

Building a Europe of Values

The Contribution of the Catholic Laity



**European Forum of National Laity Committees
Erfurt, 28 June to 3 July 2002**

Imprint

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Introduction

The Liaison Committee is pleased to present this report of the seventeenth Assembly of the European Forum of National Laity Committees which took place in Erfurt, Germany 28th June – 3rd July 2002. Some 100 representatives from 19 national delegations were present together with 30 observers, guests, and visitors from Hungary, Iceland, Greece and Russia; CCEE, and EZA; and from public life and other churches in Germany.

The theme chosen for the Assembly arose in part from ideas which had emerged at the previous Assembly in Spain where there had been some discussion of the contribution of Catholic Social Teaching to European society. This was brought into sharp focus by the concerns expressed by the Pope that the discussions of a European Constitution must be explicit about values and that the Catholic voice must be heard in these discussions. Accordingly it was agreed that the theme should be ‘Building a Europe of Values – The contribution of the Catholic Laity’.

Our guest speakers provided a rich and varied series of papers to enable us to develop this theme. Dr. Marianne Heimbach-Steins showed how Catholic Social Teaching could provide all Europeans with a guide to assist in the construction of a society within which the fundamental tensions of human existence could be addressed. Dr. Franco Garelli argued that by virtue of our spiritual awareness we were in a unique position to help a society marked by profound uncertainty and rapid change. Dr. Beata Farkas set out the role we could play in the public, and more especially the economic domain, to promote unselfishness at grass roots level where our organisations and movements could offer practical demonstrations of the working of Catholic Social Teaching. Jérôme Vignon then turned our attention out to the wider world and exhorted us to confidently offer our values to serve the interests of all. I am certain that this report will provide not only a record of the Assembly but a rich source of ideas for use by National Committees and member organisations.

The Liaison Committee would like to thank all those who worked so tirelessly to make the Assembly such a great success. The staff of ZdK were at the heart of the action; Bishop Wanke and the Catholics of Thuringia were generous in their welcome; the community of the Augustinerkloster were wonderful hosts; and EZA provided valuable financial support. Once again we are indebted to Sigrid Schraml for the production of this report.

Dr. Robert D. Corrins
President

Programme

Meeting of the European Laity Forum

28/06/2002 - 03/07/2002

Erfurt

Building a Europe of Values - the Contribution of the Catholic Laity

(promoted by the European Commission and
the European Centre for Workers' Questions EZA)

Friday, 28-06-2002

Until 19.00 Arrival

20.00-21.30 Reception by the Prime Minister of Thuringia, Dr. Bernhard VOGEL, former President of the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK) - patron of the Study Assembly of the European Laity Forum in Erfurt,
(Staatskanzlei, Regierungsstraße 73)
Dr. Bernhard VOGEL:
Politics and the Principles of Christian Social Doctrine as demonstrated by the rebuilding of Thuringia

Welcome address: Prof. Dr. Hans Joachim MEYER,
President of the ZdK

Thanks: Dr. Robert D. CORRINS,
President of the European Laity Forum

Buffet on invitation of the Prime Minister

Saturday, 29-06-2002

09.00 Mass (**Augustinerkloster**)

Opening Session (Festsaal, Augustinerkloster)

10.00 - Welcome by the President of the European Laity Forum,
Dr. Robert D. CORRINS
- Presentation of the National Committees and guests
- Welcome address: Joachim KAISER, head of the department for
culture of Erfurt, capital of Thuringia

11.00 Lecture 1: Prof. Dr. Marianne HEIMBACH-STEINS, Bamberg
Image of Man and how to shape society – Orientations in the
Social Teaching of the Church
Discussion

- 12.30 Lunch
- 14.00 *Meeting of Workshop Leaders (Augustinerkloster)*
- 14.30 Lecture 2: Prof. Dr. Franco GARELLI, Turine
Are the values of Catholic Social Teaching still
attractive in the future?
 Discussion
- Coffee break
- 16.00-17.30 Workshops on the two lectures (in language groups)
- 18.00 Evening Prayer with the Sisters of the 'Casteller Ring', a Lutheran Community
(Church of Augustinerkloster)
 directed by Sister Ruth
 participation of Dr. Joachim WANKE, Bishop of Erfurt
- 18.30 Informal meeting with Bishop WANKE
- 19.30 International buffet

Sunday, 30-06-2002

- 09.30 Eucharist in **St. Severi (Domberg, next to the cathedral)**
 Bishop WANKE
- 11.00 Guided tour through Erfurt in language groups
 Erfurt: economic, political and cultural centre of Thuringia
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.30-22.30 Excursion to Weimar and Buchenwald (**departure from Augustinerkloster**)
- 14.30 Group I : excursion to Buchenwald and Weimar
 The decline of Christian and humanistic values
 during the nazi period (1933-1945)
- 15.30 Group II : excursion to Weimar
 The era of classicism - its historical and cultural
 development in Central Europe
- Dinner
- 22.30 *Meeting of National Delegations (Augustinerkloster)*

Monday, 01-07-2002

09.00 Morning Prayer (**Chapel of Augustinerkloster**)

09.15-09.45 Plenary session (**Festsaal, Augustinerkloster**)

10.15-12.30 Workshops

1. The world of the Family (school, marriage, children, youth, education...)
2. The world of Creation (science, environment, technology, bioethics...)
3. The world of Work (unemployment, exclusion, globalisation, trade unions...)
4. The world of Social Welfare (health, insurance, pensions, migration...)
5. The world of Politics (Christians in politics, the understanding of policies, legislation...)
6. The world of Culture (media, arts, leisure...)

Coffee break at leisure (11.00-11.45)

13.00 Lunch

15.00-17.00 Workshops

1. The world of the Family (school, marriage, children, youth, education...)
2. The world of Creation (science, environment, technology, bioethics...)
3. The world of Work (unemployment, exclusion, globalisation, trade unions...)
4. The world of Social Welfare (health, insurance, pensions, migration...)
5. The world of Politics (Christians in politics, the understanding of policies, legislation...)
6. The world of Culture (media, arts, leisure...)

Coffee break at leisure (15.45-16.30)

18.00-19.15 Meeting with the Local Laity Committee of the Diocese of Erfurt at the **Coelicum / Domberg**
Topic: the situation of the church in the diaspora
Welcome address by the diocesan council Dr. Christoph ARENHÖVEL,
Weimar

19.30 Evening Prayer

20.15 Dinner

21.00 *Meeting of Workshop leaders and rapporteurs*

Tuesday, 02-07-2002

- 09.00 Morning Prayer (**Chapel of Augustinerkloster**)
- 09.15 Plenary session (**Festsaal, Augustinerkloster**)
- Welcome address: Friederike WOLDT, secretary general of the
Evangelischer Kirchentag, Fulda
On the way towards the Ecumenical Assembly
Berlin 2003
- 09.40 Lecture 3: Dr. Beata FARKAS, Szeged
How can the Catholic laity help to implement Christian
values in European Society ?
Discussion
- 10.45 Coffee break
- 11.15 Lecture 4: Jérôme VIGNON, Brussels
The responsibility of Europe towards the World
Discussion
- 13.00 Lunch
- 15.00 Meeting of National Committees
- 16.30 Plenary session - Reports from National Committees
- 18.30 Eucharist (**Schottenkirche**)
- 20.00 Festive dinner (**Kaisersaal**)
with a Thuringian music group

Wednesday, 03-07-2002

- 09.00 **Concluding Session (Festsaal, Augustinerkloster)**
- Presentation of key elements / impressions of the Forum by
Dr. Robert D. CORRINS, President of the European Laity Forum
- Discussion
- 10.30 Coffee break
- 11.00 Eucharist (**Church of Augustinerkloster**)
- 12.30 Lunch / Departure
- 15.00 **Statutory Assembly**

Lectures

Prof. Dr. Marianne HEIMBACH-STEINS,
Bamberg / Germany

Image of Man and How to Shape Society - Orientations in the Social Teaching of the Church

Our modern societies in Europe convey an ambivalent feeling of being alive: on the one hand, for many individuals they offer a multitude of possibilities how to organise their lives as has never been existent before in the history of human mankind: economic prosperity and a good provision of basic social welfare, respect of fundamental rights, democracy and codetermination to a large extent, worldwide mobility, information and communication facilities. On the other hand, we observe a deepening rift between the well-off and those living in poverty - not only on a world-wide scale but also in our own societies. We are facing a time where social standards are being challenged which have been established in our societies in the course of the 20th century.

Recently, we observe an increasing preparedness to tolerate infringements of fundamental freedoms in favour of actual or supposed security interests. And we are part of a process of growing general uncertainty: ethnic, religious, ideological pluralization is no longer seen only as a gain, but frequently and with priority it is experienced even as a threat to one's own security and identity triggering a reaction of disapproval of everything which is alien, sometimes even a certain willingness to use violence.

In this paper, I intend to formulate four statements describing a horizon of problems and questions to foster reflections about the image of Man and human dignity as well as about the force of orientation provided by social teaching of the church.

a) Challenges for Society Pressing for an Answer: Introductory Statements

I intend to start by looking at the crisis scenarios of our society by outlining four statements:

1. The diverse threats to peace and the manifest war scenarios displayed in many world regions are currently among the profoundest sources of concern and uncertainty for individuals and entire societies all over the globe. Even us, living in Germany and Europe, do not remain unaffected by the disruptions in the Middle East, in Afghanistan, in the Kashmir region, to only name a few examples. Our concern centred on a just peace in the world must therefore form the crucial factor for all reflections and forms of political acting: it is this concern which forces us into a clear discernment of the dramatic inequalities in opportunities in life and the trend towards increased injustice. The gap between (absolute) poverty and immense wealth is widening. This is a continuous elementary offence against human dignity of the poor and a source for conflict and violence: There is a link between propensity to violence and world-wide fighting related to the allocation of land, vital goods, economic and

political power. This results into the question as to which *philosophy of succeeding human life and peace* is the basis for our way of acting.

2. Currently in many Western-European countries, there seems to be a crisis of the democratic culture. It manifests itself among others in a clear political shift to the right. This development is probably linked to the afore mentioned general uncertainty and fear of the diverse elements which are alien to us and which we view as a threat. The underlying reason, however, is a profound problem of culture and education with manifold consequences: in an open society, security cannot be gained on a permanent basis by blocking oneself off against the outer world, nor can it be achieved by calling for measures in the sector of the police and security forces. It is essential to form and foster firm cultural, ideological and religious identities; they are an indispensable prerequisite for a peaceful coexistence where individuals live together, meet and bring about integration in an open pluralistic society. The question as to the *ideal situation of living-together of human beings*, of the *philosophy of a just society* needs to be discussed.

3. For many people, just another source of uncertainty lies in the reduction of social standards of the welfare state which becomes visible in many highly developed societies. Economic interests and the demand to strengthen the individual sense of responsibility of the people are arguments brought forward to support this development. It is of course of vital importance to support each and every individual's strife to act as mature citizen able to assume responsibility for his/her own matters. This, however, leads into conflicts if, due to a loss of social stability, the perception of responsibility is not supported but impeded. It is the reason why the gap between those people in our societies who are well-off and those who are in need is further widening. This area of conflicts and problems brings us to the issue as to how to define the *relationship between the individual and society*.

4. A fourth area of conflict relates to the increasing discrepancy between the expectations and the esteem shown vis-à-vis human life. We are faced with immense and rapid development processes in the medical-technical capabilities to perfect human life. This does not only apply to opportunities in the treatment and care of diseases, but also to the early diagnosis of disabilities and diseases in the prenatal stage. And yet, this upward trend in the scope of capabilities also presents a dangerous backside. The conviction that the value of human life is not based on factors such as good health, disease or special needs is not generally shared. The pressure exerted on parents to only give birth to healthy and fit babies is increasing.

In the same way, there is a rising trend to put pressure on elderly people to finish their lives if they are no longer capable of meeting certain standards of social usefulness or "normality". Often, this pressure is hidden behind an apparently very humane face, the call for the right to determine one's moment of death. All of these trends show an insidious way of challenging the right to life at the beginning and at the end, a risk to the most fundamental of all human rights, and in the end a breach of one of the pivotal foundations of a European culture which is marked by Christian values and ideas. The questions which spring to mind immediately are questions referring to the *image of Man* and to the *basis of human dignity*.

These issues are the starting point for the following reflections:

b) The "Christian Image of Man" as a Possible Means for Interpretation and Orientation

Part of the fundamental orientations of every moral code is the idea of the human being as a subject of actions reflecting high moral standards and as an individual assuming moral responsibility. Christians therefore continue to refer to the "Christian image of Man". Yet, the formula as such reveals little about the special character of the image of Man. It is necessary to take a closer look at the points of orientation which can be identified in this image. But we should bear in mind that there is nothing like a catalogue of predefined contents from which certain elements can be retrieved, but only certain points of reference which can be used.

An image of Man - just like a portrait painting - is no "true-to-life reproduction". Nor does it contain a "once and for ever" clear statement as to the innate character of the individual. It rather offers scope for interpretation. It is marked by certain patterns pertaining to a perception of the world, by religious or philosophical beliefs and by historical experience. Therefore, there is nothing like the Christian image of Man in general. There are, however, manifold attempts to discern, against the background and in the light of Christian fundamental experience and beliefs, what makes up human dignity and being a human individual. Thus, a horizon of elements is opened up, enabling the development of forms of human life in society and challenging these developments by taking a critical standpoint. Supportive factors are a number of fundamental coordinates which can be derived from the biblical-Christian belief in God and from the world experience reflected in the bible. They are coining Christian images related to human beings. I would like to describe them in five tension curves between the poles of which human life attempts to find its interpretation and meaning. To keep this tension at the same level of intensity without dissolving or losing it to one side or the other can be seen as the criterion of orientation pertaining to the Christian image of Man.

1. Pending between owing thanks as creature and being autonomous

In the biblical-Christian horizon of interpretation, it can be inferred from the relationship with the creative God what it means to be a human being: As a creature, the human being has not simply been "thrown" into its being, but it is held up and supported in the entire variety of its existence by an originator, who, kindly disposed towards his creation, accompanies it on its way. This sets a presign for all further elements of interpretation. Such a way of coming into being, which involves a sense of owing thanks as creature, is an empowerment to being autonomous and able to assume responsibility. It confronts the individual with the challenge to shape his/her world actively and in a responsible manner, to take one's life into one's hands and to lead it in the sense of one's best capabilities and in relation to other individuals.

2. Pending between individualism and integration into a social context

According to the Christian belief, every human life is unique and distinctive. At the same time, it is integrated into and dependent on a human community and society. This tension is part of the structuring basic features of the notion of person as interpreted in a Christian way. The "notion of person" is a central instrument for the social teaching of the church in order to describe the Christian image of Man. It is based on the idea of everything coming from the same origin and the continuous tension between individualism and integration into a social context. Thereby, any attempts of interpretation which either reduce the human existence into individuality, at the expense of the capacity to enter into relationship, or which restrain it to

mere collectivism, at the expense of individuality and autonomy of Man, have to be rejected. This implies consequences for the interpretation of the classical social principles of subsidiarity and solidarity as well as for their mutual assignment. Any biased determinations of the relations have to be criticised right from the outset. This is as much true for the principle of solidarity which demands social justice, as for the principle of subsidiarity which mainly serves to guarantee freedom.

3. Pending between capability to form relations and need to form relations

In the idea of the social character of human existence as such, an additional tension becomes tangible. Human beings are capable of forming inter-personal relationships and of building up societies jointly. On the other hand, they are equally dependent on experiencing inter-personal and social support. Both notions are closely linked to the fact that the individual consists not only of mind, but also of body. This presents a boundary, but also an opportunity to the human being. It would be short-sighted to interpret the social sphere only as a form of need, as a compensation for human imperfection or weakness. Such a perspective would allow for a certain level of dependency to be admissible for children, persons with diseases or special needs, the elderly and the weak. However, the ideal and objective of all human development and education would then be "autonomy", seen as total independence of all other individuals.

Whoever takes the message that God has become human being - flesh - as a starting point, would not stay with such a deficit-oriented (and individualistic) interpretation. Beside the dependency on others, experienced by every human being from their birth onwards, there is the equally essential experience related to the capability of forming inter-personal relationships which needs to be cultivated. This is one of the crucial consequences derived from the tension between individuality and the fact of being bound into a social context, both based on the idea of everything coming from the same origin. It contains a significant option of value for the interpretation of the social principle of solidarity. For debates related to the future of social security systems and for the ethical evaluation of the principle of the welfare state, this presents an important means of orientation.

4. Pending between responsible freedom and propensity to become guilty

In all three spheres of tension outlined above, the polarity between reasonable and responsible freedom and propensity to become guilty, of capability to be guilty and to make mistakes becomes visible. It is one of the factors shaping human life. The empowerment to freedom opens up space and scope for action and manoeuvre having an impact on the world. It challenges us to assume responsibility, to proceed to decision-making processes based on dialogue and reflective considerations in order to set the main directions for our own life and for processes within society. All this, though, is influenced by the ambivalence of possible failure. Human motivations and intentions are not always pure by nature. They are likely to be subject to negative influences, and corruptible. Any Christian understanding of the individual is a realistic one. It departs from the idea that this propensity cannot be overcome in our earthly life. This is the underlying meaning of the theological theory of the original sin. In particular in regard to social, scientific and political developments of far-reaching importance - such as for ex. in the field of bio-technology - it is helpful to bear this recognition in mind. Because it can encourage us to proceed cautiously and to choose options presenting less risk potential.

5. Pending between self-transcendence and mortality

Each human life approaches death. Any Christian understanding interposes the experience of finiteness and mortality with the capability of transcendence and the hope for redemption in a context of tension. The skill to become sufficiently detached from oneself and not to literally exhaust oneself in the daily activities and duties has always been characterised by the omen of the perspective of death valid for every human life. The Christian faith, however, can take up the first basic context of tension between owing thanks as creature and being autonomous which exists in human life. The belief in a good Creator-God does not only make superfluous the question as to the "why" of the experience of suffering and death. There is no easy answer to this question under the vast horizon of meanings of biblical experience of God and their Christian interpretations. Rather is it kept unanswered under lamentations in the hope to reach this God who has made himself common with the human experience of suffering and death. God does not interfere as a force putting us off. Literally everything within our means rather has to be done on his behalf in order to overcome any injustice which causes misery. At the same time, however, every individual which is suffering must absolutely be protected and promoted in his inalienable human dignity.

Conclusion: Human dignity as a means of orientation

There is a deeper meaning of the abstract term of "human dignity", seen against the background of a Christian interpretation, shimmering through these different contexts of tension. The term, used like a burning glass, concentrates various perspectives. Being a human being means to lead an existence which is owing thanks as creature, which has been freed into autonomous and self-responsible acting, but which is also finite and endangered. Due to the fact that this existence is owing thanks and accepted by God despite its propensity to become guilty, it, in the end, withdraws from the final availability by us, the human beings themselves. This is the reason why dignity of human beings is inalienable.

But: can such a way of interpreting human existence contribute to moral mutual understanding in a pluralistic society? The Christian image of Man has been shaped by strong prerequisites which are by far not shared by all members of our societies. Contents such as the destiny of the individual as a creature disclose themselves only against the horizon of the biblical belief in God. In no means do they become manifest just "by themselves". And yet, there are points of reference available even for those individuals who feel indifferent towards the Christian denomination. Because even in the Christian image of Man some general and fundamental human forms of experience (for ex. capability to form inter-personal relations and the inter-dependence between human beings, a propensity to become guilty, mortality) are taken up in an interpretative manner. They are considered to be essential when fighting the risk of seeing the definition and interpretation of human beings and human dignity in a simplifying way. There are good arguments for this even without any religious rooting. For example, one could argue: The right to life of those who are suffering, who are ill or who have special needs must not be challenged. Because on grounds of general experience these dimensions of life are indisputably part of all human beings in such an elementary way that each and every one of us has to reckon to find himself/herself in a similar situation sooner or later. And who does not want to be assured, in particular in a situation of weakness and threat to one's life, that there is a guarantee of the society to protect his/her life even in such a situation, or even more so, in an unconditional way? This shows that reasonable arguments

for the protection of human life are quite accessible, and they can be linked to a Christian perspective of the situation.

The Christian model of interpretation, though, goes one step further, and that makes up for its provocative character: the absolute unshakable character of human existence, or in other words: unavailable and inalienable human dignity is anchored in a reality which, by nature, goes far beyond the individual and which is therefore out of reach of the individual's availability. The individual is not the last, but "only" the second but last stage. The unavailability of human dignity has been preserved even in modern legal systems as a basis of common consensus. Developments such as the one outlined above, however, display the fragility and vulnerability of the consensus in an all too clear manner. Against this background, many approaches such as the line of arguments based on the Christian understanding of man may appear to be somewhat old-fashioned, but gain indeed a highly up-to-date, and even prophetic, meaning: they can help to secure standards of humanity. Notwithstanding this recognition, rhetoric conjurations alone will not suffice. All talking has to be ratified by means of the corresponding practical application!

The context of tensions between the requirements of a mutual agreement about social values under general conditions of pluralism and a strong ideological-religious position as represented by referring to the "Christian image of Man" can therefore not be denied. Despite that, this understanding has got the chance to become effective, as long as it proves to be reasonable. It is true, this is not possible by solely using theoretical lines of arguments. It may reveal to be more important to guarantee that all priorities with regard to values anchored in the image of Man become effective in the societal-social acts of Christians. It will be decisive whether it can be achieved to turn the orientation towards a "Christian image of Man" into an everyday practice (of players on the church, society, political level) which serves the vital interests in life of all individuals. If that can be achieved, even the religious line of arguments, which is so full of prerequisites, will find recognition as a serious option, or even as a necessary provocation. We would then find that its lack would have to mean a loss of humanity in modern society.

c) Socio-Ethical Perspectives for the Shaping of Society

Referring to the "Christian image of Man" thus releases indeed certain orientations of political relevance - although it does not by itself suggest solutions to practical problems. This means that even on this basis debates still have to be led and struggles fought. In doing this, the image of Man and its context of tensions can be taken as an assessment criterion for possible initiatives leading to a resolution of the problems, and as a corrective tool used to exclude certain options of manoeuvre as being incompatible. It is a regulative idea, not a standard for action. It is the task of all Christians and their churches to include this regulative idea into the public debate in such a way that its force of orientation can be perceived as useful for current debates. The social teaching of the church offers valuable assistance in this respect.

Based on the statements I have used in the first part of my talk in order to outline a scenario of current socio-political challenges we have come up with four fundamental questions:

- The question as to which philosophy of succeeding human life and of peace serves as an orientation for our way of acting.
- The question as to the idea of a just society.

- The question as to how to determine the relationship between the individual and society.
- The question as to the image of Man and to the basis of human dignity.

In the second part of my talk I have tried to illustrate an answer to the last of these questions by having recourse to biblical and Christian-socio-ethical orientations. This now enables us to draw up perspectives for responses also for the first three questions.

About the relationship between the individual and society:

In the light of Christian understanding of human kind and its dignity, the idea of individuality and dependency on a social context as being of the same origin has been revealed. This view incorporates a critical meaning vis-à-vis various conceptions of society and political strategies. This is true in a two-fold respect:

Unbalanced relation between individuality and sociality may favour unilateral individualistic and liberalistic political concepts and has the power of fostering a minimalist interpretation of solidarity exclusively as giving "assistance to those who are weak". As a consequence, we are facing a considerable reduction of social obligations formerly taken over by the welfare state, and a deepening rift between the wealthy and the poor. Such a strategy is incompatible with the idea of the Christian image of Man. On the other hand, any over-stressing of sociality can result into a situation where low regard is expressed for individual freedom and responsibility, can take away rights from independent citizens and undermine the principle of subsidiarity. This is the risk of a welfare state which gets out of hand, which takes care about the citizens in a paternalistic way, and which simultaneously deeply interferes with individual privacy and freedoms. The capability of each individual to autonomously control their affairs, to make preventive provisions and to design their life would inevitably be wasted away under such circumstances. What would also be wasted away in a parallel process are the capability and willingness to commit oneself to the entire whole of society, and to perceive the joint future as a task and obligation of each individual.

In face of these two threats the social teaching of the church emphasises: Not only is solidarity to be interpreted in the light of subsidiarity, but also against the "ineradicable misunderstanding" [...], the community were allowed to intervene, temporarily or as an alternative, only where the forces of the individual fail", it has to be guaranteed that "long before [...] the community [has] to perform preservices by which it only creates the prerequisite for a situation in which the individual (or the inner community) can subsist or become active." This is an essential orientation for the future of any model presented by the social state for our societies as well as in the field of foreign assistance and development co-operation.

About the idea of a just society

In the framework of the social teaching of the church the idea of a just society is expressed in the idea of social justice. The pivotal point here is the relation between just economic allocation and socio-political participation. One criterion which can be derived from this for a policy of social justice is the demand not to play off justice of allocation against justice of participation, but to combine them with each other in a constructive relation. In most societies there is a considerable unevenness in the allocation of material resources. This clearly shows

that it remains necessary to point to justice of allocation as a normative demand for achieving social justice which cannot be abandoned. This does not only refer to the allocation of income, but also to the even less balanced distribution of wealth.

At the same time, justice of participation must be perceived as an independent aspect in the model of social justice. This concept stresses "that the people are obliged to contribute actively and productively to the life of society, and that the society is responsible for providing them with the opportunity of such a participation." That is the way how the economic pastoral published by the U.S. American bishops has formulated it. In this pastoral, the aspect of justice of participation has been particularly stressed. This means: the demand for justice of participation emphasises the necessary mutual relation between the responsibility of the individual person to take part in the shaping of processes and decision-making within society, and the responsibility of the community to enable such participation in freedom.

Furthermore, it is part of the destination of social justice and its impact as a principle of shaping society to take into consideration the rights and opportunities of the subsequent generations. The rights and obligations of those who, in the future, will be affected by decisions which are taken in present time must be represented in the current political process by appropriate representatives. Again and again "the question needs to be raised to what extent the individuals affected are present during the negotiations. Because the structural balance of power is mirrored in terms of rights of participation".

Social justice aims at the realization of the public interest. The public interest asks for the best possible realization of those social framework conditions which enable all members of a society to pursue a development of their individual personality together with the other members of the society. This means that, as a further criterion for any adequate understanding of social justice, the question as to the addressees needs to be put forward. Responsibility for the public interest is indisputably the central task of the state which, in the end, bases its legitimacy on this factor according to the understanding of Christian social teaching of the church. In the same way, it must be insisted that the demand for social justice does by no means only put challenges to the state, but that it places obligations and duties individually and equally onto the available forces of society and onto the individual citizens of a community.

About the idea of succeeding human life and peace

Part of a succeeding human life are also all possibilities to satisfy basic needs and to develop individual skills. These are demands of justice. If these demands are violated in a lasting and serious way, it means that respect of human dignity is missing, and a source for conflict and violence is opened. If those in need do not get what they are entitled to in the name of justice in terms of goods and rights of participation, they will take it by force, if necessary. This consideration shows: the threat to peace is no natural disaster, but has always got to do with situations of injustice created by humans. Conflict does not only start where war breaks out. And the other way around: there is no peace yet only because the guns have fallen silent. A "just peace" as a final perspective, a theory which has been formulated in very clear terms by the social doctrine namely recently, demands a lot more:

Peace between peoples, between groups and ethnic entities cannot be brought about and maintained lastingly (solely) with military means. In order to achieve this objective all

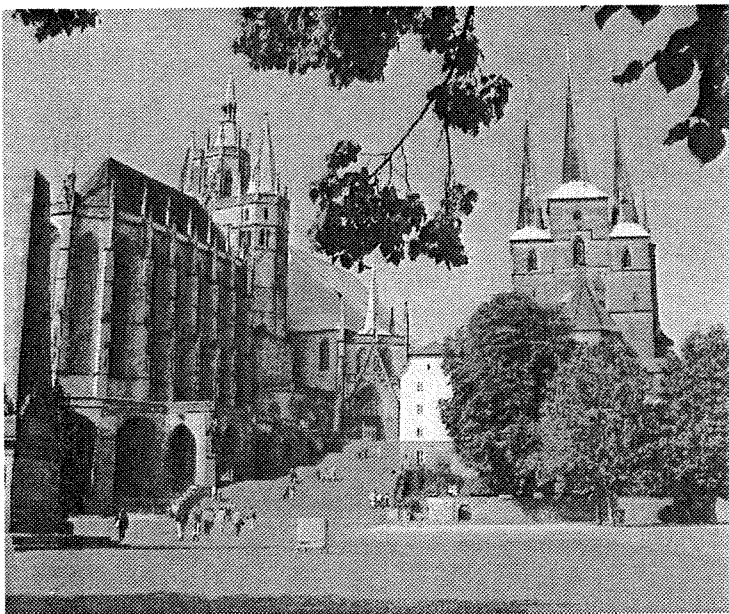
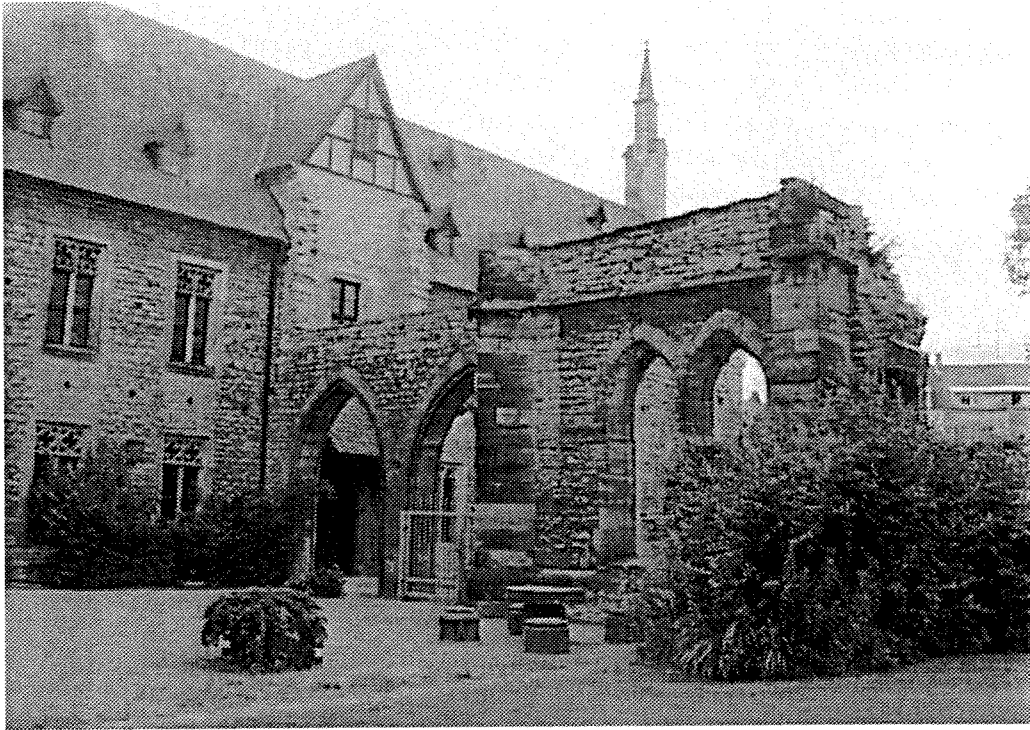
sources nourishing a potential of a propensity to use force have to be dried up. Misery and distress, extreme economic and political inequalities, chronic violation and/or disrespect of human dignity and fundamental human rights of individual persons, groups of persons or entire peoples, the destruction of self-esteem and identity - all situations and ways of conduct which deprive any person profoundly and lastingly of their elementary rights of life and development of their individual skills - are forms of violence by nature and sources of conflict which must be combated if there is to be a peaceful co-existence and a cheerful future worthwhile living in.

The social preaching of the church and the Christian social ethics therefore repeatedly emphasize that any development policy, any strives for a just world order and for a legal and political world order have to be oriented towards the primacy of the human person, the respect of the dignity of each individual human being.

Therefore, long-term strategies focussing on the fight against poverty, on the promotion of independent development, on the strengthening of the rule of law and democracy, on the respect and enforcement of fundamental human rights, on inter-cultural and inter-religious understanding must have political priority. In addition, the building-up of an international court of justice has to be pushed forward in a decisive manner - as an instrument to further the "rule of law" on a world-wide scale.

In particular, since the ideas of individuals related to a good life differ so widely, material and non-material conditions for all to participate in the resources of our planet earth and in the tasks of shaping our world have to be ensured. This is the only way of creating the necessary prerequisites for human beings to live together in peace and in a climate of mutual understanding between different cultures. Respect of freedom and demands of justice must be put into practice for each human individual in a way that mutual understanding as a basic requirement for human dignity will not remain an empty formula. Only if this succeeds is there a chance for peace within a society and world-wide. Only then can be put into practice what is part of the core statements of social teaching of the church, namely that the human being is and must be origin, upholder and objective of all institutions in society, as formulated by the pastoral constitution of the Second Vatican Council.

(original: German)



Are the values of Catholic Social Teaching still attractive in the future ?

I feel that we are all convinced of the difficulties involved when reflecting about this topic and about the following questions: how to take advantage of the values of the social teaching of the church to the benefit of the future of Europe and of the world? Which contribution can be made by the faithful, members of the laity, to the construction of Europe which undergoes profound changes, full of tension and contradictions?
These questions necessarily lead us to other problems.

Has the social teaching of the church the necessary means at its disposal to respond to the problems emerging in Europe in this historic moment? And, at the same time, can it avoid to confine itself to its own sphere, and can it instead take on its international role without backing away from its responsibilities resulting from the richness of its history and culture, from its advantages in the economic, productive and technological areas as compared to other peoples and continents?

1. Challenges in Europe

In order to give at least some answers to these questions we, first of all, have to analyse the current situation in Europe. This is the ground on which we have to base our vocation of being members of the laity in the world and witnesses of the faith and the novelty of the message we have received.

The “project Europe” currently undergoes a special situation and experiences particular tensions. According to several experts and observers, at the beginning of the European adventure there were individuals capable of integrating their ideas into the line of the history. They first worked for economic integration, later they have embarked onto the idea of political integration. Twenty years ago, “the first direct elections to the European Parliament took place”, while in these last years – after a series of several treaties – “an increasing co-operation in the sectors of social policy, labour market, immigration, police, judiciary, foreign policy, security and defence issues” has been developed. (1)

A comparable development – though slower and less clear – is in the making on the level of common values. I.e. for example, the Charter of Fundamental Rights was drawn up at the Summit of Nice.

50 years after its birth, Europe now finds itself at a cross-roads in its very existence, and this for various reasons. First, it is in the process of opening up its borders to more than 10 new countries, mainly from central and eastern Europe, and another 15-18 countries are knocking at the door of the Union. If all are accepted, the European “family” will enlarge to ca. 500 million citizens, living on a territory stretching out from the Atlantic ocean to the Russian Federation, from the North sea to the Mediterranean sea.

The enlargement of the borders offers new resources and perspectives. At the same time, however, it requires a re-definition of relations, breaks up old balances, and implies new responsibilities and tensions which are closely linked to a true exercise of democracy. It should be stressed that those countries waiting at the doorstep are less developed in economic terms: their integration will not be possible without any costs.

Europe is also faced with another challenge: the weak links of many citizens with this very Europe. After a life-span of 50 years, we are currently observing a decline in identification of many citizens in Europe. Up to some point, this situation seems to be natural. In any social relations, after a period of “statu nascenti” where great enthusiasm prevails, this is followed by a period of consolidation and reflection about the interests at stake. And yet, in some countries the idea of Europe has had more difficulties to become enrooted, and is still repeatedly challenged.

2. Problems of integration

The weakening of relations between the citizens and the European institutions may result from several factors.

a) Institutions which are closer to the citizens

A certain feeling of general discomfort among the citizens vis-à-vis the European institutions can be observed, which became visible even during the Summit of Laeken. A large number of Europeans shares the objectives of building the House of Europe. They do, however, not see the link between these goals and daily policy making of the EU. The citizens wish to deal with institutions which are closer to them, paying more attention to their concrete problems, institutions which are less rigid and operate in a less bureaucratic way. Too many decisions seem to be taken over the citizens' heads without giving them the opportunity to participate in the decisions-making process as such.

Traces of this growing disaffection can clearly be seen in many countries where abstention, a lack of confidence and trust into the institutions, and the questioning of the mediating function of politics are spreading. Traditional political parties, those who have built this Europe, appear to be too stale and trapped in the crisis of the welfare state, and therefore – in the era of communication – “the democracy of political parties” leads to a “democracy of the public” based on direct relations between the leader and the electorate.

In this context, the recent electoral success of political factions in France, the Netherlands and Italy promoting anti-European programmes – which also take the bureaucrats as one of their targets – is a clear symptom of this institutional discontent. Despite this, social participation is not completely missing in Europe. Many demands are processed via voluntary associations and small groups which seem capable of dealing with concrete problems and which serve as platforms where people find answers to their need of having an identity and social links.

b) Another problem relates to the difficulties of democracy in the era of globalisation. Interests at stake, such as the BSE mad cow disease, international financial crises, changes in the labour market, decisions in the field of bio-ethics and genetic engineering, the ecological crisis, immigration, the crisis of the welfare state, etc., give evidence of the fact that nowadays many major problems have gained an international dimension and cannot be mastered any longer at the level of the Nation states.

c) In addition, an increasing demand in security can be felt. The EU may appear to be too weak in order to respond to this demand, whereas the states have to manage tensions and conflicts linked to pluralism.

Here, a paradox situation in contemporary Europe becomes tangible. Today, people have much more resources at their disposal than in the past. But at the same time, they live with the fear of being deprived of these resources. Currently, many countries are dominated by a demand for law and order, and security. In such a climate, a consensus for nationalist and local political formations is spreading, as well as campaigns for defence and ostracism of immigrants.

The demand for security is certainly a perverse effect of globalisation, and in the imagination of the Europeans it is caused by the question of Islam, on the political, economic and social level rather than in the religious sphere. After the events of September 11th in the U.S., this problem has become even more acute because of an equation which is spreading among the European peoples: “Muslim immigrant = terrorist”. The real problem, however, is a lack of integration of a large number of Islamic immigrants into our European societies where they show a tendency of building their own communities, sometimes shut off against the outer world and consisting solely of faithful Islamic people.

d) Finally, the weakening of the European idea may be linked to a lack of strategic vision. The tensions and problems characterising a certain epoch can only be resolved by means of strategic projects and visions.

Europe is therefore pondering about its own roots, about its memory, about its cultural and moral resources in order to be able to tackle the new challenges of living together in one society.

To give Europe a soul, this is a recurrent question. The metaphor of a soul refers to the necessity of a key idea, a collective ethos, a set of shared values, a “civil religion” serving as a common point of reference beyond different cultural, ethnic and religious origins. We need principles which work like a collective cement, raising the awareness of us, the Europeans, for our resources and the role we have to play on a world-wide scale.

Can Europe really fulfil the role of serving as a laboratory where a new model of society is developed, a model which is able to be a synthesis between the best components of capitalism and of socialism? A large share of the geo-political role of Europe during this century is derived from this question.

3. Current significance of the social teaching of the church

How can the different European social groups make their individual contribution to the common cause? And which support can be offered by the Catholics – referring to the social teaching of the church – to the task of building a Europe of values?

It seems to me that within the set of texts of the social teaching of the church there is no organic reflection in regard to the European question. And yet, one finds many interventions and statements of the church related to this issue which refer to ideas of the Christian way of thinking. Indirectly, several reflections of the magisterium ecclesialis about the topics of democracy and social justice can be applied to the current process under way. Repeatedly, the Pope has expressed his disappointment in regard to the non-existence of any reference to the Christian roots of Europe in the Charter of Fundamental Rights. One should not interpret this disappointment as a threat to the laity: one can indeed accept the logic of pluralism and, at the

same time, recognise the contribution of Christianity to the building of Europe. There are, though, public debates in which the superior hierarchical levels of the church (the Pope, the bishops, the Episcopal conference, etc.) urge Europe to use as their source of inspiration principals and values based on the central significance of the individual, on a commitment in solidarity, on the respect of the principle of subsidiarity, and on the construction of a common good.

These appeals to use the principle of the social teaching of the church appear to be still of topical significance and represent the synthesis of values which the Catholics try to stress and maintain even in our advanced modernity, in order to give heart and soul to our contemporary society.

There is, above all, a certain way of seeing the individual, the one suggested by the Christian personalism. To speak about the individual means to refer to an image of Man which is not only embedded in individualism or in materialism, nor in a vision focussing on mass or collectivist ideas.

The image of Man makes reference to a free human being, entitled to certain rights, but also assuming duties, who blossoms out in his social relations with others, and who has to contribute actively to the construction of the community.

This human being forms the heart of society, and represents the point of reference and final objective of all actions carried out in all structures and by all organisations of society; with the final goal to give to anyone the opportunity to develop to his full.

Another very important principle is the one of the common good representing the criterion and the objective of any political acting. In order to respect and foster the dignity of Man it is necessary to create social conditions empowering all individuals and groups to develop to their full. The subjects of the common good are all members of a society, in particular the weakest and poorest of these members who are less than all others capable of satisfying their needs and furthering their dignity.

This principle is not limited to the local level. Any action carried out for the good of a state shall also take into consideration the good of other nations. Thus, it fosters the common good of the entire family of human beings. In this context, the role of public authorities needs to be stressed, but also the role of the family, of intermediary groups, of social and professional categories, of all those who are assuming responsibility in different social circles (economic, on the production side, legal, educational, in the area of communication, etc.).

Closely linked to the idea of the common good is the principle of solidarity which presents itself as a mutual responsibility, a commitment of all vis-à-vis the problems. First and foremost, solidarity can be seen as a certain lifestyle, using the terms of welcoming others and sharing with them. The social teaching of the church has outlined several sets of guidelines referring to this principle. Namely, for example, the realisation of the principle of a universal purpose of all goods, the practical implementation of the idea of a social function of private property, of aid and support for those in need not only by using surplus goods, but also by using what we need ourselves.

At the international level, this implies to modify the north-south relations of the world, to cancel international debts of the least developed countries, not to take possession of their resources, not to impose on them a model of development which subordinates them to the wealthiest countries, to supply them with education and technology which is indispensable for genuine development, etc.

Complementary to the principle of solidarity is also the idea of subsidiarity. Based on this principle, every social subject (the individuals, families, associations, institutions, the state, the international community) have got duties and a sphere of competence of their own where they are entitled to operate in an autonomous way without other individuals acting as a substitute for them.

According to this philosophy, for example the upbringing and education of children is a task of the family. The state, which in turn is also called upon to promote general education and training of its citizens, must not challenge this function. In the same way, the vitality of a society is linked to the capability of its citizens, groups, associations, enterprises, local authorities to exercise specific functions according to their area of competence. It is important in particular for the Nation state to acknowledge the autonomy of these realities. It favours the decentralisation of its functions, and its major responsibility consists in regulating the actions of all its subjects to the benefit of the common good.

This very principle can even be applied to international relations. It is essential that the international communities observe general equilibriums and that, in a parallel effort, they respect the autonomy of the different Nation states.

4. The contribution of the Catholics to a Europe of values

After all, we must underline that the social teaching of the church has got a role to play in the process of the building of Europe. Two elements, yet, need to be taken into consideration.

The social teaching of the church was conceived in a historical context and for a society which differed largely from today's society. Therefore it needs to be revised and adapted to our contemporary situation. Beyond this, the social teaching is a pool of principles and values: it is the task of the laity working around the globe in the worldly sphere (as confirmed by this very social teaching) to interpret these principles and values and transfer them into practice in everyday life and in all social relations.

Our faith offers us a vast horizon of meanings, criteria for discernment and an anthropological perspective: but it remains the task of all those committed to these ideas world-wide to identify the best choice and the most recommended programmes to transfer these values into practice. This is a mediating ethic-anthropological-political effort, one of the most difficult and urgent tasks for all Christians of today. Of course, we should not confine this task to Christians alone, it is shared by other cultural spheres.

The thought of the British sociologist Anthony Giddens, the attempts to compare the political experience of the European socialist parties and the liberal American ones launched by Tony Blair, the efforts to newly define the welfare state, which have emerged in Europe during the '90s, are only some examples of a fragmented dynamism, vague, but real, which is trying to define a new model of society for Europe. At the moment, this definition can only be a negative one, listing what the model is not like, or what it will not be like. We do not want to call it a "third way", only because this expression has been misused in the past. The term does not convey the meaning which Europe currently needs.

The commitment of the Catholics can only be deployed within these different attempts to clarify the situation while fully accepting the pluralist dynamism. In this process, the Catholics can take advantage of a heritage of values, findings, experience, holiness, culture, which needs to be brought up to date and utilized for the common good.

1. The social teaching of the church is inspired by a great equilibrium. The human being is a subject characterised by specific needs (labour, interests, body, leisure) but also by spiritual and transcendental demands, either by rights or by duties, by qualities which need to be developed, or by responsibilities. At the social level, the social teaching confirms the right to private property, while at the same time supporting the principle of the universal purpose of goods. The church, furthermore, recognises the function of profit-making, of enterprises and the market, but remains cautious so that these historical structures only aim at supporting the development of man, without producing inequalities or conflicts.

This anthropological concept of man, which is so full of harmony, can be taken as the basis for our proposal, as Europeans, of a “model of a balanced society, capable of reconciling economic happiness and solidarity. Our happiness and our way of living are indeed strictly linked to the equilibrium of growth, social justice and protection of the environment”. (2)

I am aware of the weak character of the word “equilibrium” today in certain strata of the European population. They have developed radical reactions vis-à-vis national or international problems, or simply by strongly putting their special interests to the fore.

In concrete terms, this means that a society with a better balance could be characterised by a financial policy which would include a major vital space for “public companies”, enterprises with a very large number of shareholders, as part of a market which is regulated in such a way that financial scandals, such as the Enron affair in the U.S., can be avoided, but without curbing the growth of companies; monopoly situations – whether of political, economic, or cultural nature – would be less likely to occur in a society where this equilibrium is a strong key idea; in such a society, ethic investment funds, ethic banks or the small and medium size enterprises would find a less hostile environment. It would not be an obligation to suppress the political opponent, and more weight would be given to the reduction of any form of radicalism and conflict. The search for such an equilibrium between the different groups and cultures would then be a normal standard in pluralist societies, where it would become an efficient method of how to manage complexity. And still, this paper has only outlined some examples.

We, of course, have to avoid the risk that the concept of an equilibrium is an empty box which can be filled by the politician, the business man or the journalist as they wish and according to the circumstances. Degeneration is always possible. But one method to avoid it is to define the concept of the equilibrium in a better way.

2. The Christian faith encourages the faithful to commit themselves to the building up of basic social relations. These relations form the origin of the vitality of any society and are relatively autonomous in relation to politics as well as to the economy. The goal is to strengthen the civil society in each Nation state and to make it grow also in the European relations by means of constructing a network of associations, professional categories, local realities, groups of experts, etc. The civil society can be a privileged place where the new model of society needed by Europe could be built.

The Catholics have always been well integrated into local realities, based on a model of the church which is founded on being deeply enrooted on site, and which wants to fill basic social relations with life. This way of being present has to be re-enforced, in particular in times when collective references seem to be missing and when social insecurity is rampant.

The civil society is a platform where the citizens acquire basic attitudes, where they can develop primary solidarity, where they learn to reflect about situations, form for themselves a feeling of where they come from and where they belong to, and where they gather experience

in living a social life. If these basic experiences are positive, the subjects are able to develop positive attitudes in their social presence in general. If, in the contrary, school, family associations, pressure groups, etc, do not present a form of positive social experience, in the long term the drift towards individualism and the fascination for populism and demagogy will prevail.

It has been said that a true and genuine civil society is the essential basis for a democracy.(3) The Catholics are particularly predisposed to work in society in a positive manner, thus strengthening basic relations, showing strong commitment in the sectors of education, training and health care, and playing a mediating role in any conflict.

3. Our Christian inspiration and the social teaching of the church are suitable to remind Europe as a whole of the values of sharing resources and showing a sense of solidarity. At first, these values have to be put into practice within the European borders. But then they should also be “exported” reminding Europe of its international role.

A new geo-political context is being drawn up. It is characterised by the presence of only one military super-power: the United States of America, and of at least three economic powers: the U.S., China in Asia, and Europe. If Europe wants to play its role, it needs to have clear ideas in regard to the model of society it wishes to present to the world. Europe must confront itself with the American individualistic capitalism on the one hand, and with market communism (or capitalism without democracy) of China on the other hand. Both are well defined in their identity and endowed with remarkable force. With its specific features Europe can and must propose original solutions to the problems of under-development in Africa, peaceful co-existence with an Islam which must abandon its conquering spirit, the search for a model for economic development, which is sustainable from the point of view of environmental issues and which allows to preserve the progress which has been realised in the way of living of the western population. We must, of course, help the poorest countries to cancel their foreign debts, while putting major emphasis on their way to develop in economic terms and respecting the times they live in. They also need our support when faced with the problem of limitless growth of population. Even the issue of immigration cannot be treated only theoretically. We have to take account of the real capacities of the E.U. countries to receive immigrants – as shown on the occasion of the European Summit of Sevilla. Co-ordinated policies must be common practice with severe and clear sanctions against clandestine immigration. In addition, concrete policies of assistance and support in the countries of origin of the immigrants are required.

4. Finally, the faithful are called upon to remain faithful to the values of the spirit, to testify their faith as an offer to man of a broader and more fertile understanding.

The social teaching of the church always reminds us of the ultimate foundation. The greatest dignity of the human being is the fact to be “image and resemblance of God”, of his vocation to transcendence. The common good and perfection on earth can be conditions which make it easier to come close to the eschatological finalities. Commitment in the areas of justice and solidarity must always be linked to charity, which leads us to seeing the image of God in our neighbour. By trying to be faithful to the Gospel, by working for the conversion of the heart, by combining justice and charity, the Christians announce the advent of the possibility of a different and more fraternal world.

This fidelity to values of the spirit is fundamental in an epoch of spiritual privation. There is no lack in religious search in our times. But often it ends on the surface. Modernity has given us many advantages and a broader conscience in many areas. During this process of growth

we have lost some fundamental truth. Our ancestors, as we are reminded by Peter Berger, did not know many things, but they “talked to the angels”! (4)

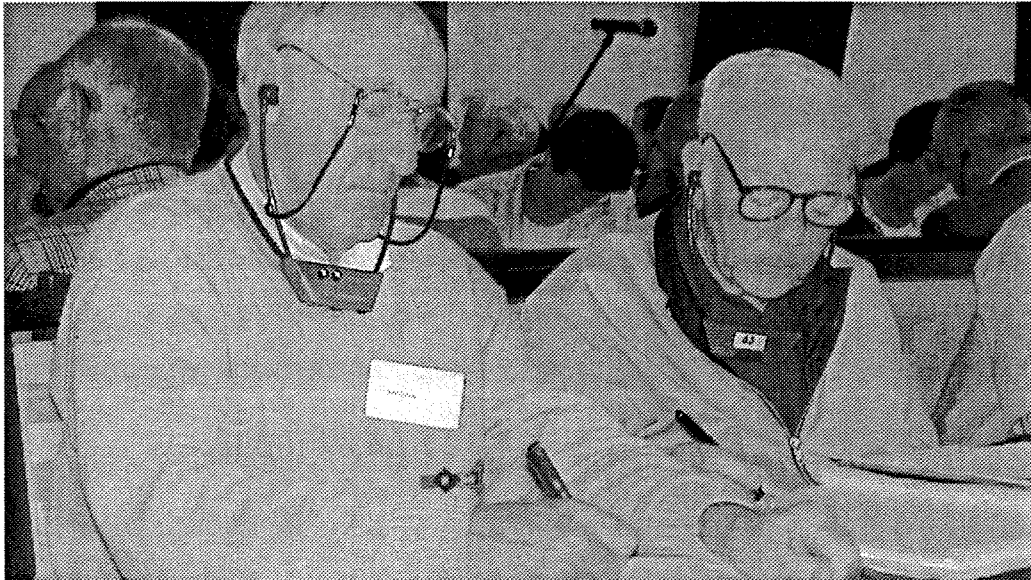
We are all aware that the Christian truth is not only a cultural heritage for Europe, but that it also has a lot to offer to man and to contemporary society. Christianity can reconcile man with his basic identity and can make society more “civil”. Thereby it helps to find a deeper meaning in the precariousness of present times and offers hope in an epoch where trust and confidence are lacking. It proposes a sense of mystery in a society dominated by technology and firm results.

A very large share of this project also results from our capability, in our function as catholic laypersons, to elaborate a spiritual model which is adapted to the conditions of our present life. It should be capable of uniting action and contemplation, prayer and commitment, discernment and courageous choice.

Even in this way we are called upon to give Europe a soul.

- (1) La Convezione Europea, Editoriale de “La Civiltà Cattolica”, 2002, II, pp. 105-110.
- (2) Romano Prodi, Intervento alla Sessione inaugurale della Convenzione dell’UE.
- (3) V. Havel, Alla ricerca della società civile, in Lo sviluppo della democrazia in Europa. Dossier Europa, Unione Europea, settembre 2000, n. 26, p. 31.
- (4) P. L. Berger, A Far Glory. The Quest for Faith in an Age of Credulity, New York, The Free Press, 1992.

(original: French)



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How can the Catholic laity help to implement Christian values in European society ?

The title of my paper contains two statements: On the one hand the Catholic laity is obliged to promote the realization of Christian values in European society. On the other hand Christianity has values even in today's pluralistic society, which can be accepted, and which are moreover necessary.

The first statement can be proved from the official document of the Catholic Church. To prove the second statement we have to study the history of European integration, as the values of European society appear in this process most obviously.

In the third part of my paper I am looking into the values that in my opinion should especially be supported by Christians.

Finally, I am dealing with the question how the Catholic laity can represent Christian values.

The mission of Catholic laity in social teaching

While there are severe differences between opinions on the position and role of Catholic laity inside the Church, it is generally accepted in the Church that the laity has to transmit the Catholic social teaching towards other social groups. The Second Vatican Council says in the document "Apostolicam actuositatem" unambiguously:

"The laity must take up the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation. Led by the light of the Gospel and the mind of the Church and motivated by Christian charity, they must act directly and in a definite way in the temporal sphere. As citizens they must cooperate with other citizens with their own particular skill and on their own responsibility. Everywhere and in all things they must seek the justice of God's kingdom. The temporal order must be renewed in such a way that, without detriment to its own proper laws, it may be brought into conformity with the higher principles of the Christian life and adapted to the shifting circumstances of time, place, and peoples. Pre-eminent among the works of this type of apostolate is that of Christian social action which the sacred synod desires to see extended to the whole temporal sphere, including culture."

Values in European integration

After the Second World War European integration began as a political, value-regulated process. That time the main goal of leading politicians and political movements was to promote co-operation among European countries, which made the outbreak of a new war impossible. In the spirit of this idea the Council of Europe was established in 1949, later the European Convention of Human Rights, the European Commission of Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights.

As it is well-known, in the fifties Christian Democratic governments ruled which regarded Christian culture and value order as the basis of integration. Although the aim of politicians

that time was to create the United States of Europe, they had to realize that it was impossible in the foreseeable future. They thought, firstly economies should be intertwined, and integrated economies, as means, should lead to political integration. To achieve this goal, the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was signed in Paris in 1951, the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community was signed in Rome in 1957.

At the beginning of the fifties, France played a leading role as to the European integration. This is the reason why in the Paris Treaty we can find the ideas of French planned economy. In France private property was maintained – in contradiction to communist countries - but powerful state intervention directed the development of economic structure.

At the end of the fifties, West Germany had become stronger in economic terms and the economic philosophy of social market economy appeared in the EEC – though with compromises. I.d. that individual economic liberty became more important, legitimacy of state or social intervention was limited by the principle of subsidiarity. In this model the functioning of the free market ensures not only efficiency, but also personal liberty. It is built on the responsible person against state paternalism.

To sum up, the goal of economic integration was the creation of a free single market. Social policy, which expressed social solidarity, remained mostly at the national level. Apart from some measures, labour was taken into account only as a factor of production, for which free movement was needed, like for goods, services and capital.

Economic integration was successful and quite sufficient until the outbreak of the oil crisis in 1973. Then a paradox situation came about. The welfare state got into crisis and the demand arose to answer social challenges at community level. It was paradoxical because the budget of social transfers had to be cut during the economic recession at national level and the member states did not accept the increase of community budget.

In 1987 the Single European Act which aimed at the completion of the single market came into force. In the eighties the EEC position in world economy weakened compared to the USA and Japan. The removal of barriers within the internal market was expected to intensify the competition between European companies and to make that way the EEC more competitive at international level. In the nineties the keyword in EU documents was competitiveness. It was predictable that competition would threaten social achievements as the decrease of wages and non-wage labour costs meant advantages in competitiveness. That is the reason why minimal social standards and equal conditions for competition had to be secured at community level. That time the United Kingdom caused troubles because the libertarian Tory government refused this approach.

In addition to social policy, employment policy became more and more important in the nineties. The EU intended to find a way of strengthening competitiveness and creating jobs at the same time.

The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 is important not only because of the social policy. The Community Charter of the fundamental rights of workers signed in 1989 and the Agreement on social policy attached to the Treaty of Maastricht were adopted by all Member States but the United Kingdom and the European Communities were reorganized and became the European Union (official title of the treaty is Treaty on the European Union). The Union has three pillars: the first is the European Community, the second is the common foreign and security policy and the third refers to justice and home affairs.

The reason for reorganization was the collapse of the socialist world system. It was rightly raised that Europe should take care of its own security. It meant not only new activities, but also the fact that new values should be presented at community level. The EU has become an actor within world policy which requires that the EU replies to questions concerning basic Christian values, like conflict handling and prevention, safeguarding of peace.

The EU has already played an important role in world economy and has represented a common policy in world trade, e.g. in the WTO. The EU has an impressive store of development aid instruments. In the nineties, the EU and its Member States provided 43% of official development assistance, whereas the United States provided 18%. As a key actor in world economy, the EU was able to participate in the regulation of international trade together with the USA and Japan. But the Balkan crisis showed that the coordination of the common foreign and security policy was weak.

The deepening of the European integration raised the necessity to lay down the common political foundations in a constitution. This issue basically refers to Christian values as well. The main task of a constitution is to protect human rights, to put down the principles of building and its functioning.

The goal of the EU was to preserve cultural diversity in spite of economic and political integration. The education system will not be harmonized, either. But the economic integration forced the EU to deal with these issues as well. In the age of knowledge based society and economy diplomas and degrees must be comparable and mutually recognized. This idea is assisted by the European Credit Point Transfer System. The success and competitiveness of European research and development depend on the concentration of its scientific capacity.

Politicians in the EU recognized that the preservation of diversity of national and regional cultures, the knowledge of each other's cultures and the strengthening of a common European identity must be assisted at the same time. The basis and organic part of European identity is Christian culture. At this point we return to the beginning of the story, after the Second World War the "Founding Fathers" wanted to build the European integration on the basis of Christian culture.

Up to this part we overviewed the process of deepening European integration. The deepening process was accompanied by enlargements in 1973, in 1981, in 1986 and in 1995. In each case not only economic and political coordination became more and more complex, but also the incorporation of new cultures and value orders. The accession of central and eastern European countries is a bigger task than formerly. It is about regions, which developments were diverted from the main stream of European history forty years and some of them were never part of it.

I hope the agenda of the Seville Summit will be maintained and enlargement will not be postponed. It is necessary to preserve the credibility of the EU among the population of candidate countries. If in the short run financial problems are solved, surmounting development differences will require huge efforts.

Beyond the economic and administrative challenges it is uncertain what the position of the new members will be. It is also a challenge for Christian values to succeed in enforcing principles and a spirit of partnership and equality of rights.

Solidarity at community level

European development shows special features compared to both North American and Japanese models. One of its decisive elements is that social inequality is not allowed to be formed by the market freely, the state, however, accomplishes significant redistribution for welfare purposes. The state, the society as a whole takes the responsibility to take care of the needy, and voluntary charity is not considered sufficient. Standard level of health services is ensured by social insurance. Social transfers succeeded in creating a large middle class. Since the oil crisis and the crisis of the welfare state this model has had to face very severe difficulties. In the eighties both pure-market-regulated economies (e.g. the USA) and state-regulated-economies (e.g. South Korea) seemed to be more competitive than European economies (they differ quite considerably).

Although since the eighties market regulation has got more room in European countries and social security systems have had to cope with serious problems, the EU has not given up the double requirements of its value order, efficiency and solidarity.

Since the nineties it has been stressed in a series of documents that competitiveness and economic, social cohesion should be maintained and strengthened. Among the policies of the EU the structural policies, that is regional and social policy, have got more and more emphasis on supporting economic and social cohesion, that is limited spatial and social inequalities.

One of the most important tasks of the Christians is to preserve the features of the European model, which coincides with one of the main principles of Catholic social teaching: solidarity. In the strong international competition enormous pressure will always be put on European politicians to make concessions to the detriment of solidarity and in favour of profitability and competitiveness.

As I have already mentioned, the EU enlargement will especially test solidarity. We should learn from the experience of Germany, where people had to face very suddenly not only the economic, but also the social integration of eastern Länder, which were cut off from western development during forty years. Now we have more time till the enlargement and the connections are not that intensive among the countries as inside one country, but the public must be better prepared for enlargement.

The history and culture of Central and Eastern Europe fell out of western teaching curriculums. This lack of knowledge in itself can be a source of misunderstanding and conflicts. Christians should establish a strategy to prepare the public with the help of their organizations for enlargement and coexistence. Naturally, states would have a lot to do because the results of public opinion polls show that reservations of EU citizens about enlargement have increased recently.

Solidarity at international level

It is a well-known problem that the power of national states to regulate the world economy and international economic relations has decreased. At the same time it is also well-known that the range of problems which requires international cooperation has increased. The growing gap between developed and developing countries, environmental problems, terrorism show on the pages of newspapers every day.

A region like the European Union has much more opportunities to enforce its will at international level than a national state. Christians should be active to promote that European foreign policy represents solidarity and responsibility for environment.

Enlargement brings new problems and tasks in this respect as well. People in the eastern countries compare their standard of living and way of life to that of people in western countries. The thought of international solidarity with the poor in developing countries is very strange for the overwhelming majority and they are not willing to bear the costs of that solidarity. Activity in environmental protection is also weaker in eastern countries. Where the per capita GDP is one third of the EU average it requires huge efforts to catch up with the EU standard.

At the same time solidarity and environmental protection should be enforced more powerful in European foreign and trade policy and we should have these values accepted by new Member States.

Subsidiarity and democracy

Western observers always wait anxiously for the results of elections in eastern countries to see whether extremist parties get into the Parliament. Recent results of western elections show that the defence of democracy is a never ending process.

Let me demonstrate the fact that stereotypes cannot be used and are misleading with a real story. A Jewish journalist of Hungarian origin, who lives in France, called terrified a Hungarian diplomat, who also works in France, after the first run of president election: "Have you already heard that Le Pen is on the second place?" "Escape to Hungary peacefully, there the extreme right wing party could not get into the Parliament!" – was the answer.

In an age when people are mistrustful of big institutions, when oppressive social issues like immigration offer no good solutions, when terrorism shadows every-day life, the functioning of democracy is not self-evident. The deepening of European integration involves the danger of bureaucratism. The Christians have to strengthen the values of democracy, human rights and subsidiarity.

They should pay severe attention to the elaboration of feasible solutions. E.g. it seems to be insufficient simply to repeat liberal principles in the issue of immigration, because it provokes counter reactions. But we have to be aware of the fact that if the developed world wants to slow down immigration, the order of world economy must be changed, which brings forth sacrifice. Distribution of resources, development opportunities must be more just.

One of the biggest enemies of democracy is corruption. The past decade regretfully did not show that after the system change corruption would have disappeared in the former socialist countries, rather also in western countries corruption scandals swept over. In Hungary, Pax Romana in its programme and activity focuses on corruption. In my opinion, it is a crucial task for the Christians in general.

European identity in its programme and activity – Christian cultural heritage

Nowadays identity is a very fashionable subject in economics: one investigates what the impact of identity on economic decision is. In psychology, political science, sociology the importance of identity is not a new finding. To be an influential actor of world politics and economy European citizens must have a strong European identity.

The basis of European identity is the common Christian culture. This is the case even if it does not mean a lively religious tradition for the majority of society. The Christians can help

to find a balance between different levels of identity, that is national, European and general, human identity. The latter is needed to establish our responsibility for world politics and economy.

The content of European identity is not obvious, we have to elaborate it concretely in our age. I have already referred to the fact that for forty years Central and Eastern Europe had fallen out of the cultural and historical knowledge of Western Europe and out of the content of European identity. In Hungary pupils learn very much about the history and culture of Western Europe. (There are stories according to which a Hungarian pupil knows more about Shakespeare than an English one.) But at the same time Central and Eastern European history and mainly culture is almost completely lost in our education system.

Several programmes of the EU support the teaching of European Studies and promote student mobility in order to get to know each other. Christians have to strengthen this process via their own networks. To harmonize national and European identity is a sensitive task all over in Europe. Protection of the rights of minorities is also an issue, which requires continuous efforts.

Channels of achievement

The above mentioned aspects can be supplemented with others. I thrived to seize values which I think to be crucial. At least it is very important to reply to the question how we can enforce these important issues.

Basically there are two levels which do not exclude but strengthen each other. These two ways are well-known for persons who participate in Christian public life. We do not need to discover them, but to strengthen our determination.

a/ Persons whose jobs make it possible (like economists, lawyers, etc.) have to represent Christian values.

b/ The Christian Churches and Christian organizations have to utilize their networks, their capacity for lobbying in EU organizations to enforce their values in European society.

(original)

Jérôme VIGNON,
Brussels / Belgium

The following notes reflect only the main ideas of Jérôme Vignon's speech. They may, however, serve as source for further discussions. The original text is in French, the translation has not been revised by the author.

The responsibility of Europe towards the world

I. From the ECSC to a Political Union

- Jean Monnet and the citizens

Quotation of J. Monnet: “harmony”.

Excerpts from opinion polls used for the White Book on “European Governance”. The Maastricht Treaty (a non colonialist view).

The debate on the term “civil power”.

- The European Union – global actor

The original consequences of the Customs Union.

Facts and statistics taken from the preface of the White Book.

(The EEC, the world's leading “active” economic and commercial power.)

- The quick emergence of a common external policy of the EU

1975: The political cooperation. Tindemans Report

1987: The Single European Act. Declaration of Venice.

1991: The Treaty on European Union and the Common foreign and security policy (CSFP)

1999: The Common security and defence policy

Why should we speak – under these conditions - of a “political dwarf”? In the field of external policy the EU is not a subject, but an instrument.

II. World in unrest – Emerging Europe

The external politicising of the European Union is the result of a conscious choice made by the Union's leaders at the beginning of the 80s. It results from loyalty to the original idea but it is also an answer to the new challenges of our times: the depolarisation of international relations, the increasing importance of the economic dimension of these relations.

How about the EU's performance ?

- Major stabilising force in the east of the EU.
- Less successful politics of rapprochement. The best opportunities missed in the Middle East and in Africa: difficult combination of economics and politics.
- The EU: the world's first multilateral power; opinion leader at the WTO, the UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), the ILO (International Labour Organisation) (examples to be drawn from P. Lamy's book).

Notorious exception: international financing: The EU did not play a major role in the handling of big crises: Russia, South-East Asia, Argentine.

- Though the end result is not negligible, Europe – as a global force - does not come up to the expectations as far as its role in the field of conflict prevention is concerned (cf. the aftermath of 11 September; ambiguity of the Laeken declaration). The way the EU is involved in international relations raises, however, hopes (e.g. role of the EU in promoting the idea of partnership for a sustainable development on the occasion of the Johannesburg summit).

III. Are the Europeans still looking for harmony ?

- Solutions for a more efficient European taking over of responsibility in the existing world. The European Commission has recently given an example with its communication "A Project for Europe".
- Do the Member States have founded reasons for preserving their national sacrosanct external policy ? (conversation between Tony Blair and the Archbishop of Canterbury).
- We live, however, on a common planet to which we owe a global responsibility (Brundtland Report). The relationships between security and environment, security and poverty, peace and justice, if they are not new, have become global and detached from particular territories where corresponding tensions emerge. Our leaders are certainly aware of all this (cf. recent presence of representatives from Africa at the G8 summit).
- In view of all this evidence, is the source of the external anomy of the European Union not to be found within the EU itself ?

Our short-sightedness – does it not mean that we do not want to see the world (cf. the absence of discussion during the French presidential elections)? Three important European voices have picked up the topic of the relationship between external and internal affairs. They can express themselves quite freely, the more so as they are standing at the periphery of politics:

- Vaclav Havel (Brussels)
- Jacques Delors (Lille)
- Andrea Riccardi (Berlin)

The difficult question of the EU's autonomy from the US has to be addressed.

IV. In favour of a powerful and generous Europe

- For several specific reasons the citizens, as representatives of the civil society, ought to play a role - a much more important one than at national level - in the conception of the external policy of the EU.
- Attention towards the poor is not only a moral obligation, it is a path to be followed in order to analyse problems in a proper way.
- The short-term has to be enriched by the long-term: refusing to look for a scapegoat and resisting feelings of revenge which allow to "stretch the time" of collective action (theme of responsibility).
- Put secret solidarity to the fore: "stretch the space" of individual action.

Conclusion:

- Role of the Christian laypersons in globalisation, beyond Europe.
- Next French initiative: Conferences on "The Christian basis of globalisation".

(original: French)



Homily by Bishop Dr. Joachim Wanke

during the Holy Mass on June 30th 2002 in Erfurt, St. Severi Church

To find Life

“If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him”
(Romans 6,8), second reading, 13th Sunday (A)

“He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it”
(Mathew 19,39), Gospel, 13th Sunday (A)

At present we enter the era of biosciences. We are on the track of life and its mysteries. Modern medical knowledge nourishes the vision of man's victory over a lot of illnesses. A lot of hopes “to find life”. But at the same time fears are increasing “to lose life” – especially when it is not welcome by society anymore. New understanding of the mystery of life increases the danger of manipulation, of breeding human beings, even of killing innocent life.

- Christian faith mentions life with a larger horizon than earthly time of life. In the middle of passing life God granted us the beginning of lasting life. There is “right life” in the middle of “false life” (Th. W. Adorno). The faith on Jesus Christ and baptism grant us access to this life.
- Life is a gift. To be born is the fruit of love. Human life is more than a mixture of certain chromosomes. It goes beyond biology. It wants to answer a call. It longs for being loved. Our heart longs for “eternity”. God, “lover” and “inventor” of life, has put this longing in our heart. We will never come to terms with having to die. But is there any alternative to helpless protest against death ?
- Every human life has its vocation, which goes beyond earthly possibilities of life. Worth of life isn't defined by efficiency, nor by beauty or health. Our life is life towards hope. Our faith knows the vocation of man to live in God forever. There is life which goes beyond our understanding. If you look at a caterpillar, you cannot see that it can be able to fly as a butterfly. What makes us “fly” sometimes, is the experience of love and of being loved. The ecstasy of love is the foretaste of the new creation, in which we all will take part. Love is effective only where it can let go, where it is able to deliver itself. Loss here is high winning. This is what Jesus means, when he puts together “to find” and “to lose” in a dialectical way. “Rising” begins with “dying” daily – following the life of Jesus, who by “letting go” won life for him and for all of us.

- Therefore every human being has its own dignity, granted by God and independent from its “utility” for society. Man can have hope, even if illness and handicaps restrict his life. Europe grows together and is characterized by the knowledge of biosciences, but also by increasing economical dictates. Therefore it is important to contribute this understanding of our faith to every part of society. Christians have to be “lawyers of life”. Christians should look for “coalitions for life” with everyone, to whom life is precious.

(original: German)

Resolution

passed by the Statutory Assembly of the European Laity Forum,
Erfurt, 3 July 2002

- The participants of the European Laity Forum meeting in Erfurt welcome the ongoing development, integration and enlargement of the European Union. We wish to encourage all people of good will to contribute to this process, preserving the ideal of a unified Europe as initiated by de Gasperi, Schuman, Adenauer and others.
- Europe is for us not only a political and economic structure, but, above all, a community of culture, traditions and values based on the three pillars of Judaeo-Christian spirituality, Roman law and Greek philosophy. We are convinced that none of these three pillars can be omitted in the process of building a new Europe.
- We believe that God is the ultimate basis of all values. While we fully respect those who do not share our beliefs, and do not negate their rights, we appeal to them not to deny our values and history. The 20th century stands as a warning that building political systems, including democratic institutions, without a basis on a transcendent authority can lead to overt, or hidden, totalitarianism.

Recognising the above, many modern European constitutions invoke God as the highest authority. We urge all politicians to ensure that the new European Union Constitution does the same. In building a new Europe we have to remember that the human person must be at the centre of our concerns.

It is necessary “to rediscover those essential and innate human and moral values that flow from the very truth of the human being and express and safeguard the dignity of the person, values which no individual, no majority, and no State can ever create, modify, or destroy, but must only acknowledge, respect, and promote.” /John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*/

Origin, objectives and running of the European Forum of National Laity Committees

The European Forum seeks to create opportunities to organise meetings and exchanges between national laity committees and/or between European consultative bodies existing in the Church in which the promotion of the layperson and his co-responsibility in the Church is placed in the foreground.

From the very beginning, much attention has been paid to include all European countries, from Eastern and Western Europe as well as from North and South.

The Forum is not in itself an international Catholic organisation recognised as such by the Vatican. The Council for the Laity in Rome has, however, followed and encouraged this initiative from its beginning. At each meeting of the Liaison Committee (7 members who take care of the initiatives) and of the biennial Forum itself, some representatives from the Office of the Council of the European Bishops' Conferences and from the European Council of Priests, were always present.

The European Laity Forum wishes to be a free meeting place for collective contact and for exchanging ideas of purpose and experiences, but it never binds any member or country; nor can it take decisions which would oblige the national committees to take action or to adopt a position. However, the Forum is really unique in that nowhere else can national consulting or co-ordinating laity bodies in the Church meet each other as such.

Themes which have been treated since the foundation in 1970

- * **1970 Innsbruck / Austria**
Hope as a force for Christians: invitation to commitment and presence at the construction of the community

- * **1972 Luino / Italy**
Liberation and evangelisation

- * **1974 London / England**
Migration in Europe and the question of the situation of the laity since Vatican II

- * **1976 Louvain-la-Neuve / Belgium**
The responsibility of the Christians in Europe

- * **1978 Luxembourg / Luxembourg**
The responsibility of Christians in economy, culture and marginalization in an European context

- * **1980 Madrid / Spain**
A new lifestyle concerning developing countries, the working environment and the family

- * **1982 Vught / The Netherlands**
The work of the layman in different local Churches and more especially, their task in a secularised society

- * **1984 Dublin / Ireland**
The causes of existing conflicts between individuals, society and different ideologies

- * **1985 Zagreb / former Yugoslavia**
Vocation and mission of the laymen in the Church and in the world – 20 years after Vatican II
- * **1986 Paris / France**
The Church as a place of dialogue in every significance
- * **1988 Freising / Germany**
After the synod: reflections and perspectives
- * **1990 Vienna / Austria**
Towards a more human Europe – a challenge for the Churches
- * **1992 Antwerp / Belgium**
Living in a multicultural society
- * **1994 Ljubljana / Slovenia**
Christian vision on solidarity – challenge to the social-economical system in East and Western Europe
- * **1996 Twickenham / England**
Media today : A challenge for Christians
- * **1998 Bratislava / Slovakia**
Reconciliation : Socio-economic tensions and the response of the Church
- * **2000 Alcalá de Henares / Spain**
Live, so that others may live
- * **2002 Erfurt / Germany**
Building a Europe of values – the contribution of the Catholic Laity

With the support of the European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA)
and the European Commission