM
Bank: Rabobank
IBAN: NL 83 RABO 0113870159
BIC (swift code): RABO NL 2U
For countries not using the IBAN-system:
Dutch bank account number: 1138.70.159



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