



Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe

Commission des Eglises auprès des Migrants en Europe

Kommission der Kirchen für Migranten in Europa

Joint Letter to the President of the Convention on the Future of Europe, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing

Dear Mr President,

Our organisations represent Christian churches as well as church-related agencies throughout Europe.

The close interest taken by the Churches and these organisations in the work of the European Convention is evident in the individual submissions made by our organisations in recent weeks. We have also welcomed the creation of a structured Forum to enable the variety of institutions, associations and communities in both the Member and Candidate States to participate actively in the debate.

In this joint letter, we should like to emphasise our shared suggestions, reflecting our common values. In particular, we propose the following:

1. The European Union should perceive itself as a community of values, based on the centrality of the human being and the promotion of peace and reconciliation, justice, solidarity, subsidiarity and sustainability.
2. The religious and spiritual heritage of Europe should be acknowledged in any constitutional text. The specific contribution of Churches and religious communities to society should be acknowledged.
3. A future constitutional text should incorporate fundamental rights. Among these, religious freedom in its individual, corporate and institutional dimension should be affirmed.
4. The pursuance of the common good should be integrated as one of the core principles of the European Union. Poverty eradication at a global level, support for the marginalised and those threatened by social exclusion, especially migrants and ethnic minorities, should be specifically declared key objectives. Access to a high level of social services must be guaranteed. The important role played by non-statutory social welfare providers in sustaining a multitude of charitable services should be acknowledged.
5. In order for the European Union to fulfil its responsibility for global and sustainable development, it must be able to speak with one voice on the world stage. Building sound and just relationships, both with its immediate neighbours and globally, is essential to develop a fair and just system of global governance.
6. There is a need to reinvigorate democratic political life and, above all, to ensure that citizens sense that their concerns are heard and are taken seriously. Citizens and legal residents should be able to participate and contribute fully at all levels. A future

constitutional text should provide for a structured dialogue with the variety of institutions, associations and communities in society. In this context, the specificities of Churches and religious communities should be taken into account.

7. A future constitutional text of the European Union should incorporate Declaration N° 11 of the Final Act of the Treaty of Amsterdam, expressing its respect for the status of Churches and religious communities as recognised by each Member State.

We hope that you will find the submissions made by the organisations mentioned above and represented by the signatories to this letter to be an interesting and helpful contribution to shaping the future of the European Union. We are committed to continuing our constructive engagement in the debate in the Convention and intend to make more detailed contributions in the coming months.

Yours sincerely,

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Mgr Noël Treanor

Secretary General, Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community – COMECE

Denis Viénot, President, Caritas Europa

Jürgen Gohde, President, Eurodiaconia

Jef Felix, Secretary General, International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity – CIDSE

Rob van Drimmelen, Secretary General, Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe – APRODEV

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