

2023

The bottom half of the image features a blue-tinted photograph of the European Parliament building in Strasbourg. The building's iconic semi-circular glass facade is visible, reflecting the sky. In the foreground on the left, several European Union flags are flying on tall poles. The text 'a year in review' is overlaid on the right side of this section in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font.

a year in
review

About us

The European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) is the only European political party explicitly promoting Christian values in politics.

We are genuinely anchored in the political tradition that contributed significantly to the founding of the European Union: Christian Democracy.

Our goal is to bridge the gap between extremes in European politics by re-establishing Christian Democracy as a viable political alternative, with an emphasis on the Christian relational worldview.

We dream of a Europe where human dignity is protected, where people are free and safe, and where governments serve their citizens.

ECPM acts as a platform for its members and associates: we want everyone to feel elevated, their voice heard and aware of their value. Through our events, trainings and resources, we empower our members with knowledge and connection so that they will effectively and successfully engage their parliaments and communities and be the voice that influences Europe.

Our movement brings together over 50 Christian- democratic political parties, individual politicians, NGOs and think-tanks from all across Europe.

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Human Dignity

Human dignity expresses the intrinsic value of every human being. It is inviolable and must be respected and protected, as stated in Article 1 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. We believe this universal principle rests on the human being as created by God in His likeness, and is the cornerstone of all the other human rights. Therefore, life should be protected from conception to natural death. We align ourselves with the principles stated in the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine and recognize that it is the sole competence of EU Member States to legislate on bioethics and healthcare matters.



Healthy Families

We see the family as the most important social entity and the foundation for a thriving society. We call on the European Union to respect the sovereignty of the family, based on the marriage between one man and one woman. Family policy is foremost the responsibility of EU Member States and, according to the principle of subsidiarity, European institutions should not interfere. ECPM members support national policies which promote parenthood and flexible conditions for child-rearing. We support programs protecting children and youth, preventing addiction and violence, and we condemn all forms of domestic violence.

Our Values



Economy Benefitting People & Planet

ECPM advocates for a relational view of the economy where healthy relationships between people is the end goal of systems, rather than increasing profits. To that end, we favor SMEs, family-owned business and stakeholder business models. We support innovation as long as it does not violate human dignity and doesn't harm the environment. Cohesion funds should support regional companies and inclusive business models instead of large multinationals; reducing disparities between EU regions must be a priority. We believe that wise stewardship of the natural resources is a biblical assignment.



Freedom, Security & Stability

Foreign affairs must be rooted in the human dignity principle, that promoting human rights is the best way of countering extremism and violence. Foreign policy remains the competence of EU Member States. We encourage solidarity among Member States when it comes to migration and border security, and increased collaboration against (cyber)terrorist threats. We call for a serious assessment of the foreign aid the EU sends to third countries, and we believe countries and regions which respect human rights should be prioritized.



Fighting Modern Slavery

We condemn all forms of modern slavery which reduces people to commodities. ECPM advocates for due diligence in business practices and for consumers to choose companies vetted for their fair and sustainable practices. We support the Nordic Model as a means of fighting sexual exploitation and encourage Member States to adopt legislation criminalizing the buyers of sex services and the traffickers. We urge European governments to increase prosecution rates of traffickers, to develop national prevention campaigns and to work closely with NGOs in implementing exit programs and ensuring legal assistance to victims.



Reforming the EU

ECPM calls for the European Union to reduce its directive role and to act more as a facilitator between strong, sovereign Member States. We reject uniformity and turning the EU into a superstate; instead, we propose a confederal model, where clusters of Member States increase their cooperation around a common issue or priority. EU agencies which have no added values and operate outside EU competences should be eliminated. We want more transparency on how the EU budget is spent on projects across the EU. We remain opposed to Turkey joining the EU.



Honoring EU's Christian Roots

We believe that Christian values like freedom, truth, solidarity, human dignity which were at the root of founding the EU are still relevant today. We stand for the freedom of religion/ belief of all people, including the right to worship publicly, wear religious symbols, and teach their children in the faith. ECPM stands with the millions of persecuted Christians around the world. We condemn the rise in discrimination of Christians in Europe, the violations of their freedom of conscience and the lack of reasonable accommodation.

Foreword by the ECPM President

Dear ECPM friends,

Despite many turbulences and challenges in 2023, God has been good and faithful, which fills us with hope for the next year. The words spoken by God through the prophet Jeremiah a long time ago in times of crisis are still relevant today: ***“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*** (Jer. 29:11 NIV) We are promised hope and a future when we walk with Him. As one of the Moldovan writers said, without Christ we are faced with a hopeless end, but in Christ we have an endless hope.

While Russia's invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine remains one of the biggest threats for Europe, the attack of Hamas against Israel on October 7 is challenging peace at a global level and has the potential to attract more actors into the conflict. Understandably, when we look around and see tension, protests, confrontations, clashes and a general state of instability, we can become worried and anxious. There is a great need for strong, wise, and godly leadership. I believe, with humbleness, that the ECPM is called for times such as these and can play an important role in Europe.

I am very encouraged to see that ECPM has been growing during 2023. At our General Assembly in June, in Rambouillet, France, we accepted three new member parties: **Valores** from Spain, **Suverena Vara** from Lativa and **Abba** party from Malta.

At the same time, we appointed two new members to the Board: **Cristian Terheş** (Romania) and **Jean-Frédéric Poisson** (France). **Márton Gyöngyösi**, a member of the European Parliament, and a well-known conservative Hungarian politician, joined the ECPM in September, rising ECPM's seats in the European Parliament to five. By faith I can say that by the end of 2024 the ECPM family will become even larger.

I would be remiss if I didn't also mention the great work our General Director **Maarten van de Fliert** and his team are doing. I am grateful for their commitment and dedication in furthering ECPM's mission. Given that next year will be a very busy year for all of us, I want to encourage each of you reading this yearbook to pray for them and their work.

The elections for the European Parliament are scheduled to be held on 6– 9 June 2024. It will be the tenth parliamentary election since the first direct European elections in 1979, and the first European Parliament election after Brexit. I was appointed by the ECPM Board to be the Chief Campaign Officer, a responsibility I accept humbly and which comes with a lot of hard work. This is true not just in my case, but for all of us: our member parties, especially our candidates who will run for office.

During one of the prayer times in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, I shared a devotion based on a text from the book of Judges. God called Gideon to free Israel from the Midianites. The Bible says there were so many Midianites that ***“it was impossible to count them or their camels.”*** (Judges 6:5 NIV) Gideon gathered an army of thirty-two thousand men to fight against the Midianites. But God told him: ***“You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast saying ‘My own strength has saved me’.”*** (Judges 7:2 NIV). ***So, Gideon dismissed twenty-two thousand, while ten thousand remained. But the Lord said again: “There are still too many men”*** (Judges 7:4 NIV). Gideon ended up with only three hundred men, which is less than one percent of the army he had at the beginning. It is made clear in this story that the key to victory was not in the number of soldiers. The resounding victory was due to God's presence which strengthened Gideon and the unity of those three hundred men. Gideon's speech before going into battle is one of the shortest in the Bible, and at the same time, one of the most profound: ***“Watch me, (...) follow my lead, (...) do exactly as I do.”*** (Judges 7:17 NIV). ECPM may be the smallest European party, but it is the only Christian European party. During this election campaign, I count on God's presence with us and on our unity both in prayer and deed.

We forged an Identity Declaration and revised our Political Program this year. Our common values are expressed well in these two documents, organized around seven spearheads. You can find them in this yearbook. Our Political Program addresses the most stringent needs and problems we are faced with nowadays. Our member parties and candidates will focus on the most relevant political topics for their national context, while reflecting and expressing the seven spearheads

in our Political Program. It will be a sign of European unity in the upcoming battles. In this context, I would like to express my gratitude to **Sallux**, our political foundation, for their research and publications which are enormously helpful to us.

At the end of this foreword, I would like to ask for you to pray for the wars to end and for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine and in Israel, for the well-being of our nations, for the upcoming European elections in 2024, for national elections in several European countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Georgia, Romania, Lithuania, Moldova, North Macedonia, Portugal) and for our families and young people of Europe.

Let me conclude with Jesus' words from the Gospel of John: ***“While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*** (John 9:5 NIV). Let these words be our motto for the year. As followers of Christ, may the light of the ECPM shine before our fellow men in Europe, so they may see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven.

Valeriu Ghileţchi

President of the European Christian Political Movement



Director's Reflection

A year of bridges

Bridge- building and bridge-breaking- this is what comes to mind when I reflect on 2023. I called the previous year “a year of change” because of the many shifts in my life, in ECPM and in the EU. The developments of 2022 brought me to my role at the ECPM with the clear mission to start building more bridges with, and between, our members and to also connect our party to the greater European political landscape. But unfortunately, bridges were also destroyed in 2023: peoples and communities broke down and bridges were literally blown up in the recent wars in Europe and beyond.

The Sermon on the Mount of our Lord Jesus Christ has become the constitution for my work at the ECPM and in my building bridges with all its stakeholders. During event openings or devotion time, I have reflected many times on this sermon as a great example of a sermon or a speech but primarily as a guideline for our life and work.

“Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. He said:

*‘Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of
righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you
and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.
Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in
heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets
who were before you.”*

Matthew 5: 1-12 (NIV)

The Beatitudes show us a path of living in harmony with ourselves and with each other. It is a counterintuitive approach,

to be sure, but that is the way of God's kingdom. Mercy, not merit; purity of heart, not a tailored suit; righteousness, not rules; peacemaking, not revenge- these are the character traits God is seeking and rewarding. Totally opposite from how this world functions. When something is not like the rest, it shines, it stands out. This is how I see Christians, followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, operating in this world, in politics too. Being insulted or falsely accused is hard, but if we move forward with our minds set on the reward in heaven, I think people will stop and wonder and opportunities to collaborate, to effect change, to connect, will present themselves.

Unfortunately, this year marked severe breakdowns in relationships and communities, too. The Russian government continued its assault and devastation of its neighboring country, Ukraine. Several bridges were blown up in the conflict, deteriorating the already acrimonious relationship between the two peoples even more. Israel and Gaza are at war again, with the high number of fatalities and the poisoned rhetoric inflaming reactions worldwide. In the EU, polarization is at an all-time high. People are divided over politics, over digitalization, climate change, economics, migration and so on. Cheap populism and misinformation are causing folks to shout, insult and fight each other rather than talk and listen to each other. It seems as difficult as ever to build bridges between each other's convictions.

The ECPM can play a role in the midst of all this. We are the only explicitly Christian party at European level, gathering members from all walks of life, from multiple Christian denominations and with varying political views. Despite all these apparent differences, or maybe because of them, we have learned how to collaborate efficiently, how to talk and listen to each other and how to respect one another. We believe our unity and strength comes from our faith in God and His teachings, like the Beatitudes mentioned above. That is the bridge which connects us, the glue which holds us together. And we think that can be true of the European society at large. God's teachings on freedom, equality, justice, love, self-sacrifice are good and useful models for our world today. I urge you to promote these things in your community and society, encouraged by the Lord's Sermon on the Mount. Use this counterintuitive approach in the Beatitudes in your political work and you will be building bridges, even with your strongest opponents. And when you feel persecuted, discriminated or cast aside, remember the bigger picture, remember you do not walk this Earth alone and that God is with you.

Next year will bring new challenges to our continent; I already wonder what my reflection for the next yearbook will be. The outcome of the elections for the European Parliament taking place in 6-9 June 2024 will definitely shift things, but I hope and pray that it will also bring more peace and unity between people, Member States, countries and institutions. May we defeat polarization by linking arms and creating bridges of understanding and consensus!

I invite you to join me in reflecting and living out the Beatitudes. Let's build bridges together and let's BE bridges connecting opposite views. We pray for the upcoming European and national elections, and we trust God for the results, while we continue to work hard promoting His teachings in European politics- *Ora et Labora*. I look forward to our cooperation.

Maarten van de Fliert

General Director of the European Christian Political Movement



Advisory Council Report

The Advisory Council (AC) was established by the General Assembly (GA) on June 7, 2013, and is a consultative group to both ECPM board and its members. The role of the Advisory Council is to provide guidance to ECPM board & members and financial oversight. The members of the Council may also propose discussion topics for the General Assembly, may check and amend program and statutes. It usually meets at least two times per year.

In 2023, the Advisory Council was composed of the following people: Florica Cherecheș (President), Inga Bite (Vice President), Peter Östman, Branislav Škripek, Sylvana Bal and Christophe Foltzenlogel. We are committed to serving God through this participation and pray for His guidance in order to make good decisions, with love and understanding for our differences. We want to always keep in mind the common goal that unites us, which is, to promote the Christian values in the European politics.

At the beginning of this year, the President and Vice President of the Advisory Council were selected to be part of the process of vetting two new board members: MEP Cristian Terheș from Romania and Mr. Jean- Frédéric Poisson from France. As part of the Selection Committee, they interviewed the candidates.

The first working meeting of the AC in 2023 took place online on May 9, in preparation for the General Assembly meeting in June; we discussed the agenda for the GA and other pressing matters. During this meeting, we approved the candidacies of Cristian Terheș and Jean- Frédéric Poisson and they were

elected by the General Assembly at the meeting in June in Rambouillet, France.

At this time, the General Director of ECPM, Maarten van de Fliert, informed us about new member parties expressing their intention to join the ECPM: Suverena Vara (Latvia), Valores (Spain) and ABBA (Malta). Other parties were going to attend the GA as observers: Christian Values Party (Sweden), Christian Union Party (Lithuania) and MEP Gyöngyösi from Hungary, who also became our fifth MEP in the fall of 2023.

In this same meeting, we welcomed the final version of the ECPM Identity Declaration, and we reviewed the amendments to statutes and the financial reports of the previous year.

The Advisory Council members participated at the 24th General Assembly of ECPM on June 16 in Rambouillet, France where the above-mentioned board members were elected, and the new party members were approved. The political parties from Ukraine, UK, Georgia and Moldova had their membership terminated.

During the summer, the AC was asked to offer input and feedback on the ECPM Political Program, which will serve as a manifesto for the 2024 elections for the European Parliament, as well as a guiding document for the next 2024-2029 mandate. The program was approved during the 25th extraordinary Assembly meeting held in Brussels on December 6-7.

Also, since June 2023, the Advisory Council has its own logo, which is used in all our documents. We are grateful to the ECPM staff who produced it and who have been a wonderful resource and help in organizing our meetings, taking notes, and liaising with other ECPM bodies.

We are thankful to God for His care and provision and for the opportunity we had to serve Him in this Advisory Council in 2023.

Florica Cherecheș

President of the ECPM Advisory Council



Intro duc tion

Introduction

In this yearbook, you will find summaries of the events ECPM organized in 2023 either as sole organizer or in partnership with our party members, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and non-governmental organizations. Our activities continue to focus around the seven spearheads which constitute our political program and which you can find neatly organized in the following pages.

Our political family grew this year: we added new member parties, two new members to our board and a fifth Member of the European Parliament. We also added a couple of temporary part-time employees to our staff to help us better liaise with members and to prepare us for the heavy workload before the European elections coming up next year.

Two important documents finalized this year, which help us communicate about our party more efficiently, are the Identity Declaration and the Political Program/ Elections Manifesto which you will find later in this publication. It was very important to get all our members' input and to engage them in the process and are very pleased we managed to do that, so the documents are truly reflective of who we are as a party. It is encouraging to see how these two documents have inspired some of our members to model their foundational statements after them, leading to greater cohesion among our members.

We continue to work on ECPM's message, visibility and purpose, to refine and adapt it in order to accurately describe us and our work. Our dream is to see the voices of European Christians in politics elevated, recognized, and making a difference. What you see in this booklet are ways we empower our members and associates with resources, information and tools, ways we create the space for them to connect and exchange experience, for all of us together to be powerful agents of change (to be salt and light, as Lord Jesus called His followers) in the European political environment.

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Human Dignity

Life • Protection • Rights



Future Leaders Programme



Rónán Mullen, Member of Parliament (Ireland/ ECPM)
Emily Albrecht, Director of Education & Outreach at Equal Rights Institute
Paul Brady, Lawyer
Lorcan Price, Lawyer
Rachel McKenzie, coordinator at Rachel's Vineyard, UK
Luke Silke, Pro-life activist

Prof. Patricia Casey, Psychiatrist
Elaine Noonan, Programme Manager at Community Connect
Katy Edgmon, Founder of Zoe Community
Eilís Mulroy, Political activist
Fiorella Nash, Writer and bioethicist
Dr. Berry Kiely, Pediatrician and medical advisor

Together with Pro Life Campaign Ireland (PLC), we co-organized the Future Leaders Programme, a six-week course which equips young people in Ireland and the EU to become leaders in life-defending healthcare. The course took place twice this year: once in the Spring and a second time in the Fall. It provided participants from diverse backgrounds with practical tools and knowledge on how to communicate their position in a civil and efficient way. The sessions consisted of several online lectures, assignments and a media-training day.

Irish and international experts, medical professionals and activists spoke on topics ranging from freedom of conscience, bioethics, apologetics, mental health and abortion to euthanasia and elder care, the legal and

medical implications surrounding these issues. The situation at European level was often compared and contrasted with the Irish context while emerging patterns and best practices were highlighted. The program culminated in all participants meeting in person at a Dublin television studio, where each got to practice the apologetics principles taught during the training and to use the information acquired to make their argument in defense of life-centered healthcare. The participants honed their public speaking, interviewing and advocacy skills, visited the Irish Parliament, and attended a Pro-Life conference on this last day of the programme.



European Christian Political Youth Camp



MEP* **Helmut Geuking**, President of Familien Partei Germany
Maarten van de Fliert, ECPM General Director

MEP Helmut Geuking together with ECPM organized a political summer school in a camping format, on the shores of Lake Balaton, Hungary. Youth between 17 and 22 years old gathered to learn and enjoy nature.

Participants from several EU countries had the opportunity to learn about the importance of Christian values in European democracy and to be trained in political processes like election, running a campaign, voting issues and the functioning of the European Parliament. The two main coordinators and instructors were General Director of ECPM – Maarten van de Fliert– and MEP Helmut Geuking.

The first week the training sessions were focused on introductory subjects like the different political traditions/ parties and their beliefs, the connection between politics and worldviews, the foundations of democratic societies and elections, etc. Maarten van de Fliert talked to the youth about the EU


system and institutions and the ECPM's place in the EU political environment. He also explained to the young people how Christian values are at the foundation of EU project as well as most free and democratic societies in the world. The participants got to engage in role-play and simulations of EP plenary sessions and debates, and they filled out quizzes about the history of the EU.

In the second week, MEP Geuking focused on the importance of legislation and voting. He talked about his work in the European Parliament, how resolutions and amendments are created and passed, the importance of negotiation and the value of each vote in turning initiatives into law. He encouraged the youth to stay connected and aware, to be informed voters, and to courageously get involved in politics at local level as their communities need them. At the end of their camping days, the youth visited monuments and sites with historic significance in Budapest.

*MEP– Member of European Parliament



Young Ethical Leadership Programme

 **Rónán Mullen**, Member of Parliament (Ireland/ ECPM)

Together with Irish senator and ECPM member Rónán Mullen, we organized a whole-day workshop about the importance of ethics in leadership, specifically for the youth. The programme's objective was to foster reflection and to challenge young individuals and professionals present to make a positive impact, particularly in politics. Around 40 young people attended the workshop. A representative for ECPM and ECPYouth– Samuel van der Putte– spoke about our common vision and the Christian ethics at the root of our work.

The theme of the workshop was *God – In or Out?* and explored the current challenges of a rapidly changing and polarized society. It tackled questions young leaders are faced with regarding their place in purpose in life, how to make choices and pursue a career without compromising their values and beliefs, and how to be of service to communities at odds with each other.

Throughout the programme, participants explored key Christian ideas about a well-ordered and just society while analyzing case studies from Ireland, the Netherlands and other EU countries. They compared and contrasted differences in political systems and legislative processes, as well as discussed the limitation of competences for the various institutions. The case studies covered topics like education, healthcare, freedom of belief, expression and assembly.

Despite diverse political outlooks, participants shared a sincere interest in promoting the common good and were committed to personal and professional development and to becoming ethics-based leaders. Senator Rónán Mullen connected the workshop themes to the larger European context, the ways legislation and policies at EU level influence Ireland, and spoke about ECPM's work and efforts of connecting like-minded, ethics-focused folks all across Europe.



Healthy Families

Family • Sovereignty • Parenthood



Strong Families Lead to Strong Countries



Jūlija Stepanenko, President of Suverena Vara
Uģis Sprincisa, Chairman of The Entrepreneurs Group
Dāvids Kļaviņš, Member of the Suverena Vara Council
Karin Heepen, ECPM vice president & Chairwoman of Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland

Together with Julija Stepanenko, President of the Latvian party Suverena Vara (Sovereign Power), ECPM organized a conference on the importance of families and family values for the society.

The purpose of the conference was to educate party members and supporters about family values and to present the newly founded party's position and vision in promoting these values. Around forty people were present.

Mr. Uģis Sprincisa (Chairman of the Entrepreneurs Group) had a presentation about the human life cycle highlighting the importance of family and the main factors which influence a person during his/her life. He spoke about the role the government plays throughout the cycle and how it can contribute directly or indirectly to human flourishing. He argued that in the first phase of life (from conception until three years

after birth) the role of the government should be indirect and minimal.

Jūlija Stepanenko, lawyer and former member of the Latvian Parliament, talked about the legal aspect impacting family life. She gave a short history of the laws and regulations which indirectly affect families, emphasizing the need to strengthen families and protect children.

Dāvids Kļaviņš spoke about the importance of harmonious family relations and how to foster those despite individual differences in a family.

Karin Heepen, ECPM vice president and president of BündnisC Germany, brought greetings and encouragement on behalf of ECPM. She spoke about healthy families being a spearhead of our political party, based on the Christian teaching which centers it.



EU Policies on Parenthood. The Case of Surrogacy



MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen
MEP Miriam Lexmann
Dr. Adina Portaru, Senior Counsel Europe, ADF International
Olivia Sarton, Lawyer and Scientific Director, Juristes pour l'Enfance

MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen (SGP/ ECPM) and MEP Miriam Lexmann (EPP*), along with ECPM, hosted an event on European policies concerning parenthood, specifically addressing the issue of surrogacy. The event took place in the European Parliament and drew an audience of 25 people, including Spanish MEP Margarita de la Pisa Carrión (ECR*) and Hungarian MEP Márton Gyöngyösi* (Jobbik Conservatives/ ECPM). The objective was to discuss surrogacy practices and their adverse effects on children, mothers, fathers and families.

The conference came as a response to the European Commission's recent proposal for an EU Certificate of Parenthood, then under debate in the European Parliament. This initiative would

put pressure on member state governments to sanction surrogacy even though a country may not allow the practice.

The hosts MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen and MEP Miriam Lexmann suggested that surrogacy fuels abuse, human trafficking, violating the rights of vulnerable women and children, in essence violating human dignity. The practice commodifies both children and women's wombs, which is unacceptable.

Olivia Sarton, lawyer and scientific director of Juristes pour l'Enfance, underlined that surrogacy is a new form of exploitation that takes advantage of the bodies of women and appropriates the children they bear. She added



that the conditions under which many women consent to the practice (state of need and psychological fragility) cast doubt on whether they freely gave their consent. She also referred to the Casablanca Declaration, which calls for the universal abolition of surrogacy.

Dr. Adina Portaru (senior counsel at ADF International) discussed the legal implications of surrogacy agreements, highlighting contradictions in the Commission's proposal compared to earlier statements acknowledging that the European Union lacks competence over surrogacy and family policies. The Commission is interfering in family policy by picking the cross-border aspects of

parenthood and surrogacy. She emphasized the lack of stringent screening procedures in surrogacy compared to adoption, raising concerns about the safety and well-being of children. An EU accession to the Oviedo Convention was raised as a mean to increase the protection of baby and women.

Speakers and hosts agreed that instead of regulating the practice of surrogacy, which would only create demand, efforts should be made to highlight that surrogacy means, in essence, the commodification of children who become objects of surrogacy agreements, which is a profound violation of their human dignity.

*EPP- European People's Party

*ECR- European Conservatives & Reformists

*Márton Gyöngyösi was at the time of the conference an independent MEP. He joined ECPM in September 2023.

World Children's Day Conference



MEP Helmut Geuking, Familien Partei Deutschlands President
Chiara Piccolo, Managing Director at Alliance for Childhood
Rev. Dr. Joe-Barth Abba
Fr. Hans Schmeinck
Maarten van de Fliert, ECPM General Director

MEP Helmut Geuking welcomed the speakers and participants to the conference which had been preceded by a religious mass centered around the preciousness of children. He also spoke about his party– Family Party Germany–emphasizing that it is deeply anchored in Christian values and focused on families and children's wellbeing.

He spoke about his initiatives regarding children's education subsidies and financial aid for disadvantaged families with children. MEP Geuking is shadow rapporteur on the report *“Reducing inequalities and promoting social inclusion in times of crisis for children and their families”*, an Own Initiative Report by the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament. He is advocating for the recognition of the cost of bringing up a family.

The focus of the conference was the Commission's programme: the European Child Guarantee. The MEP highlighted the insufficient funding for the programme, which causes the results to not be as robust as they could be.

Chiara Piccolo, the managing director of the Alliance for Childhood, presented the work of the organization and thanked Mr. Geuking for being the Alliance's ambassador to the European Parliament. The Alliance for Childhood is a network of around 20 organizations working to improve children's lives from various perspectives. They work to increase the respect for children's agency and autonomy, to create awareness of the needs of children and to develop solutions to problems which could endanger their childhood. The Alliance serves as a platform where policymakers, medical practitioners, researchers and parents



collaborate to create policies, spaces and practices which protect and promote a child's wellbeing and development, with children's input and participation.

Ms. Piccolo highlighted the importance of the European Child Guarantee, at a time when 1 in 4 children in the EU are at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost of living and the climate crisis are exacerbating the already existing inequalities, she explained. For this reason, the ECG must be properly implemented and fully funded.

ECPM's General Director, Maarten van de Fliert praised MEP Geuking's work on this topic and

his collaboration in promoting one of ECPM's spearheads: Healthy Families. He stressed the importance of a healthy family environment for the harmonious development of children and for the benefit of society at large.

The final two speakers were Rev. Dr. Joe-Barth Abba and Fr. Hans Schmeinck who had led the religious service preceding the conference. They spoke about the *Imago Dei* we all carry within us and about the preciousness of children and their protection. Dr. Abba stressed the importance of the family in the education of the child and the right of parents to be involved and consulted about what their children are taught.



Economy Benefitting People & Planet

Environment • Sustainability • Technology

Who Feeds the World Tomorrow?



MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen, ECPM/SGP Netherlands
Roel Jongeneel, Senior Scientist at Wageningen Economic Research
Bart Kemp, Spokesman for the farmer organization Agractie
Kees Huizinga, Dutch farmer living in the Ukraine
Maarten van de Fliert, ECPM General Director

Hosted by ECPM Member of European Parliament Bert-Jan Ruissen and attended by around seventy people, we held a seminar in Putten, NL where we discussed the current threats to our food supply and what that means for our future. ECPM General Director Maarten van de Fliert was present, too, and provided information about ECPM, our role in the EP and the position of these policies.

The European Union has been largely self-sufficient in most agricultural products and is the largest exporter of agri-food products, but all that is in danger of changing. The rapid increase in world population, climate change and the war in Ukraine are threatening to destabilize the global food security.

The speakers have drawn attention in particular to the European Green Deal and its

provisions which greatly regulate and restrict the agricultural sector, causing significant tension among the farmers and fishermen (as the protests in the last few years have shown). Those present have echoed the discontent of the food producers about all the red tape and bureaucratic burden they need to put up with in order to be able to continue their activities. Dutch government plans (and other governments in Europe) to reduce the size of agricultural land or transform it into protected areas have been discussed with much concern.

MEP Ruissen committed to continuing the fight at European level on behalf of fishermen, farmers and gardeners, praising the people engaged in these industries for their hard work and for keeping Europe fed.



European Water Protection Policies. The Case of Mar Menor



MEP Anja Haga*
Dr. Alfonso Galdón, Valores President, professor of science and environmental studies
Prof. José Carlos Abellán, Professor of ethics and law
Maarten van de Fliert, ECPM General Director

Together with member parties Contigo Más and Valores, ECPM organized in Spain a conference on the European policies protecting surface and underground waters, by looking specifically at the case of Mar Menor in Murcia.

The intense farming in the region has led to nutrients-rich waters from the fields to spill into Mar Menor (a natural lagoon) where they cause an uncontrollable growth and expansion of algae which then acts as a suffocating “blanket” and deprives of oxygen the marine life under the surface. Many fish and other marine life end up dead on the shores. It is considered an ecological disaster.

The conference started with ECPM General Director- Maarten van de Fliert- bringing

greetings on behalf of ECPM and reflecting on the Christian duty to care and protect the nature, since it is created by God and entrusted to us for stewardship.

Anja Haga (policy expert and consultant for ChristenUnie Netherlands at that time and later MEP) held a presentation about the EU policies governing water protection and the framework around intense farming and agriculture runoffs. She provided examples from the Netherlands on how these measures are approached.

Alfonso Galdón, president of Valores party and expert in environmental sciences, spoke about what is happening in Mar Menor and argued that the lack of coverage of this disaster is partly due to the lack of political will of the current

leadership in Murcia. The lack of enforcement of European standards and fines were also mentioned as factors.

José Carlos Abellán wrapped up the event connecting the two previous keynote speeches by encouraging the audience to acknowledge the issues present in the Spanish society and to proactively engage in addressing them. He spoke also about the Contigo Más ethics and principles regarding nature and the society at large: integrity, sustainability and beauty. These three virtues are interdependent and, when given equal importance and effort, they produce a wholesome and healthy (social, political, natural) environment.



*Anja Haga succeeded Peter van Dalen as MEP for ChristenUnie/ECPM on September 5th.

Economics, Diplomacy and Integrity Croatia Forum



Dr. Justin Kagin, Founder and director of EDI, University of California, Davis
MEP Cristian Terheş, ECPM/ President of PNCR* Romania
Jack Fallow, Director of Globis Mediation, business consultant
Dr. Aurora Martin, Romania National Agency for Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
Dr. Noemi Mena Montes, Professor of Political Communication, Radboud University

Dr. Josip Lucev, Political Scientist
Robert Maricak, Business investor and executives’ consultant
Tihomir Kukolja, Director Leadership Focus International
Momir Blazek, CEO and Art Director of MI Design
Mihajlo Trajkoski, Project Manager NGO LinkAcross
Martha Weiss, CEO of Equipping the Next Generation (EtNG), Forum for Leadership and Reconciliation board chair
Maria van Oost, Compliance Officer ECPM



ECPM co-organized the twelve-day-long Forum together with Economics, Diplomacy and Integrity Croatia (EDI), an organization aiming to establish an economic and political community of leaders based on the principles of Jesus. The objective of EDI is to enable leaders to put these principles to use and engage societal problems such as corruption, selfishness, youth hopelessness, unemployment and poverty. EDI believes that when people and leaders adhere to Jesus’ teachings, they will make a difference in their environments. The Forum was attended by thirty participants coming from different backgrounds and active in various fields of work

such as academia, business, and government.

Through a combination of lectures, small group discussions, workshops, and networking opportunities we created an environment where participants could gain knowledge, develop a vision for change, and receive practical support for their endeavors in politics, economics, and business—all while emphasizing the importance of integrity and reconciliation in post-war contexts. Participants were provided with invaluable resources and a supportive community that encouraged them to think, work, and lead wisely.

Jack Fallow encouraged the participants to cultivate character and integrity: ***“Integrity is the crucial thing, no matter what your role in life is, because your actions come from your character, and we should continuously improve our character.”***

MEP Cristian Terheş spoke about integrity in politics and how one can maintain integrity even in the face of the challenges in the parliament. In a measured and unvarnished way, he spoke about the costs of entering politics and offered valuable advice for those interested in engaging in politics. His Romanian background helped the participants (mostly from the Balkans) identify with him and have hope that they can make a difference without compromising their values.

Dr. Aurora Martin presented her work raising awareness about sex trafficking and the experiences of mothers who migrate to the West from Moldova, and the difficult decision of leaving their families behind.

Robert Maricak encouraged participants to ***“stay in their countries instead of leaving them and use every opportunity to change their nations by building and creating new businesses, engaging in politics, and helping those in need around them.”***

Maria van Oost introduced participants to ECPM and described the intricate decision-making process in the EU Parliament and how ECPM contributes to this process for Christians.

*PNCR- Romanian National Conservative Party

Towards the 2024 European Election: European Economic Policies



Karin Heepen, ECPM vice president, Chairwoman Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland
Johannes de Jong, Director of Sallux
Dr. Jacques Bazen, Lecturer at Saxion University, ECPM board member
Andrea Rehwald, Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland
Verena Thümmel, Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland

ECPM and Bündnis C teamed up for an event on the topic of European economic policies; it aimed to inform the attendees of current European economic policies and was held in the light of the upcoming European elections of June 2024. Some forty people were present at the conference.

Johannes de Jong, director of Sallux ECPM Foundation, delivered a comprehensive presentation on the intersection of European economic and foreign policies and their implications for migration and the root causes of displacement in the Middle East and Africa. He advocated for a relational economic policy which extends benefits beyond shareholders and involves all participants, especially families. He emphasized the significance of decent working

conditions and fair wages both domestically and internationally. In his presentation, de Jong underscored the necessity of a foreign policy that doesn't appease corrupt regimes but instead collaborates with entities in these nations advocating for fundamental freedoms, aligning with the EU's Christian character. This approach, he argued, is crucial for long-term reduction of migration causes, tensions, and costs in Europe.

Dr. Jacques Bazen, board member of ECPM, delved into the plans of the European Central Bank (ECB) for a Digital Euro. Contrary to replacing cash, the Digital Euro is designed to complement it as legal tender, aiming to mitigate the challenges and price fluctuations associated with digital currencies like Bitcoin.

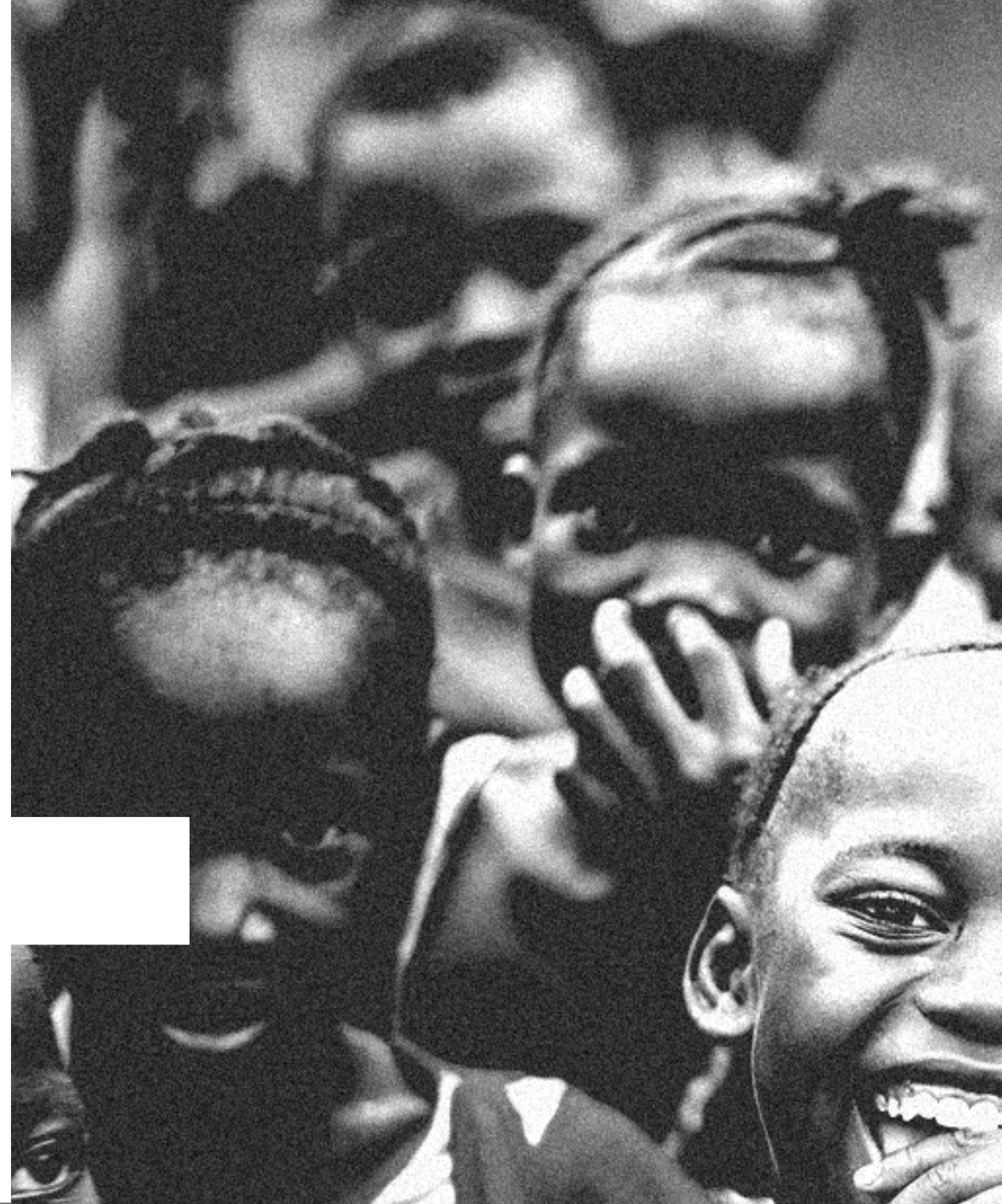


Bazen raised concerns about the potential vulnerabilities of a new digital payment system, including high costs and susceptibility to hacking. He highlighted the transformative shift of the ECB from a monetary supervisory authority to a commercial bank providing services directly to citizens. Bazen warned that should the Digital Euro become the dominant payment method in Europe, the ECB would simultaneously become a major risk factor for financial system issues.

Andrea Rehwald (Bündnis C) shed light on the European Green Deal, emphasizing its implications and strategies for environmental sustainability. Verena Thümmel (Bündnis C) gave insights into the EU's plans for international pandemic management, focusing on collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the establishment of an international health system.

Freedom, Security & Stability

Security • Collaboration • Developement



The Multiple Faces of Antisemitism in Europe



MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen, ECPM/ SGP Netherlands
MEP Niclas Herbst, EPP
MP Michael Freihlich, N-VA (BEL)
Josh Reinstein, President of Israel Allies Foundation
Leo van Doesburg, Director for Europe, Israel Allies Foundation
Orianna Marie Krueger, Combating Antisemitism Movement
Valeriu Ghilețchi, ECPM President

Other contributors: MEP Helmut Geuking, MEP Miriam Lexmann, MEP Charlie Weimers, MEP Cristian Terheș, MP Emanuel Zingiris (Lithuania, online), MP Darren Millar (UK), Lucio Malan, senator (Italy, online), Inga Bite, former MP (Latvia, online), Ruth Isaac (European Jewish Association), Risto Huvila (Vice-Chair Finnish Holocaust Remembrance Association), Patricia Teitelbaum (Chair of IMPAC –International Movement for Peace and Coexistence), Jack van der Tang (Pillar of Fire), Jan Aage Torp (Norwegian Christian Coalition).

More than a hundred people– Members of the European Parliament, members of national parliaments, organizations and members of civil society– gathered in the European Parliament in Brussels to discuss and bring to light various

ways in which antisemitism still shows up in European society.

Even though several years have passed since the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definition was created and most EU member states have already adopted it, the speakers showed how antisemitic language and attitudes continue to be a reality in Europe. The purpose of this event was to raise awareness of this phenomenon, to share experiences of various legislators on how they approach fighting it and to propose ways in which the European Union can increase its role in addressing antisemitism.

“Antisemitism is a threat not just for the Jewish people, but it is a poison for our

society, our values and our democracy,” MEP Niclas Herbst from Germany told the audience at the opening of the event. *“Many Europeans live with a distorted view of Jews and the Holocaust,”* said MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen, citing multiple studies which show a lack of knowledge about the Holocaust among young people.

The various speakers named anti-Zionism as a new form of antisemitism; while in the past Jews were persecuted because of their religion or ethnicity, now they are being demonized for their desire to live in their land. In international and legal fora, Israel is almost always portrayed as the aggressor and occupier for claiming rights to its own land and settling there. It was emphasized that this shift in mindset and law interpretation amounts to institutional antisemitism. The members of European Parliament in the room pointed to the unwavering support given to the Palestinians by the European Commission while ignoring the antisemitic school materials, language and attitude on display in Palestinian circles.

Orianna Marie Krueger and MEP Helmut Geuking highlighted the critical role of education. Krueger suggested that education should address the subject of antisemitism. MEP Geuking added that the fight against antisemitism starts in schools. Only through education can the mentality that world peace is threatened by Jews be changed.

Josh Reinstein, the Israel Allies Foundation President, emphasized the benefits of faith-based diplomacy and encouraged all legislators and representatives friendly towards Israel’s plea to advocate on their behalf from their positions in order to counteract the rising form of institutional antisemitism.

ECPM President Valeriu Ghilețchi mentioned that fighting antisemitism and every kind of religious persecution is a core value for ECPM and that *“together with our MEPs and national parties we work on guidelines and projects meant to combat antisemitism”*.



Renewing Our Minds - Peace and Reconciliation in the Balkans



Bojan Ruvarac, ROM Director
Martha Weiss, CEO of Equipping the Next Generation (ETNG), Forum for Leadership and Reconciliation board chair
Alan Cutting, Former pastor and Samaritan's Purse Project Manager
Bryan Carey, Peace Catalyst International
Mirela Popaja-Hadžić, trauma and peacebuilding professional
Dušan Beredji, Pastor and activist

Camilla Bocăniaľă, Polylogos founder
Tihomir Kukolja, Former ROM director
Marko Marina, historian of religions
Anthony Cordle
MP Stieneke van der Graaf, ChristenUnie
Jack Fallow, Director of Globis Mediation, business consultant
Marko Stupar, Financial advisor and community organizer
Maria van Oost, Compliance Officer ECPM

The goal of this summer conference organized by ECPM together with Forum for Leadership & Reconciliation is to transform the thinking (renew the minds) of future leaders in the Balkan area through Jesus' teachings. These leaders will then return to their communities and act as bridge builders and peacemakers, and will help bring unity to communities divided along ethnic, religious, or socio-economic lines. The ROM 2023 conference unfolded over several days, featuring a lineup of speakers and workshops that delved into various aspects of identity,

dialogue, peacebuilding, and leadership. It was attended by fifty people.

Bojan Ruvarac kicked off the conference talking about identity and about the ways we interact with those we perceive as enemies. Anthony Cordle continued this theme, emphasizing the never-ending potential for understanding and refining one's identity. Martha Weiss explored the crucial skill of disagreeing well, offering a respectful dialogue framework. Marko Marina provided historical insights into how Jesus'

teachings influenced the Roman Empire and the Jews living under their occupation at that time.

The workshop *Art as a Weapon of Peace* prompted thought-provoking discussions led by Dušan Beredji and Bryan Carey, emphasizing the power of art in fostering peace. The following days featured speakers like Marko Stupar, who challenged attendees to live lives of integrity, and Stieneke van der Graaf, a Dutch MP who talked about her work around environmental and human rights issues. Maria van Oost presented the ECPM and the seven spearheads of our programme as an example of the implementation of Jesus' teachings in politics.

After a day in Trieste for reflection, the conference continued with another workshop called *What's Troubling Young People Today?* The importance of cross-generational dialogue was highlighted, fostering mutual understanding and learning between age groups.

A night dedicated to empathy and vulnerability allowed participants to share their stories, fears and challenges in leading. The following morning included joint sessions with EDI*, featuring Tihomir Kukolja and Alan Cutting reflecting on Jesus' role as a healer and a servant leader.

The second week included workshops on the fight against human trafficking and extreme nationalism, on leadership and parenting.

Mirela Popaja-Hadžić spoke about trauma, its effects on relationships and emphasized the healing power of forgiveness. Jack Fallow led discussions on managing difficult conversations, an essential skill for those in leadership positions. Camilla Bocăniaľă introduced the concept of *"effectuation"*, urging leaders to affect the future of their organizations rather than predict it.

The conference's final morning focused on establishing habits for self-protection while working as agents of change. A roundtable discussion led by Violeta, Camilla, and Rachel addressed strategies to avoid burnout and maintain health and proactivity in the pursuit of positive societal transformation.

Participants in this year's reconciliation summer conference enjoyed a meaningful experience, engaged in learning, shared moments and conversations with fellow young leaders. They were personally challenged in their identity and vision. A participant reflected on the conference, saying, ***"It has been a remarkable time, meeting incredible individuals with beautiful yet challenging stories. I firmly believe that ROM provides an excellent platform for learning, empowerment, and growth in dreams, vision, and personal identity."***



*EDI- Economics, Diplomacy and Integrity forum

The Troubled Political Situation in the Middle East and its Impact on the EU Foreign Policy



Karin Heepen, ECPM vice president, Chairwoman Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland
 Journalist and Islamic studies expert
Johannes de Jong, Director of Sallux
Lefteris Kaloterakis, ECPM Policy Officer

Together with member party Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland, ECPM hosted a conference on the current situation in the Middle East for around thirty people. The event sought to provide insight and clarification on the conflict between Israel and Palestine, and to discuss the implications for the European Union.

Bündnis C Chairwoman Karin Heepen opened the event by setting the context in which Hamas’ terrorist attack on Israelis took place the month before, on October 7th. She recalled European history and emphasized that past oppression and persecution of Jews in Europe creates a responsibility to protect and defend the Jewish people and the Israeli state.

The keynote speaker was an experienced journalist and expert in Islamic studies who has

been living and working in the Middle East for more than a decade. For safety concerns, her identity will be concealed. She explained how the Hamas attack on Oct. 7 was strategically timed during a period of internal division in Israel over Netanyahu’s attempt to diminish the power of the judiciary, exacerbated by tensions between Arabs and Israelis and, more broadly, tensions between Shiite–Sunni. She presented Israel as a bulwark against Islamic terrorism and its threat to European democracies as well. The speaker showed great concern about the increase in antisemitic sentiment, particularly among young people and within universities. She continued by recalling that Europe is the largest provider of aid to Palestinians, with around 300 million euros annually, but warned that part of these funds may end up in the hands of Hamas and be used for buying weapons etc.



Johannes de Jong, director of Sallux, during his presentation criticized the EU for lacking a certain awareness of the reality on the ground in the Middle East. He advocated for any EU approach to be rooted in the concept of shared human dignity. By presenting a historical perspective on the Middle East and describing the extremist expansionist behavior of Iran and Turkey, he pointed at the inconsistency of EU foreign policy in the region. Human rights violations by Turkey and Iran are ignored to

maintain the status quo. The autonomy of stateless and oppressed peoples, such as the Kurds, is not given the same weight and attention as the cause of the Palestinians. Mr. de Jong called for consistency in EU foreign policy with regard to ethnic minorities and their self-determination.

Both speakers agreed on the fact that a two-state solution for the Israeli–Palestinian conflict seems unfeasible at this moment in time.

Reforming the EU

Reform • Subsidiarity • Cooperation



ECPM-CU: Together to European elections



Mirjam Bikker, Christen Unie leader
Don Ceder, Nico Drost, Stieneke van der Graaf- Christen Unie Members of Parliament
Oetze Deelstra- APA to MEP Peter van Dalen
Maarten van de Fliert- ECPM General Director

The ECPM General Director Maarten van de Fliert joined our member Christen Unie (CU) for the Dutch Parliament’s open day on 11th February and for a special meeting focused on EU policies and the work of ECPM on June 3rd in Apeldoorn. The Christen Unie leader and Parliament representatives updated the audience about their work, spoke about their challenges and presented the strategy for the 2024 European elections.

The ECPM Director engaged people in workshops and in small group discussions on the importance of Christian values being promoted at European level. He spoke about

the role of European parties, of the work of our MEPs in the European Parliament and of the upcoming European elections in 2024. The visitors oftentimes asked questions about the other EU bodies, like the EU Commission and Council and expressed frustration with some of the legislation which seems imposed on The Netherlands from Brussels.

Assistants of the CU MEP Peter van Dalen* were present and offered additional insight into the activities of an MEP, the voting process and the legislative train timeline and impact. They also participated in the Q&A session, answering many questions from the audience.

*After 1 September, Anja Haga succeeded Peter van Dalen in the European Parliament

Mr. van de Fliert took time on each occasion to talk about the privilege but also the challenge of being the only European party to explicitly promote Christian values and how that is connected to political work in the European Union. He reminded visitors that Christian values such as peace, justice, freedom, equality and solidarity were what inspired the EU founding fathers and we have a mission to honour that legacy and to remind our voters that those ideas are still relevant and useful today.

The participants were reminded on both occasions that the Dutch are heading to the polls for the European elections on the first day, on 6 June 2024, and useful links and pages to be followed for information were provided to everyone interested.



International Covid Summit III



MEP Cristian Terheş
MEP Francesca Donato
MEP Ivan Vilibor Sinčić
MEP Christine Anderson
MEP Mislav Kolakušić
Dr. Robert Malone

Dr. Pierre Kory
Dr. Ryan Cole
Dr. Byram Bridle
+20 other doctors, scientists, journalists and experts.

Together with MEP Cristian Terheş we helped organize the third edition of the International Covid Summit (ICS 3) which took place in the European Parliament in Brussels. MEP Terheş together with other MEPs welcomed world-renowned doctors, virologists, journalists, scientists and other experts to present their findings on various aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the lives of citizens. Speakers presented the origins of studies of coronaviruses and potential vaccines, the effects of the virus on the various demographics and people with pre-existing conditions, the effects of lockdowns and social distancing, as well as the effects of vaccines on adults and children.

MEP Terheş spoke in particular about the restriction of fundamental rights and of movement during lockdowns and around the use of the so-called COVID-19 Green Certificate. He virulently criticized the

European Commission for the opaque ways in which it contracted the Pharma companies to produce vaccines and then bought them even though they were developed with public money. All speakers denounced the obligation the EU imposed on the population to vaccinate.

The goal of the high-level conference was to raise awareness and draw lessons from the past to better address future pandemics or health crises. The event was attended by approximately 250 people.



ECPM-SGP: Together to the European Elections



MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen, ECPM/ SGP Netherlands
Dick van Meeuwen, President of SGP
Maarten van de Fliert, ECPM General Director
Nathanaël Middelkoop, Alderman in Urk, The Netherlands

Together with Dutch member party SGP*, ECPM organized a conference on social and economic European policies in the framework of the upcoming EP 2024 elections. Approximately five hundred SGP members attended the meeting which focused on the political program of the SGP for the European elections and on providing input for ECPM's political manifesto.

SGP party president, Dick van Meeuwen, opened the conference with a speech on the significance of advancing Christian values in politics, particularly in the European Parliament. He welcomed ECPM General Director Maarten van de Fliert, who shared about ECPM's work in the EP and in gathering Christian parties and individuals from all over Europe under

one umbrella. ECPM maintained a presence throughout the conference with a stand, inviting attendees to ask questions about our activities. In anticipation of Mother's Day (the day after the conference), ECPM gave away a small gift to attending families.

MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen presented his work in the European Parliament, and his activities with the ECPM. Ruissen also explained his motivation as lead candidate for the EP elections with the SGP. His candidacy was confirmed during the conference, sealing his appointment as the head of list for SGP in the Euro elections 2024.

During a panel exchange, European policies on Israel, agriculture and fishing, and freedom

of religion and belief were discussed. The 75th anniversary of the state of Israel was brought up, and MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen detailed his work in the EP Committee on Foreign Affairs and as vice-chair of the EP Delegation for Relations with Israel. The panel continued with the challenges in the agricultural policies coming down from Brussels. Ruissen spoke about his efforts as a member of the Committees on Agriculture and Rural Development and Fisheries. Nathanaël Middelkoop, alderman from Urk responsible for agriculture and fisheries, highlighted the ways national and European measures have an impact at the local level and shared the challenges for him as alderman and for his community.

The conference closed with an enthusiastic encouragement and call to vote in the EP elections next year.



*SGP- Dutch Reformed Party

Honoring EU's Christian Roots

Advocacy • Freedom • Heritage



The Christian Roots of Europe



Prof. Juan Manuel Burgos, President of Asociación Española de Personalismo
Miguel Perez de los Mozos, President of Contigo Más in Pozuelo de Alarcón
Carlos Ruiperez, President of Contigo Más in Arroyomolinos
Maarten van de Fliert, ECPM General Director

The leaders of Contigo Más in the suburbs of the Madrid greater area – Pozuelo de Alarcón and Arroyomolinos – joined by the ECPM General Director and an international expert on the history of Europe, spoke with approximately forty guests about the Christian roots of the European Union and the history of Christian-democracy in Europe. The event took place in front of a monument dedicated to Europe, the Perdigones Hill, in Pozuelo. Both the Spanish and the European anthems were sung, and the flags were raised in a ceremonial moment.

By organizing this event we wanted to remind Europeans and Spaniards that the European Union project was based on Christian values like peace, justice, equality, solidarity. We want the European institutions and legislation to reflect and to include this historical truth.

Although the origins of the European Union and

its economic community are relatively recent, the European citizens forgot or missed how and why it all started and that it is these roots which all the countries in Europe have in common. The main issue addressed in this event was an exposition of the Christian roots of European culture and political system and a call to return or to rediscover those roots. The conclusion of the event was that Christian-democratic values are still relevant today because it puts the human being at the center of political activity.

Professor Burgos, an expert in European history and thought, spoke about the Greek, Roman and Christian roots of Europe and emphasized in his talk how Christianity's central tenet– that the human being has intrinsic worth and value– shaped European history and culture, including our legal and political systems. He also pointed out how this aspect is something uniquely European, part of the European soul and DNA.

The other speakers expressed that European Christian democrats have a duty to keep alive this heritage and history and to fight for the Christian roots of Europe to be recognized and reflected in EU language and legislation. Miguel Pérez de los Mozos and Carlos Ruipérez, the Contigo Más leaders in the two suburbs, reminded the audience of Spain's origins and history and its Catholic faith which can be instrumental in guiding a legislator and is linked to our freedoms and rights.



The Relevance of Ethnic Communities for European Diversity



Michal Považan, ECPM Board member
Ján Merka, Director of the Bihor branch of Democratic Union of Slovaks and Czechs in Romania
Fr. Anton Merčák

Together with the Democratic Union of Slovaks and Czechs in Romania, ECPM organized a conference in Bihor, Romania, on the relevance of ethnic communities for European diversity. The event kicked off a youth ethnic festival and was attended by 350 participants from Czech Republic, Croatia, Serbia, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. Among the attendees were several representatives of Romanian and Slovak government, and representatives of minority organizations: Peter Hatar- Ambassador of Slovakia in Romania, Adrián Miroslav Merka- chairman UDSCR and member of Parliament (Romania), Viliam Komora- secretary of Matice slovenskej (Slovakia), Doina Iacoban- State Secretary Ministry of Investments and European Projects (Romania), Malina Marica- Director School of Public Finance, Ministry of Finance (Romania), Geafer Dincer- State Secretary Department for Interethnic Relations (Romania), Aurora Caravasile- Advisor to the Ministry of Culture, Department for National Minorities

(Romania), Miroljub Panici- Union of Bulgarians from Banat representative (Romania) and Sorin Galadean- Union of Romanian Architects representative.

Following the conference, the dignitaries enjoyed the 17th edition of the International Festival of Slovak Youth, a separate event, where dance youth groups from Central and East Europe presented their customs, traditions and culture. The objective of the conference was to highlight the importance of ethnic communities for regional, national and European diversity and to underline their contribution to the preservation and promotion of Christian values as a link between Romanians, Slovaks, Czechs, Bulgarians and other Balkan peoples.

The core message conveyed by the speakers is the imperative to educate and prepare the youth to assume their roles as members, and future leaders, of the ethnic communities. Only

then the preservation of diversity of the EU and its cultural richness can be secure.

Michal Považan, ECPM Board member, pointed to the fact that in the European Union everyone is a minority, whether on a national, religious, or ethnic basis, and the way individuals navigate this minority status determines whether they become agents of change or endure suffering. The Slovak minority in Romania, drawing strength from its rich history, has faced challenges and evolved, showcasing creativity and the European spirit of entrepreneurship. Považan underlined the need to build internally strong communities rooted in history and faith and he mentioned inter-generational dialogue and solidarity as a key component in this process. Ján Merka, Director of the Bihor branch of Democratic Union of Slovaks and Czechs in Romania, advocated for countries to recognize and protect the rights of individuals who belong to a minority and to facilitate ways for them to communicate and interact with administrative and judicial authorities in their native tongue.



Cornerstone Annual Dinner for Young Professionals



MEP Anja Haga, ECPM/ CU Netherlands
 Alojz Peterle, former Prime Minister of Slovenia, former MEP
 Marie Claire Curera, IT Application Support Team Leader and Founder and CEO of Shean asbl
 Jonathan de Koeijer, ECPYouth board member

In cooperation with the Cornerstone team, the annual dinner took place in Brussels on December 6th . The event brought together almost one hundred young professionals interested in politics and the work of ECPM. At the event, guests present had the opportunity to network and exchange views and stories about navigating the workplace as a follower of Jesus.

Accredited Parliamentary Assistant Bart Bolhuis delivered MEP Anja Haga's speech, due to the fact she was unable to attend. Haga encouraged the participants in these times of rapid changes, conflict, technological and environmental challenges: ***"Be assertive, be patient, be loving."*** She shared how ***"the enduring love of God, exemplified in Jesus Christ"*** inspires her in her parliamentary work. When discussing environmental challenges, MEP Haga pointed at the tension Christians may experience: God is in charge but at the

same time we have a responsibility to act when consumption patterns in the West have negative implications for nature and Creation.

Mr. Peterle talked about his personal experiences during communism in Slovenia and about his time serving in various public roles, and the role of his faith during all of it. "We cannot separate a citizen from his values and belief" was his answer whenever he was confronted with the idea that someone's religion should be a private matter. He centered his life's work and efforts around human dignity as a guiding principle, which is something he has in common with EU founding father Robert Schuman. Human dignity provides a remedy for increasing polarization, in his opinion. Europe has a bright future when it is built on human dignity and cooperation.

Ms. Marie Claire Curera fled Rwanda during the genocide and came to Belgium as a refugee.

Now, she is an IT specialist and leads the non-governmental organization Shean which supports refugees. Ms. Curera elaborated on the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), saying it can be both a blessing and a curse since it can be used for good and for evil. For instance: automatization and a loss of jobs, as well as threats to our privacy. ***"However, we should not disengage from this challenge"***, she said. ***"We should develop new skills to anticipate the future of AI's development. Christian actors in the field should therefore put their faith and skills to good use to understand AI and harness it for good purposes."***



Working Visits with ECPM Members

SGP, The Netherlands

A group of nearly one hundred individuals, most of whom are associated with our member party SGP, came to Brussels to participate in a two-day summer school on European Politics held at the European Parliament and other EU institutions.

MEP Ruissen gave a presentation about the advantages and disadvantages of the EU and about its inner workings; he also spoke about his work and the legislative process in the European Parliament. He was followed by MEP Ladislav Ilčič who discussed the role of Christian values being represented in the European Parliament, especially when it comes to reports and resolutions. Journalist Alexander Bakker pointed to the most current news and to the EU showing up frequently in the news but for positive reasons (see Qatargate

etc). Mr. Huib van Wagenveld provided insight into how the European Council is functioning, explaining how the 27 heads of state or the 27 ministers/secretaries of various departments meet regularly to discuss matters which need harmonization and agreement. ECPM President Valeriu Ghilețchi spoke about the work we are carrying out at national, regional and European level and encouraged the participants present to engage politically in their towns and communities.

The summer school also featured workshops and EP debate simulations over resolutions.

European Politics Summer School: MEPs and Experts Discuss EU Advantages, Christian Values, and Political Engagement



Unia Polityki Realnej (UPR) & Prawica Rzeczypospolitej, Poland

At the end of February, General Director Maarten van de Fliert visited the two member parties ECPM has in Poland. He met with the leadership and staff of each party, listened to their plans and vision for the short-term and long-term future, and shared experiences of our other member parties in similar situations, as well as offered support and training for capacity building.



Prawica Rzeczypospolitej, Poland



Unia Polityki Realnej, Poland

Bulgarian Union from Banat (UBB) & Slovak & Czech Democratic Union (UDSCR), Romania

In April 2023, General Director Maarten van de Fliert visited our member parties in the Western part of Romania. In Arad, he met with the member of Parliament representing the Bulgarian community in the West and South of Romania, George Nacov, and a couple of his board members. It was an informative and productive discussion, where the ECPM Director got an insight into the Bulgarian minority community, their challenges and their priorities. It was a privilege to get to know Mr. Nacov and talk about his passion for hunting and fishing and the concern for ecosystem equilibrium. We found common interests and discussed organizing an event on Creation Care together in the future.

In Oradea, Mr. van de Fliert visited the offices of UDSCR and met with their representative in the Romanian Parliament, Mr. Adrian Merka. He shared with the ECPM Director about the educational programs and after-school activities taking place at the party headquarters for the minority children in the community. Mr. Merka further explained how the party is organized, what is the area it represents and spoke about his work in the Romanian Parliament. It was decided during the visit to organize an event highlighting the importance of the ethnic communities for Romania and for Europe (you can find that event at page 64).



with UDSCR President Adrian Merka



with UBB President George Nacov

General Assembly- 24th and 25th edition

The 24th edition of the ECPM general assembly took place in Rambouillet, France, where our member party VIA- La Voie du Peuple and its president Jean-Frédéric Poisson (former mayor of the city) graciously hosted us. Members from twenty countries, representing eighteen political parties, joined the board, advisory council and staff for the meeting which was chaired by ECPM President Valeriu Ghilețchi, assisted by vice-president Karin Heepen and General Director Maarten van de Fliert. Our think-tank, Sallux, and the ECPYouth were present as well and shared with the assembly the projects they are engaged in.

During the reunion, members thanked outgoing MEP Peter van Dalen for his hard work during his mandates in the European Parliament and welcomed his successor, MEP Anja Haga. At the same time, the assembly also welcomed three new parties into our family: Valores

(Spain), Suverena vera (Latvia) and Abba (Malta) and elected two new board members: MEP Cristian Terheș and Jean-Frédéric Poisson.

In the second part of the reunion, members had the opportunity to review and provide input on the election manifesto and the political program for the next mandate. We heard what the priorities for each of the members are and what they would like to focus on during the European elections. The suggestions were collected and followed up on during the subsequent months and a final version of the manifesto was presented and accepted later in the year.

The meeting concluded with a presentation of the party's finances and the Auditors' report as well as an announcement about upcoming changes to the ECPM statutes to bring them in line with Authority recommendations for European political parties.

ECPM assembly in Rambouillet: Welcoming new members, planning election manifesto.





We met again in a general assembly format for the 25th edition in December 2023, in Brussels, Belgium. It was an extraordinary session which lasted two days and focused primarily on the manifesto/ political program. The members had the opportunity to submit comments and amendments to the version presented at the previous GA in Rambouillet for several months and during this assembly those amendments were discussed and voted. We had representatives from more than twenty member parties and individual members, besides the board, staff, advisory council, Sallux and ECPYouth; in total almost sixty people.

During the meeting, we welcomed MEP Marton Gyöngyösi as individual member and MEP Cristian Terheş and former MEP Peter van Dalen whose status changed to individual member. Additionally, the assembly was informed of the board's decision to accept the Swedish Values Party as a new member party.

The members of ECPM also had a chance to vote on the statutes changes, which were brought as a necessity to comply with new rules and with Authority requirements.

Our political program for the next legislature serves as our Manifesto for the 2024 elections. It is structured around seven spearheads and represents our common ideology guiding our political work and decisions:

1. Human dignity
2. Healthy families
3. Economy benefitting people & planet
4. Freedom, security & stability
5. Fighting modern slavery
6. Reforming the European Union
7. Honoring EU's Christian roots



You can read our Manifesto here.

Our two-day extraordinary session ended with a presentation of the campaign plans and vision, of the topics and of ideas for collaboration in order to promote our program and values throughout Europe.

ECPYouth

This year, ECPYouth opted for the theme: 'Sustainability: Joint Fight for a Renewable Future'. God created the Earth and the human being in His image and likeness, making it our direct duty to care for the creation and protect the rights of future generations. ECPYouth takes the meaning of sustainability beyond its primary environmental sense and includes the other pillars as well: economic, political, and social sustainability.

Our events in Madrid and Warsaw gave us the opportunity to delve deeper into the matter and discuss the implications of resource overuse, energy shortages and the challenges of inflation, resulting in political turbulence, as well as the potential contribution of young people to incorporating sustainable practices into our daily living. The discussions culminated in adopting a Resolution on Sustainability with a practical call to spread awareness about environmental sustainability, promote the respective policies, and integrate sustainability targets into the 2024 European electoral campaign.

Committed to investing in Christian youth with political vision, we ran

the second edition of the Christian Changemakers training throughout the year. The program gathered even more expert trainers on political campaigning, debating, campaigning and Biblical foundations and received overwhelmingly positive feedback from our participants.

Throughout the year, we substantially expanded our network by welcoming a new member organization from North Macedonia, accepting new individual members, and strengthening our existing partnerships. The members and friends of ECPYouth joined the Working Group Politics, which was restarted this year and contributes to the political positioning of ECPYouth. We stay active in supporting and attending the events of our members, such as the Congress of our member Perspectief and the Summer School of SGP-Youth, joined the podcast of SGP-Youth, and attended the 24th and 25th General Assemblies of ECPM. Working in close cooperation, we keep discovering our calling and finding new ways to put our ideas into practice for stronger Christian democratic ideals among European youth.



Sustainability Through the Lens of Spain



Maarten van de Fliert, ECPM General Director
Dr. Noemi Mena Montes, Senior Lecturer at Radboud University
Cristina Rodriguez, Valores head of list for Lorca
Percival Manglano, Member of Congress for Madrid

ECPYouth held its regional conference in conjunction with the annual General Assembly in Madrid in April 2023. Counting around 30 people, the event focused on this year's theme of sustainability in regard to the natural environment, economy and migration, to which the Spanish political context layer was added.

Maarten van de Fliert opened our event, encouraging the ECPYouth members and affiliates to think about the current challenges that European youth faces, and to develop the ECPYouth position in addressing them. He was followed by

representatives of the youth branches of the Christian political parties ECPM has in Spain: Valores and Contigo Mas. The keynote speaker was Dr. Noemi Montes who delivered a talk on the issue of migration and sustainability; she addressed the economic impact of migration in Europe, deconstructed myths promoted by media regarding immigrants, routes and the job market. Dr. Montes is a long-term journalist reporting on the issue of refugees and economic migrants in Europe and leads several projects on reconciliation throughout Europe.

ECPYouth also had the privilege to visit both chambers of the Spanish Congress in Madrid, while receiving explanations about the political landscape in Spain. We were led on this tour by Percival Manglano, member of Congress representing Madrid.

It was an intellectually enriching experience, helping our participants to better understand the Spanish context and to think about sustainability in new ways, as well as an amazing networking opportunity due to the high turnout for the event.



Christian Changemakers 2 (2022-2023)



Valeriia Petrechiv, Christian Changemakers (CCM) Coordinator

Klariska ten Napel, Trainer at School voor Spreekvaardigheid and a City Council Member

Jeff & Romkje Fountain, Founders Schuman Centre for European Studies

Philip Powell, Jubilee Centre

Jack Valero, Catholic Voices

Oetze Deelstra, Accredited Assistant to MEP Peter van Dalen

Elise Abbey van Doorn, International Coordinator at SGP

Dr. Noemi Mena Montes, Senior Lecturer at Radboud University

Cristiana Bontea, Professional Orientation Coach at Coach for Insights

Francis Longchamps de Berier, Catholic Priest and a Legal Professor at Jagellonian University

Marija Petrushevska, Member of North Macedonian Parliament

Wojciech Kosciak, Former TV Presenter at Telewizja Republika

Maarten van de Fliert, General Director of ECPM

Joshua and Juliana Heinrichs, Members of the Cornerstone Network

Christian Changemakers (CCM) is a year-long program, offered by ECPYouth, aimed at equipping potential or current young Christian politicians with necessary tools such as public speaking, writing, debating, presentation skills, and campaigning skills. The training is

designed to strengthen the intellectual, practical, biblical, and relational outlook of participants and consists of a combination of online and offline training, ongoing coaching sessions, and practical assignments throughout the year.

The second Christian Changemakers program started in the fall of 2022 in Switzerland. Participants of the program explored a variety of topics from a Christian perspective. Throughout the year, participants were guided by the main trainer of the program Klariska



ten Napel, the coordinator Valeriia Petrechkiy, and the professional coach Cristiana Bontea.

The kick-off event took place in October 2022 in Switzerland under the theme 'The person behind the change'. The goal was to help participants identify who they are, what they want to do and what their message is through Bible studies, coaching support, and group feedback sessions. They further went through an intense three-day public speaking training to learn to produce and transmit a compelling message.

The second event of this season took place on 1-4 March 2023 in Brussels, Belgium and was aimed at helping CCM participants stand with confidence and talk with grace in the political arena, in debates and on (social) media as Christian politicians. Klariska ten Napel, Jack Valero and Oetze Deelstra spoke about the various aspects of communication, about framing and reframing, about expressing one's views in a calm, dignified way, about empathizing and connecting with the receiver of the message etc. The coaches equipped the participants in effective techniques based on a Biblical approach.

The participants in the program then got to visit the European Parliament, guided by accredited assistants of the MEPs.

Elise Abbey van Doorn offered extensive information about the European institutions and how they function. The youth met MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen and ECPM General Director Maarten van de Fliert for an open conversation about the role and impact of Christians in politics.

The closing event of the second edition of Christian Changemakers took place in Warsaw, on 9-12 August. It focused on political campaigning and getting one's message through different types of media, as well as dealing with opponents and polarization. The participants received professional media training from former journalist Wojciech Kosciak. It continued with sessions and coaching offered by Klariska ten Napel, Marija Petrushevska, and Dr. Noemi Montes who narrowed down the specifics of campaigning, media encounters, and shared their extensive experience. Father Professor Francis Longchamps de Berier supplemented the program with a lecture on the roots of our legal system, a reflection on the topic of Roman Law, and how Christianity shaped our legal norms. Finally, CCM participants had the opportunity to visit the Polish parliament (Sejm) and learn more about the Polish political landscape from representatives of the Real Politics Union party, as well as our Polish member, Maria Skwarcan.

CCM also included multiple online events and assignments. Each in-person event was preluded by a homework

assignment, readings, writing, and video tasks. Throughout the year, participants were studying and debating around four themes: Biblical Foundations, Economy, Law and Justice, Politics. The online modules were structured as four-week workload segments (introduction, assigned reading, study & discussion, conclusions). All the online modules were guided by Philip Powell.

We also came together in an online space for a Lecture on Europe, Christianity, and polarization to further deepen participants' understanding of contemporary European challenges. Jeff Fountain shared his extensive knowledge of and experience within the European political scene, along with the Christian response to modern trends of polarization.

The program also put emphasis on developing strong writing skills and delivering one's message in different formats. Dr. Montes held a series of writing workshops on opinion articles, introduced participants to the publication process, and shared some tips on how to get published. Meanwhile, Klariska ten Napel held a workshop on resolution writing and explained the political process behind submitting a resolution.



ECPYouth General Assembly

Following the conclusion of the CCM programme, ECPYouth had its General Assembly. The Board, ECPYouth Members and Affiliates gathered on August 12, both in-person and online, to discuss the current state of affairs and plan future ECPYouth development and growth.

During the Assembly we elected two new board members: Jonathan de Koeijer (Politics) and Gerard Scullion (Events). Additionally, we welcomed a new member organization: the North-Macedonian Integra Youth Alliance. Two resolutions: one on Sustainability and another on Prevention of Sexual Crimes, were tabled and adopted during the GA.

*Electing board
members,
welcoming
new members,
adopting
resolutions*

12 AUGUST, WARSAW, POLAND



elevate. empower. engage.

2023 Yearbook

RESOLUTION ON SUSTAINABILITY

The members of ECPYouth,

Reminding the climate targets set in the Paris Climate Accords and other binding and non-binding international agreements;

Considering the scientific consensus on the warming of the planet;

Deeply concerned with the human role in the deteriorating state of the climate;

Recalling the Biblical call to human stewardship over nature;

Considering sustainability is the 2023 annual theme of ECPYouth;

Noting further the upcoming European Parliamentary elections in 2024;

Taking note of previous ECPYouth resolutions and statements;

1. Reaffirm that environmental sustainability is a key political challenge for the preservation of a flourishing future of the world;
2. Encourage ECPYouth member organizations to adopt public statements about environmental sustainability, including but not limited to, information dissemination, lobbying mother parties, and ways in which members can take action.
3. Call upon ECPM to integrate sustainability targets into the 2024 European Parliamentary electoral campaign;
4. Call upon MEPs affiliated with ECPM to actively promote policies that support environmental sustainability;
5. Call upon for the utmost effort to meet the goals of the Paris Climate Accords;
6. Further invite other political youth parties to cooperate in order to achieve a sustainable future for future generations.

RESOLUTION ON PREVENTION OF SEXUAL CRIMES

The members of ECPYouth,

Considering ECPYouth Odessa Declaration which emphasizes the freedom, dignity and inviolability of every human being,

Considering that both the Istanbul Convention and MEPs highlight the importance of consent,

Considering that 1 out of 5 children in Europe are victims of various forms of sexual violence, including sexual touching, rape, grooming, sexual harassment and many more,

Considering that people with disabilities are more prone to become victims of rape,

Considering that any form of sexual abuse leaves scars for life and post – traumatic stress disorder (PTSD),

Considering the European Commission proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating violence against women and domestic violence,

Considering that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and therefore never should be assaulted,

Considering no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment according to United Nations,

Stressing that using another person's body to satisfy one's personal sexual wants and needs without consent is a violation of a person's dignity, freedom and other fundamental rights,

Stressing that many cases of rape go unreported in fear of the victim being discriminated by society,

Stressing the importance of raising awareness about the manipulative tricks and traps of the perpetrators,

Stressing that the citizens of the countries who are not part of the EU are suffering just as much from this crime,

Emphasizing the importance of opportunities for building a new life in terms of education, work, financial support and psycho-social therapy as requirements to step out, and therefore combat rape,

Calls upon all members of the EU Parliament, especially of the ECPM:

1. To encourage developing and implementing awareness campaigns/educational programs about rape (not forgetting the countries outside of EU).
2. To recommend the creation of national funds of assistance in rehabilitation of the perpetrator (both during and after jail time).

Working Group Politics Restart

The Working Group Politics has been re-started at the beginning of 2023 and has an important role in contributing to the political substance of ECPYouth. The Working Group consists of 10 members from Poland, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Georgia, Belgium, Armenia, North Macedonia and Serbia and is led by our current Board Member Politics Jonathan de Koeijer.

The Working Group held its online meeting in November 2023 and focused on the potential ways the Working Group Politics can support ECPYouth members with their projects and political vision during the upcoming European elections. The members focused on preparing the major brainstorm session with the entire ECPYouth network, which took place in Brussels on 7 December.

The Politics Working Group supports ECPYouth members for European elections



Election Preview and Members Gathering



Maarten van de Fliert, ECPM General Director

Our final event of the year gathered the members of ECPYouth in Brussels to discuss and plan around the upcoming elections campaign. The members shared the issues their national parties deem important during the brainstorming session facilitated by Board Member Politics and have suggested the ways ECPYouth could carry them forward at the European level. An agreement was made to appoint the campaign committee.

On the second day we discussed and adopted the 2024 budget, as well as elected a new President- Valeriia Petrechiv- and Board Member Communications: Ivana Stojanovska.

Additionally, the Board of ECPYouth attended the European Prayer Breakfast and participated at the Cornerstone Dinner for young professionals on these same days.



ECPM Board



Valeriu Ghilețchi
ECPM President



Karin Heepen
ECPM Vice-President



Cristian Terheș



Jean-Frédéric Poisson



Jacques Bazen
Treasurer



Michal Považan



Leon Meijer

ECPM

MEPs



Cristian Terheș

Country
Romania

Political party
PNCR (Partidul Național
Conservator Român)

Website
rb.gy/jOgomy

Mr. Terheș is a Romanian MEP for the 2019–2025 mandate. He studied Theology, Journalism and Communication in Romania and The United States. He also served as a priest in the Greek–Catholic Romanian Mission and as the President of the Romanian Greek–Catholic Association in US for 10 years. Cristian Terheș has a natural flair for business development and uses technology and communication tools effectively to maximize return on investment and to market companies online. He has successfully used his skills in doing so for companies and

non-profits for almost 20 years.

At a political level, he has been involved with organizations which unite Romanians abroad and solidify relations between Romania and US, with an emphasis on religious liberty, the rule of law and fighting corruption in Romania.

As an MEP, he is a member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and a substitute on the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee and the Petitions Committee.



Anja Haga

Country
The Netherlands

Political party
ChristenUnie

Website
christenunie.nl

Anja Haga is a Dutch Member of the European Parliament on behalf of ChristenUnie (Christian Union) since September 2023 when she succeeded Peter van Dalen. In the European Parliament, she is member of the Parliamentary Committee on Fisheries, a member of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and part of the Delegation for Relations with South Asian Countries.

Haga is a former member of the Provincial Council of Friesland and former alderman of the city of Arnhem. Additionally, she worked as strategic policy

advisor for the Dutch Forestry Department.

Anja Haga is an expert in environment and climate policies and as MEP she fights for a plastic-free Europe and the preservation of nature. The other spearheads of her candidacy for the EP elections are Freedom of Religion & Belief, and a humane, solidarity-based asylum policy.



Helmut Geuking

Country: Germany
Political party: Familien Partei
Website: wählefamilie.de

Mr. Geuking is an MEP for Germany for the 2019-2024 EP mandate. He spent most of his career fighting for social justice for the elderly and disabled and has been a strong advocate for quality palliative care and support for families caring for their loved ones. In the European Parliament, he is a member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.

He is a defender of family rights, state-subsidized childcare and is working towards making the market-place a more family-friendly environment.



Bert-Jan Ruissen

Country: The Netherlands
Political party: SGP
Website: sgp.nl

Bert-Jan Ruissen has been working for the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality for 19 years. He has represented The Netherlands in the EU Council in working groups and committees of DG AGRI. Ruissen has been the SGP representative in the city council of Krimpen aan den IJssel, his hometown.

He believes that Biblical principles are beneficial for the society at large, is critical of the increasing concentration of power in Brussels and is a strong advocate for a well-functioning single market, sustainable agriculture, better relations with Israel and wants to fight modern slavery and oppression.



Márton Gyöngyösi

Country: Hungary
Political party: Jobbik Conservatives
Website: gyongyosimarton.com

Márton Gyöngyösi is a Hungarian Member of the European Parliament representing Jobbik Konzervatívok (Jobbik Conservatives). From 2010 to 2018, he served as member of the Hungarian Parliament where he was the vice-Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. As an MEP, he is a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and of the Delegations to the Africa-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and to the African, Caribbean and Pacific States- EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly.

Gyöngyösi advocates for Christian values, democracy and fundamental freedoms, as well as for the protection of the environment and nature. He puts families as the cornerstone of all policies and society at large.

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ECPM Identity Declaration

We, the members of the European Christian Political Movement (ECPM), based on the biblical foundation of our political engagement– ***‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind’. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ (Matthew 22:37–40 NIV)–, affirm the following:***

- ECPM was founded and exists as the only European political party openly and explicitly promoting Christian values*. We recognize the Christian foundation on which Europe was built and we believe biblical teachings represent a valuable and relevant answer to today’s issues. Christian values are universal and necessary for the progress of the European Union. It is the core feature which unites us.
- We are firmly rooted in the belief that God created the human being according to His image, and that each person has intrinsic value and the right to life from conception to natural death. We also support the natural family and marriage between one man and one woman.
- The ECPM members are united around common Christian values but allow for nuance and diversity in the secondary topics and in their implementation at national level. We stand united on the core principles, are flexible in the approach, and value greatly dialogue and consensus.
- We share knowledge and best practices with each other, and we encourage each other in our common work. We find it essential to stay united when it comes to our core Christian values. Together we are stronger. The vast ECPM network is our greatest asset. ECPM acts as an advocate/ representative for Christians at the European level.

- We are committed to respecting the sovereignty of the EU Member States and abiding by the principle of subsidiarity. We advocate for governments sharing responsibilities and for cooperation at all levels.
- The ECPM works to continuously increase its visibility and involvement at national and local level, including in media, and to attract new members driven by the same values. Growth should be deepened (roots) and widened (more branches).
- The ECPM remains open to strategic collaboration with external actors (individuals, parties, organizations etc.) on certain topics, as long as it does not go against our core Christian beliefs.

****Christian values (list is not exhaustive and non-hierarchical): caring for Creation, common good, compassion, family/ marriage, fighting poverty, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, honesty, justice, relational thinking, responsibility, sanctity of life, solidarity, sovereignty, stewardship, transparency.***



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