

EN

“Building a better European home”

Declaration of the COMECE Bishops European Elections 4-7 June 2009

1-European Elections: an opportunity to build a better Europe

After 64 years of peaceful development and 20 years since the fall of the Iron Curtain, which ended the division of the continent, the process of European integration deserves to be appreciated, in spite of some shortcomings. For this reason we, the Bishops of COMECE, support and promote the European Union as a project of hope for all of its citizens.

Even in this unsettled time of financial and economic crisis, the European Union has proved to be a dependable home that strives to safeguard stability and solidarity among its members. Today, in 2009, the European Union has the capacity and the means to respond to the most urgent and pressing challenges of our age.

By participating in the European Parliament elections, all citizens have the opportunity to contribute to the development and improvement of the European Union.

2-Participating in the elections: a right and a responsibility

The Catholic Church has supported the project of European integration since the very beginning and continues to do so. Every Christian not only has the right but also the responsibility to be actively engaged in this project by exercising his or her vote.

The participation of Christians is essential in order to rediscover the ‘soul of Europe’, which is vital to fulfil the fundamental needs of the human person and the service of the common good.

The European Parliament, through its powers and competences (which would be further enhanced by the final ratification of the Lisbon Treaty), must contribute to these aspirations and goals.

3-What Christians expect from the European Parliament:

The basic principles of any society are Human Dignity and the promotion of the Common Good. Therefore these principles must be at the very heart of all European Union policies.

Given the important role of the European Parliament, we expect the Members of the European Parliament actively to participate and contribute towards the following:

- to **respect human life** from conception to natural death as integral to all European Union legislation, programmes and policies;
- to **support the family** founded on marriage – as understood between one man and one woman - as the basic unit of society;
- to **advance the social rights** of workers providing them with working conditions which respect their health, safety and dignity;
- to **endorse economic governance based on ethical values** in order to achieve sustainable human development within the European Union and at global level;
- to **promote justice** in relationships of the European Union with developing countries through financial assistance and innovative partnerships;
- to **demonstrate solidarity** by shaping policies that help the weakest and poorest in our societies (in particular people with disabilities, asylum-seekers, migrants);
- to **protect creation** by fighting climate change and encouraging a moderate lifestyle;
- to **promote peace** in the world through coordinated and coherent external EU-policy.

Enlightened and guided by Christ's teaching, Christians are ready and willing to help fulfil these aspirations, mindful of His Holiness Pope John Paul II's assertion: *"Christian inspiration is capable of transforming political, cultural and economic groupings into a form of coexistence in which all Europeans will feel at home"* (*Ecclesia in Europa*, 121).