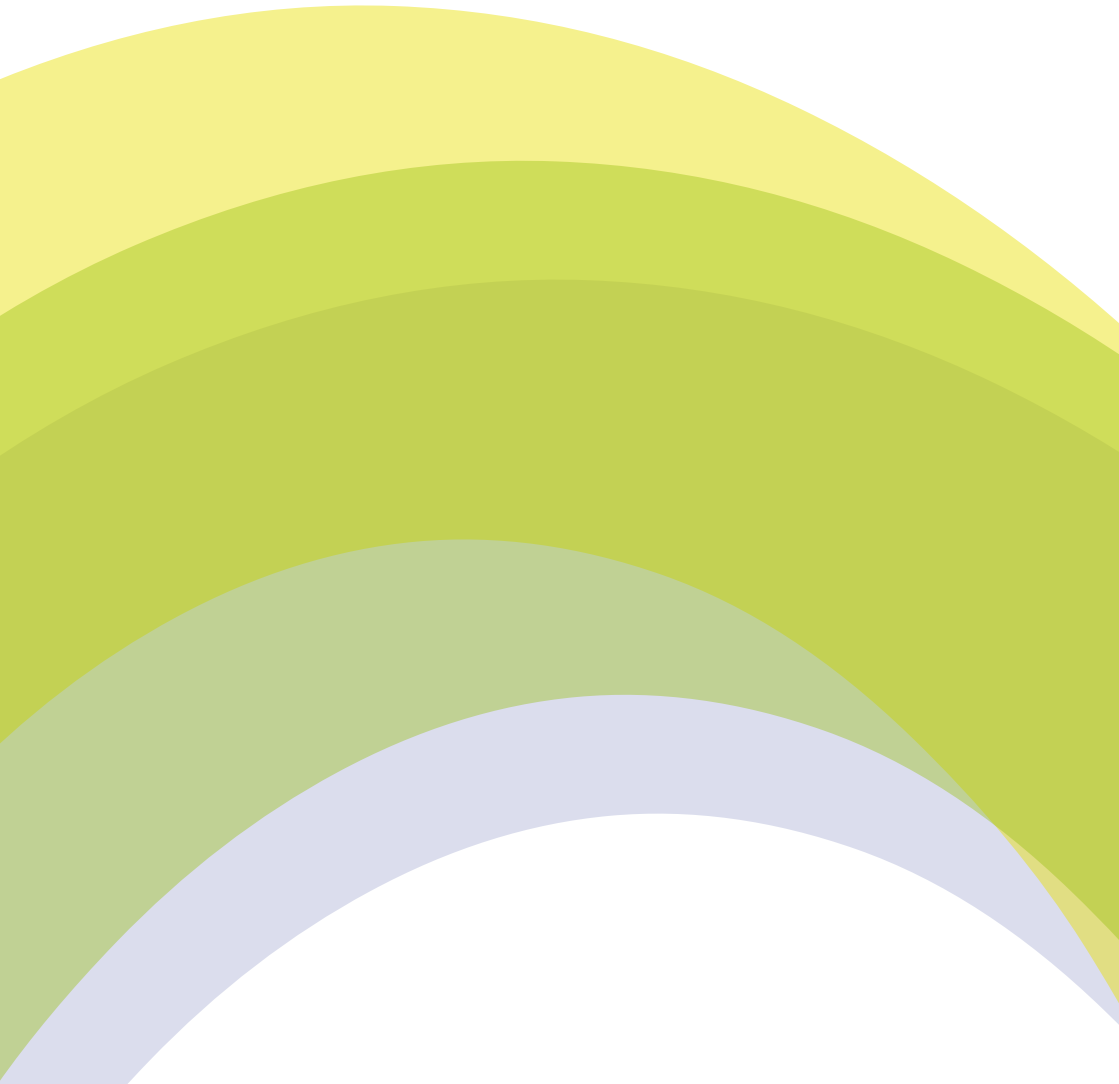




# YEARBOOK 2016

FOR A EUROPE OF **DIGNITY, FREEDOM**  
AND **RESPONSIBILITY**



**We want to thank all our partners for their cooperation in the past year.  
A special word of gratitude for the VOE foundation and the FICDD  
who have supported several of our events. We also thank our  
colleagues from Sallux for all their assistance and support.**

A person in a dark suit is seen from behind, holding a blue card up in the air. The background is a blurred meeting room with other people seated at a table. The overall image has a light, airy feel with a soft blue and white color palette.

# YEARBOOK 2016

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN POLITICAL MOVEMENT

“we believe that the Christian culture embeds fundamental freedoms that are virtuous for European societies”

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# ABOUT ECPM

The European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) is the only explicitly Christian European political party. We are genuinely anchored in the political tradition that significantly contributed to the founding of the EU - Christian Democracy. Our goal is to fill the gap in the European political landscape by reiterating Christian Democracy as a viable political alternative in Europe, with a particular emphasis on a Christian relational worldview. Our movement brings together over 50 Christian-Democratic political parties, NGOs, think tanks and individual politicians from over 20 countries within the EU and beyond.

## Our Values

### **A Europe of Human Dignity**

Human dignity expresses the intrinsic value of every human being. We believe this universal principle rests on the human being as created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, life should be protected from conception to natural death. The protection of human dignity should be a priority above individual freedom. ECPM believes that a vibrant and positive Europe should celebrate and promote life. Because of the subsidiarity principle ECPM believes that the European Institutions should refrain from openly promoting any specific view on this matter. Sadly enough, the European Institutions often promote and fund an anti-life view. ECPM calls for a more modest and objective stance on this issue, especially related to funding of NGO's regarding this subject.

### **An Economy that Works for People and Planet**

Economy is about life. The purpose of all economic activity is to support life and advance wellbeing for all. We believe that initiative and ownership empowers people. We encourage the development of small and medium-sized companies and a focus on improvement of the investment climate for innovative entrepreneurs. ECPM believes that globalization has many positive aspects but is not by definition a good development. We are critical on agreements like CETA and TTIP as we believe that they disempower people and sometimes even countries merely for the benefit of multinationals and the world of international finance. The principles of free trade and open market economy are still very important for Europe's economies however there need to be checks and balances in the system to keep it sustainable. A growing world population and a growing world economy has consequences for our planet. If we want to

leave this planet in a good shape for our children and grandchildren then we must take responsibility now. This means that the EU and its Members need to take action now to reduce pollution, CO2 expulsion and to invest in sustainable energy sources.

### **Healthy Families and Healthy Marriages**

Healthy Families are the basis for thriving societies. We believe that stable, loving relationships between parents are crucial for the wellbeing of their children. Marriage is the best guarantee for enduring relationships. ECPM recognizes the family as the most important social entity, preceding the state and any other community or group. ECPM calls on the European Union to respect the sovereignty of the family, based on marriage between one man and one woman. ECPM is also weary of the political focus on the 'autonomous individual' as it is promoted by secular ideologies. We believe that the quality of life of a human being depends on the quality of his relations with others. People are always connected through relations and the strongest and earliest connection in life is the family.

### **Freedom, Security and Stability**

Real freedom of faith, conscience and expression only becomes visible through relations with those who feel, think or act differently. ECPM believes that an extreme political correctness fueled by aggressive secularism is a danger for real freedom and real plurality. In this sense, there must be a fundamental freedom to disagree with the view of the majority on any subject. ECPM is also worried by the lack of freedom of religion in many parts of the world. This is clear to see in Islamic countries but also countries like India and China. The European Union and its Members should promote a culture of freedom and forcefully support those who defend and promote freedom in their country or region. Regarding the rise of extremist Islamic groups like ISIS it is the view of ECPM that this organization has proven to be a direct threat to European security and therefore the EU and its Members should take action to completely remove ISIS from Syria, Iraq and any other places where it might resurge.

### **Human Trafficking; Fighting modern-day Slavery**

Human trafficking is an ultimate de-humanizing act that reduces people to trading objects. It distorts relations and severely hurts people, making it a difficult process to re-establish new healthy relationships. A majority of the victims are used for sexual exploitation. Since human trafficking is a cross-border crime, combating it requires international cooperation. ECPM strongly



favors the Nordic model that decriminalizes the prostitute and criminalizes the client and the trafficker as the most effective way to stop human trafficking and (forced) prostitution. Human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal industry in the world, the EU and its Members have to act now.

### **Reforming the European Union**

The European Union needs serious reform. Not only technically but also spiritually. We believe that a European Union that is less directive and more facilitating will be more beneficial for EU citizens and will form an effective narrative against destructive far-right sentiments. The European Union must start to under-promise and over-deliver instead of doing the exact opposite. To many, the EU has become as problem-causer instead of a problem-solver. This view might not be true but it does stick in the minds of many citizens. In order to win back support for a different and better EU we need a more realistic and constructive rhetoric. This means more freedom for Member States and a stronger focus of the EU on key matters as food safety, energy safety, fair competition and cross border problems like immigration, rapid climate change, security and terrorism.

### **Preserving Christian culture & heritage**

We believe that the Christian culture embeds fundamental freedoms that are virtuous for European societies. Eroding the Christian culture and heritage in Europe will lead to more division, violence and insecurity. History has shown what happens in societies that (try to) abolish religion. A culture that always sees life as God-given will always value life. Europe has been shaped by Christianity and has been a Christian continent for over a millennium. Without any exception, all EU members were already Christian before becoming a nation state. The majority of the founding fathers of the EU were Christians. We believe that the EU should be proud of its Christian roots and that Christian culture and heritage should be preserved. Key aspects of this culture are freedom, love, truth, reconciliation and respect for life. Europe has become a diverse continent which it can remain only when everyone respects the view and faith of the other. For this reason, we are weary of secular anti-religious ideologies that want to remove the heritage of Christian thinking and play down its relevance. For the same reason, we are opposing EU membership of Turkey which has a different cultural background and different values.



**Branislav Škripek**

# WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear colleagues and co-workers, members of ECPM and friends,

At the end of 2016 our president Peter Östman concluded his long service leading ECPM. Being encouraged by board members, and after prayerful consideration, I have decided to temporarily take on this responsibility until the official presidential election at our Warsaw General Assembly in May 2017. I express my warm appreciation and thanks to Peter Östman for his involvement in and efforts for ECPM's performance and standing. Peter, on behalf of ECPM, I thank you very much for all the sacrifices you have made and wish you and your family God's blessings!

Last year was turbulent in many ways. There were frightening terrorist attacks in our cities of Brussels, Nice, Berlin and other places. The refugee crisis grew and brought more challenges. The EU was too divided to give a clear answer or to provide more effective and better organised help. The United Kingdom decided to leave the European Union in their referendum. Some countries held elections, with surprising results. Politically, this year was no walk in the park.

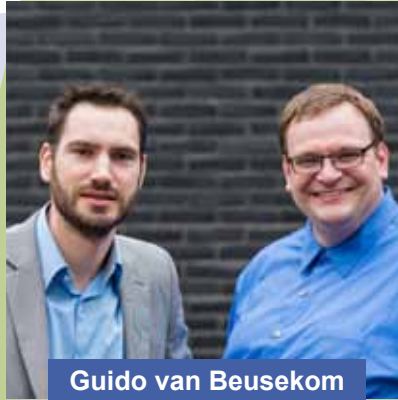
ECPM, however, has remained firm. With our members, we stand firm in our trust in Jesus Christ and in our efforts to promote Christianity within EU politics. This unites us and leads us in the decisions we have to make, on all the different levels where we act. Our movement also grew in terms of professionalism. Many events were organised, and we published statements in response to different political changes. Therefore, I would like to thank our staff for all their active work last year.

Furthermore, I would like to congratulate our think tank, CPFE, on their new name. Their General Assembly has decided to rebrand as Sallux, combining the Latin words for salt and light, exactly what Jesus asks us Christians to be in this world.

2017 will bring a lot of new opportunities and challenges. I wish you all a very successful year, inspired by the Holy Spirit and blessed by God, our Father.

In Jesus' name,

**Branislav Škripek** | ECPM Interim President



**Guido van Beusekom  
& Leo van Doesburg**

# REFLECTION ON 2016

*“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”.* JEREMIAH 29:11

Uncertain, uneasy and unpredictable. This is how citizens all over the world feel and think about the future. For many, this feeling was triggered by an event or series of events that happened in 2016. Few predicted Brexit, few predicted the electoral victory of Donald Trump and few know what is really to be done with Turkey and the situation in the Middle East.

Many people can no longer ‘buy’ answers from a political philosophy based on left-liberal interpretations of individual freedoms and individual rights. In a way, this is a positive shift; however, the growth of far-right-wing populism and the structural, wide-scale appearance of misinformation or ‘fake news’ clearly pose a new challenge to everyone, including us Christians. Chapter 29 of Jeremiah gives us an approach for dealing with this kind of situation. It is a message from God to the exiled Israelites. God told them and us that, even in times of fear and anxiety, we should continue our work and not be discouraged.

While looking back on 2016 and looking forward to the coming years, it becomes even clearer that we need to focus on core issues: respecting human dignity, promoting peace, cooperation and compassion. We need to do this in an open and truthful way. We need to be realistic and optimistic. We need to be part of a solution instead of exploiting a problem. These ideas are neither new nor complicated, but they are much needed by our societies.

**Guido van Beusekom** | General Director

**Leo van Doesburg** | Director for European Affairs



**Heiner Studer**

# ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT

The Advisory Council (AC) was established by the General Assembly (GA) on 7 June 2013 and is a consultative group to both the ECPM board and its members. It can propose topics for the GA and the board. It checks the budget and the annual financial results. New ECPM board members are discussed by the AC first, before the board decides whether they are accepted. The AC also checks and amends changes to programmes and statutes. It has at least two meetings per year.

In 2016, the AC had two meetings. The first was in Kiev (Ukraine) on 19 February. The AC discussed the Vision document on the EU, the refugee situation, the 2016 budget and the upcoming GA.

The second meeting was in Bucharest (Romania) on 4 November. During this meeting, the AC discussed the Vision document, the upcoming GA and the decisions that will be proposed, as well as the budget. The AC sent a resolution to the GA against the UNESCO decision on Hebron and Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

At the GA on 5 December, the first term of the AC ended. Peeter Võsu and Kris Vleugels, former members of the board, were at the end of their first term and could not be re-appointed according to its regulations. Wijbren Jongsma, Mareks Raups, Volodymyr Stretovych and Heiner Studer (president) have been re-elected for the second term. Florica Chereches has been a member of the AC since 2016, and has also been re-elected. Peter Östman has been elected as a new member of the AC.

The AC is very pleased with the work of ECPM and its members. We hope and pray that they will continue it in 2017 as well.

**Heiner Studer** | President of the Advisory Council





# INTRODUCTION OF 2016 EVENTS & CONFERENCES

In this yearbook, you will find short reports on events that were organised by ECPM, that we promoted among our members or that are linked to the work of our Members of the European Parliament. Therefore, not all of the events mentioned in this yearbook are exclusive ECPM events.

For example, Prayer Breakfasts and European Parliament Inter-groups are, by definition, not linked to one specific party or organisation. However, we still include these events in our yearbook, as we fully support initiatives that bring together Christians in politics from different parties and nations. Most of the reports in this yearbook are shortened versions of the event reports. To read more, please visit our Events page on our website: [ecpm.info/events](http://ecpm.info/events).

It is our vision to work together with you to build a Christian political movement that can bridge personal and political differences in order to serve the people of our nations and continents. In this, we are inspired by the teachings, principles and life of Jesus Christ.



# FIRST QUARTER

FOR A  
FREED  
RESPC



20 JANUARY | **Freedom of Religion or Belief Intergroup / Launch of Open Doors' 2016 Watch List** - Persecution against Christians significantly increased in 2015

The European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is a group of like-minded MEPs dedicated to promoting and protecting freedom of religion or belief in the external actions of the European Union. This freedom is a universal human right that is enshrined in Article 18 of both the Universal



Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Peter van Dalen, ECPM MEP, hosted the launch of Open Doors' 2016 World Watch List. This report quantifies the severity of persecution against Christians in the world. For the 14th year in a row, North Korea is ranked first; Eritrea made a notable jump from ninth to third place, and India worsened its score by 6 points since 2014.

"I am glad there is so much interest in this event – persecution is increasing rapidly, and as legislators, we must make it a priority," said Peter van Dalen, MEP, Co-Chair of the Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief. He continued, "the EU is the largest trade block in the world. We should use this as a lever to insist that the persecution stops." Read more at

[www.religiousfreedom.eu/2016/01/25/persecution-of-christians-significantly-increased-in-2015-2](http://www.religiousfreedom.eu/2016/01/25/persecution-of-christians-significantly-increased-in-2015-2).

20 January 2016 | European Parliament, Strasbourg, France | main speakers:

- Peter van Dalen, MEP, the Netherlands
- Esther Kattenberg, Advocacy Officer, Open Doors

26 January 2016 | Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France | main speakers:

- Valeriu Ghilețchi, MP Moldova
- Pavel Unguryan, MP Ukraine
- Ben-Oni Ardelean, MP Romania
- Leo van Doesburg, Director for European Affairs, ECPM
- Ronan Mullen, Senator Ireland
- Jeffrey Donaldson Member House of Commons, United Kingdom

26 JANUARY | **The Rights of Parents and Children belonging to Religious Minorities**

A roundtable discussion organised by ECPM and the European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) with the title: "The Rights of Parents and Children belonging to Religious Minorities". This Hearing was organised on the occasion of the Council of Europe discussing a motion for a resolution on the "Protection of the rights of parents and children belonging to religious minorities".

## 4 FEBRUARY | National Prayer Breakfast, Washington DC

Peter Östman, President of the ECPM, participated in the 64th National Prayer Breakfast in Washington DC on behalf of the ECPM.

4 February 2016 | Washington DC, US | main speakers:

- Mark Burnett and Roma Downey, television producers
- Barack Obama, US President



12 February 2016 | Jerusalem, Israel | main speakers:

- Mark Whitacre
- Samuel Smadja, a believing Jewish businessman
- Avi Mizrahi, head of a messianic congregation in Tel Aviv, Israel
- Johannes Gerloff
- Florian Peretz, businessman
- Albrecht Fuchs

## 12 FEBRUARY | Europartners in Jerusalem

Leo van Doesburg participated and spoke at the Europartners annual leadership retreat. The mission of Europartners is to help business people and professionals connect with Christ.

## 13 FEBRUARY | Prayer for Politics meeting

More than 50 leaders of Christian fellowships and churches and Christian candidates for the national elections took part in this prayer meeting. The aim of the meeting was to gather Christian candidates (15) and church leaders for a common prayer for help and guidance for people who are active in the public sector and politics. The topic of the meeting was “hope”. In their speeches, speakers emphasised our responsibility, as Christians, to be the light of the world according to the commission from Jesus. The political reality in Slovakia, however, lacks hope for improvement. The high corruption rate and social, education and healthcare issues demand a qualified and engaged approach. Christian activists and politicians should be the answer to this challenge. Later, eight truly devoted Christians were elected as MPs in March 2016, and one more later joined them when he replaced another politician.



13 February 2016 | Svit, Slovakia | main speakers:

- Richard Vašečka, member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic
- Ad de Bruin, YWAM missionary
- Branislav Škripek, ECPM MEP

## 18 FEBRUARY | Sallux roundtable “Response to the asylum crisis along the refugee route”

The conclusions of the roundtable were listed at the end of the meeting and



approved by those present:

18 February 2016 | Brussels, Belgium |  
main speakers:

- Branislav Škripek, ECPM MEP (Slovakia)
- Dr Noemi Mena Montes, PhD Political Communication, expert on immigration
- Ladislav Ilčić, MP (Hrast, Croatia)
- Arne Gericke, ECPM MEP (Germany)

1. We need a common EU approach in dealing with both the refugee stream and its causes.

2. An active EU role is needed in the issues of war and peace. This is true for both Africa and the Middle East, and especially Syria. The EU needs to cooperate with the Democratic Self-Administration in Syria in that regard and not shy away from providing arms to minorities.

3. EU solutions require solidarity within the EU. Aside from proper sheltering, we need to ensure that a safe and legal route is created for the most vulnerable.

4. The issue of integration is a serious challenge. The administrative

and cultural capacity of the EU is and will be tested in that regard, and all levels of government should not shy away from cooperation with churches, which already provide support. Christians and the Church could play a key role in welcoming refugees and in the integration process.

5. The UN and NGOs need much more support from the EU and EU Member States. Countries neighbouring war zones need special economic support for taking care of refugees. Countries like Lebanon and Jordan should receive more support.

## 16 MARCH | Finnish Prayer Breakfast

Nearly 200 guests from Finland and abroad filled the Hilton banquet hall to listen to many prominent Finnish and international speakers. The general topic of the event was “Confidence Towards the Future”.



The moderators of the Prayer Breakfast were Sari Essayah, MP (KD) and Sauli Ahvenjärvi, MP (2011-2015, KD). After the Prayer Breakfast on 16 March, all guests

16 March 2016 | Helsinki, Finland | main speakers:

- Hannu Nyman, Dean of the Finnish Lutheran Church
- Paula Risikko, MP
- Paul Petrie, founder of European Prayer Breakfast
- Timo Soini, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Päivi Räsänen, MP (KD, former Minister of the Interior)
- Jaana Vuorio, Director General of the Finnish Immigration Service

gathered for the Values Forum with the general topic “How will our society change?”, with two sub-topics: “Can a State be the Good Samaritan?” and “Changes and the Future, the Finnish Experience”.



### 19 MARCH | Christian Social Congress

“For Poland and for Christian civilisation” is the title of the second Christian Social Congress, organised in the Polish city of Poznań. The event, which aims at “promoting an exchange of views between Christians”, brought together many leaders from different churches, the government, the political world and several civil associations. Bogusław Kiernicki emphasised the importance of the Congress, “scheduled

19 March 2016 | Poznań, Poland | main speakers:

- Marek Jurek, ECPM MEP (Poland)
- Kazimierz Ujazdowski, MEP
- Guido van Beusekom, General Director, ECPM
- Ferenc Kalmár, Ministerial Commissioner for Hungary’s Neighbourhood Policy and former MP
- Bogusław Kiernicki, President of the Saint Benedict’s Foundation

as part of the celebrations for the 1050th anniversary of the Christianisation of Poland in response to Pope St John Paul II’s encouragement to build the civilisation of life”. At the end of the event, a final document was adopted: the Poznań Charter of “Catholic rights, rules and policies designed to build a Christian civilisation”. Launched by Polish ECPM MEP Marek Jurek, the first Congress took place in Warsaw in October 2015.





# SECOND QUARTER



## 2 APRIL | ECPM KD event, Helsinki/Stockholm

2 April 2016 | Helsinki/Stockholm

| main speakers:

- Sari Essayah, MP (KD)
- Peter Östman, ECPM President 2013-2016
- Guido van Beusekom, General Director, ECPM



## 7 APRIL | The role of Christian communities in a new Middle East

The EU should support and promote those that favour real freedom. This was one of the outcomes of the event organised by ECPM's MEPs Bas Belder and Branislav Škripek together with the Transatlantic Christian Council. Experts from the Middle East, Europe and the US addressed the situation of Christian communities in Syria, Iraq and Israel. Experts from different fields were present.

As a conclusion to the conference, Johannes de Jong (Sallux) stated that Western governments should work with entities that promote freedom and not with those that promote un-freedom. Martin Janssen rightly added that very often, Islamic countries have a different view on freedom that is not compatible with Western values.

All experts agreed that the Western world should do more to protect Christian minorities in Syria and Iraq. Read more at [ecpm.info/events.html](http://ecpm.info/events.html).

7 April 2016 | Brussels, Belgium | main speakers:

- Bastiaan Belder, ECPM MEP (the Netherlands)
- Branislav Škripek, ECPM MEP (Slovakia)
- András Pátkai, European Director for International Israel Allies Caucus Foundation
- Mr Rami, humanitarian worker for the Middle East on behalf of Open Doors
- Kirsten Evans, Executive Director at In Defence of Christians
- Adina Portaru, ADF International
- Rima Tüzün, European Syriac Union
- Johannes de Jong, Managing Director, Sallux
- Martin Janssen, Middle East expert





## 23 APRIL | ChristenUnie Congress

ECPM MEP Branislav Škripek was invited to speak at the 33rd ChristenUnie Congress (NL). During this Congress, Gert-Jan Segers was elected as the party's new leader. He stated that the party will have three main focus points: the future of our children, taking care of our neighbours and defending our freedom of faith. More than 500 people took part in this Congress.

23 April 2016 | Zwolle, the Netherlands | main speakers:

- Gert-Jan Segers, CU party leader
- Jos de Blok, founder, Buurtzorg Netherlands
- Jan Van Werven, entrepreneur
- Bram Rebergen, Director at Youth for Christ NL

## 2 JUNE | Ukrainian National Prayer Breakfast and Forum

ECPM participated in the 5th National Ukrainian Prayer Breakfast, which was organised by the Interfactual Parliamentary Group “For the Spirituality, Morality and Health of Ukraine”. Prominent national and international politicians took part in this event. Continuing from the breakfast, ECPM and the Interfactual Parliamentary Group “For the Spirituality, Morality and Health of Ukraine” organised a large international forum on the “Cooperation of Christian Politicians and Civil Society in the Promotion of Christian values on the International Arena”. In total, about 550 people, including representatives of NGOs, parliamentarians, assistants and representatives of churches, participated in the forum. Read more at [ecpm.info/events.html](http://ecpm.info/events.html).



2-3 June 2016 | Kiev, Ukraine | speakers prayer breakfast:

- Petro Poroshenko, Ukraine president
- Volodymyr Groysman, Ukraine Prime Minister
- Prince Nicolaus of Liechtenstein,
- Branislav Škripek MEP (SK)
- RT Hon. Jeffrey Donaldson, MP UK

speakers forum:

- Paul Diamond, standing Council to the Christian Legal Centre
- Ellen Fantini, director of the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe
- Lorcán Price, legal counsel with ADF International
- Marguerite Peeteres, founder of the Institute for Intercultural Dialogue Dynamics
- Antoine Renard, president of the European Federation of Catholic Family Associations (FAFCE)
- Leo van Doesburg, Director for European Affairs and Policy Advising ECPM
- Pavel Unguryan, MP Ukraine

## 11 JUNE | ECPM General Assembly

For the 12th time, ECPM held its General Assembly, where member parties and individual members gathered to discuss the present and future state of ECPM. During this Assembly, several resolutions were presented and accepted by vote. These resolutions concerned Turkey-EU relations, protecting religious freedom, a resolution against pornography and Ukraine-EU relations. You can read the resolutions at the end of this yearbook.



## 11 JUNE | “Crossing the border: Giving direction to the refugee debate in a divided Europe”

On the afternoon of Saturday, 11 June 2016, ECPM organised a conference on “Crossing the Border: giving direction to the refugee debate in a divided Europe”.

The interesting speeches and panel discussions featured national Members of Parliament, research professionals and a Member of the European Parliament. After the opening speech, keynote speaker Joël Voordewind shared his views on the tension between compassion, culture and politics in the refugee debate. While considering the situation on national, European and global levels, Voordewind urged us to remember that there are still internal refugees within Syria and Iraq who are stuck in their countries. Romanian MP and ECPM member Ben-Oni Ardelean responded to Voordewind by saying that “it is a problem that we do not have a common discussion about the refugee topic in the European Union. The member states are very divided and our vision needs to be reshaped.”

11 June 2016 | Rotterdam, the Netherlands | main speakers:

- Peter Östman, ECPM President 2013-2016
- Branislav Škripek, ECPM MEP (Slovakia)
- Joël Voordewind, MP, ChristenUnie
- Ben-Oni Ardelean, MP, Romania
- Dr Noemi Mena Montes, expert on immigration
- Ladislav Ilčić, MP, Croatia
- Jan Schippers, Director of the SGP Research Institute
- Johannes de Jong, General manager Sallux



As Christian politicians, we have a particular responsibility to treat refugees with respect, without looking down on them. After this, a panel hosted by ECPM board member George Rukhadze allowed attendees to react to both presentations. This was followed by a discussion with the audience on the state of terrorism in the region as well as the question of who should fight IS, since many men have fled to Europe.

### 30 JUNE | FoRB Intergroup. Presentation of the Report on the State of Religion or Belief in the World 2015-2016

On 30 June, our MEP Peter van Dalen presented the Annual Report on the State of Freedom of Religion or Belief in the World 2015-2016, together with Dennis de Jong, MEP, co-chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). Their critical annual report for 2015-2016 finds that freedom of religion or belief has continued to be severely restricted around the world (in 53 countries). As the report states, “it has become evident to the Intergroup that there is a discrepancy between the official commitment spoken and actual delivery made by the EU’s institutions.” Part of the report therefore reviews the state of play concerning FoRB in EU foreign policy and makes practical recommendations for addressing this concerning inconsistency.



30 June 2016 | Brussels, Belgium | main speakers:

- Peter van Dalen, MEP (the Netherlands)
- Dennis de Jong, MEP (the Netherlands)





# **THIRD** QUARTER

## 29 JULY | Economic Diplomacy and Integrity Forum

EDI gathered approximately 35 people in total, with 16 participants and 19 team members and speakers. The team of ten was drawn mostly from past participants, and while serving, they also participated in lectures and held master classes directed towards encouraging their visions and promoting unity within the team. Eleven countries were represented, including Croatia, the US, the Netherlands, Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, Norway, the UK, Moldova, Albania and Spain.

Lecturers were drawn from international and local speakers, who shared not only important concepts related to Economic Diplomacy and Integrity, with the principles and life of Jesus, but also gave personal testimonies and were open about their lives. We had topics related to leadership and integrity in this modern world.

Participants were also challenged with the 3rd annual EDI Creative Challenge. At

the end of EDI, they had to present an idea consistent with the themes of EDI to change their own nations. Among other exciting projects, one group proposed a plan for an EDI in Moldova, and they are currently working on it for 2017! Some other projects included a community centre for Roma in Soard, Romania, and a centre for those with physical disabilities in Albania.

29 July - 10 August 2016 | Fužine, Croatia | main speakers:

- Jack Fallow, founder and former Chairman of Gasforce Limited
- Rodoljub Oreščanin, Founder and President of Biznisnova
- Samuil Petrovski, National Director of IFES for Serbia
- Heather Staff, political policy expert (UK)
- Dr Noemi Mena Montes, expert on immigration
- Tihomir Kukulja, media professional and Director of Renewing our Minds
- Wilco Kodde, International Secretary of the youth wing of SGP
- Josip Lucev, member of the Rotary Club Zagreb Metropolitan and lecturer in political science



11 - 28 August 2016 | Fužine, Croatia |  
main speakers:

- Drago Pilsel and Claudia Keller-Pilsel
- Allen Belton, Senior Partner, Reconciliation Ministries
- Aurora Martin, Ministry of Labour, Family, and Social Protection (Romania)
- Julia Bicknell, Executive Editor and Director, World Watch Monitor
- Leo van Doesburg, Director for European Affairs, ECPM

### 11 AUGUST | **Renewing our Minds Forum**

Renewing Our Minds (ROM) is a programme for young professionals and leaders that focuses on reconciliation, integrity and peace-building and is aimed at building our communities based on the values of Jesus. ROM's programme consists of seminars, workshops and Christian values-oriented courses.



### 16 AUGUST | **ECPM leadership retreat**

For the second time, ECPM organised a retreat for its members to strengthen bonds, relax and brainstorm about the future of ECPM and Christian politics in Europe. This year's theme was "Salt and Light in the world". Each day started with a short Bible study that was followed by seminars from Pastor Erik Jensen (What does God want to do in Politics?), Guido van Beusekom (What is ECPM's purpose in politics?) and finally by former Norwegian MP Lars Rise (How to follow Jesus as a politician). Each day ended with group talks that gave participants the opportunity to reflect on what was discussed that day and on ways for the voices of Christian politicians to be heard more effectively in today's world. Read more at [ecpm.info/events.html](http://ecpm.info/events.html).

16-20 August 2016 | Langesund Bad, Norway |  
main speakers:

- Pastor Erik Jensen
- Lars Rise, former MP, Norway
- Guido van Beusekom, ECPM General Director
- Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director for European Affairs



and Leo van Doesburg (What is ECPM's purpose in politics?) and finally by former Norwegian MP Lars Rise (How to follow Jesus as a politician). Each day ended with group talks that gave participants the opportunity to reflect on what was discussed that day and on ways for the voices of Christian politicians to be heard more effectively in today's world. Read more at [ecpm.info/events.html](http://ecpm.info/events.html).



## 9 SEPTEMBER | “Perspective of Christian Democracy in Europe”

The conference Perspective of Christian Democracy in Europe was looking for answers to hot political questions: how to defend the Christian family model against partnership law, what kind of educational system would enable children to acquire a basic knowledge of religion, how to defend basic human rights against totalitarian control, who are the political actors who stand for a Christian worldview, as well as other questions.

The conference included lively discussions about policies based on Christian values in Estonia and the Nordic countries. The moderator introduced the conference with the thought that Western democracies are based on Christian values, and even Estonia, one of the most secular countries in Europe, has 20% believers and another 26% of people who are inclined to believe in a god, according to recent research (less than 10% are atheists). Christian values are important to a large part of society. Unfortunately, we do not see the same number of arguments based on a Christian worldview in public discussion.

Peter Östman spoke about ECPM and its unique position as a European party. He referred to it as the it as a Christian voice in Europe. He also mentioned the Finnish Christian Democrats and their policies on keeping Christian values in Finland. As the national church in Finland is very liberal, the Christians in politics there lack its support on many basic political questions. An interesting and lively discussion between the speakers developed during the panel discussion at the conference. Read more at [ecpm.info/events/ecpm-13th-general-assembly.html](http://ecpm.info/events/ecpm-13th-general-assembly.html).



9 September 2016 | Tallinn, Estonia | main speakers:

- Urmas Viilma, Archbishop
- Andres Pöder, Archbishop emeritus, President of the Council of Churches of Estonia
- Urmas Reinsalu, Minister of Justice of Estonia
- Tunne Kelam, MEP
- Erki Tamm, President, ECB Union of Estonia
- Peter Östman, ECPM President 2013-2016, MP of Finnish KD
- Lars Rise, former MP, Norwegian PP

## 21 SEPTEMBER | Romanian Prayer Breakfast

This year, the eleventh edition of the Romanian Prayer Breakfast had the theme “Romanian diaspora – between identity and integration”. The event started with a conference on the role of prayer in transforming a nation. In his opening speech, Mr lordache first condemned all violent acts, with special reference to the terrorist

21 September 2016 | Bucharest, Romania |  
main speakers:

- Florin Iordache, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of Romania
- Kun Mo Chung, former Minister for Science and Technology of South Korea
- Aurelian Mihai, MP, Romania
- Florica Chereches: MP Romania
- Petru Andea: MP Romania
- Leo van Doesburg: Director for European Affairs, ECPM

acts that had recently taken place and the nuclear tests made by North Korea.

It is worth mentioning that the first part of the event was moderated by a Korean delegation led by Rev. Chung Hong Key – Korean Pastor, President of the Association for Promoting Excellency in Leadership. During his presentation, Mr Chung Mo Chun showed how prayer has

played an important role in the development of South Korea since the beginning of the 20th century. From being a very poor nation, Korea has reached the status of a developed country and is now an important player in the international arena. During the conference, Aurora Martin raised awareness about the situation faced by many Romanians in diaspora. Many of them, especially women and children, are being abused. Furthermore, children are left behind in Romania, abandoned in other countries or forced to move from one country to another very frequently.



26-28 September 2016 | Warsaw, Poland |  
main speakers:

- Sophia Kuby, ADF International, Belgium
- Rocco Buttiglione, UDC party leader (Italy)
- Lorcan Price, ADF International, France
- Jean-Paul Van de Walle, lawyer and specialist in surrogacy
- Grégor Puppincq, ECLJ, France
- Leo van Doesburg, Director for European Affairs, ECPM

### 26-28 SEPTEMBER | **Agenda Europe Summit**

The Summit is an important pro-life, pro-family annual event bringing together more than 120 participants from 23 countries. The summit discussed important local issues in view of the ongoing human rights debate across Europe.



### 28 SEPTEMBER | Quo Vadis Europe

On 28 September, ECPM's MEP Branislav Škripek organised a conference with the title "Quo Vadis Europe" at the Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic in Brussels. The conference was attended by MEPs, Members of Parliament and representatives of NGOs from Slovakia, as well as Brussels-based representatives of civil society.

28 September 2016 | Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic in Brussels | for more info and speakers see [branislavskripek.sk/en/slovakpresidency](http://branislavskripek.sk/en/slovakpresidency)

### 28 SEPTEMBER | European Heroes of Life Award

For the first time, ECPM's MEP Arne Gericke and the ECPM presented the "European Heroes of Life Award" for Christian midwives in Europe. The four Saxon midwives Tamar Kuchler, Kirsten Zeil, Aline Queck and Andrea Heinert were honoured at this ceremonial act.

In 2006, they jointly refused their services to a women's clinic after having been asked to participate in late-term abortions. "We are midwives to give life, not to destroy it," said one of the award winners. An international jury had selected the midwives from among numerous nominees from the whole of Europe.

Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director for European Affairs, emphasised in his speech that these women are a role model for others: "Christians are constantly being restricted in their freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, especially in the medical professions. There are warnings, sometimes even professional prohibitions. This cannot happen in Europe."



28 September 2016 | Brussels, Belgium | main speakers:

- Arne Gericke, MEP (Germany)
- Leo van Doesburg, ECPM Director for European Affairs

### 30 SEPTEMBER | International conference “Security challenges in Georgia”

The Christian Democratic People’s Party of Georgia, ECPM and RCC Georgia together organised this two-day Tbilisi International Conference on 30 September – 1 October 2016 at Hualing Tbilisi. The conference, which was attended by well-known Georgian and foreign experts, politicians and commentators, generated

30 September – 1 October 2016 Tbilisi, Georgia | main speakers:

- Peter Östman, ECPM President, MP, Finland
- George Rukhadze, CDPP Chairman, ECPM Vice-President
- Peter van Dalen, MEP, the Netherlands
- Branislav Škripek, MEP, Slovakia
- Vladimir Plămădeală, CDPP Moldova, ECPM
- William Lahue, Head of the NATO Liaison Office
- Andrea Keerbs, Country Director, IRI Georgia
- Batu Kutelia, McCain Institute
- Nodar Kharshiladze, Senior Fellow, GFSIS
- Tornike Sharashenidze, Head of IR Faculty, GIPA
- Khatuna Lagazidze, Security Expert, Georgian Institute for European Values
- Nika Chitidze, Prof. IBSU University
- Zurab Agladze, Senior Fellow, GFSIS
- Giorgi Targamadze, CDI Chairman, former CDM and Parliamentary Minority leader

keen interest and was widely covered by the media.

The two-day conference commenced with a session on the Black Sea region’s security challenges and the EU. Speakers from different European and Eastern European countries shared their messages about the security challenges Georgia is facing and the steps that need to be taken towards long-term stability, allowing Christian democracy to flourish.

The second panel of the conference was devoted to threats of terrorism in the region and in the EU. Panel discussions were followed by an active Q&A session. The discussion focused on challenges and opportunities for Christian politics in the countries of Eastern and Western Europe.

The second day of the conference was attended exclusively by Georgia’s Christian Democratic People’s Party leaders and members, who actively contributed to the follow-up discussions.







# FOURTH QUARTER

## 2-7 NOVEMBER | Visit to refugees in Jordan

Branislav Škripek and Stieneke van der Graaf visited Jordan for three days in November. Our politicians met with refugees, representatives of NGOs and religious leaders to learn about the current situation of refugees in Jordan.

During an international roundtable discussion in the city of Amman, local professionals and NGO workers talked about “Supporting development in Jordan through education”. Imrad Gammoh, involved in the establishment of new Christian schools and active in the Jordan Baptist Convention, gave an overview of the current situation regarding education for refugee children in Jordan.

Although Jordan aims to prioritise education for both male and female refugees, there are challenges as well. Refugees are obliged to follow the official Jordanian curriculum and, since Jordan is officially a Muslim country, this makes it hard for Christian

children. On the last day, they travelled to the refugee camp in Zaatar, close to the Syrian border. Around 80,000 people live in this camp, most of them Syrian refugees. As a city, this refugee camp once more showed how important it is to arrange proper shelter for those fleeing to their neighbouring countries, Jordan and Lebanon. Read more at [ecpm.info/news/visit-refugees-jordan](http://ecpm.info/news/visit-refugees-jordan).



2-6 November 2016 | Amman, Jordan | main speakers:

- Branislav Škripek, ECPM MEP (Slovakia)
- Stieneke van der Graaf, Member of the Provincial Parliament in the Netherlands for ChristenUnie and ECPM board member
- Imrad Gammoh, lecturer at the Jordan Evangelical Theological School



## 3 NOVEMBER | Keeping Hope Alive: Understanding the damage and effectively fighting the culture of death

ECPM MEP Branislav Škripek hosted a conference at the European Parliament with world expert psychologist Dr Philip Ney and paediatrician Dr Marie Peeters-Ney. Their grasp of the connection between childhood neglect, child abuse and abortion was truly eye-opening. Our demographic winter is

3 November 2016 | Brussels, Belgium | main speakers:

- Dr Philip Ney, leading world expert on the effects of abortion, neglect and abuse
- Dr Marie Peeters-Ney, paediatrician

deepened by the survivor-syndrome effects of aborted children in our families. They are true pioneers seeking to bring scientific and biblical healing to the wounded. Read more about their vital work at [www.messengers2.com](http://www.messengers2.com) and [www.mtjoycollege.com](http://www.mtjoycollege.com).

## 12 NOVEMBER | Parti Chrétien-Démocrate (PCD) national assembly for centre-right primary elections

Stieneke van der Graaf participated in the PCD national assembly on behalf of ECPM. Jean-Frédéric Poisson, a member of the party, was a candidate in the centre-right primary on 20 November.

12 November 2016 | Paris, France | main speakers:

- Jean-Frédéric Poisson, MP, France
- Stieneke van der Graaf, ECPM board member

## 30 NOVEMBER | Slovakian Prayer Breakfast, Bratislava



30 November 2016 | Bratislava, Slovakia | main speakers:

- Branislav Škripek, ECPM MEP (Slovakia)
- Anna Záborská, MEP (Slovakia)
- Richard Vašečka, MP (Slovakia)
- Ad de Bruin, Dutch missionary and YWAM worker
- Guido van Beusekom, General Director ECPM

Members of the Slovak parliament from various political parties met together with Slovak MEPs and ECPM representatives at the Slovakian Prayer Breakfast. The goal, besides prayer, was to build relationships and contacts across the political spectrum. Ad de Bruin shared his thoughts on the contemporary young generation. These young people have a huge, yet hidden potential to change our country. The speaker challenged the older generation to do everything

they can to help this coming generation succeed and create room for them. Branislav Škripek, the initiator of the prayer breakfast in Slovakia, said “Prayer Breakfasts are a worldwide tradition. It’s an event attended not only by politicians



but also by priests, pastors and NGO representatives to pray together for their political situation, country and the leaders. This event abroad is also attended by the representatives of other religions, as they want to hear about the person and teaching of Jesus Christ.”

The motto of the event was: “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16).

## 5 DECEMBER | ECPM General Assembly

At the last General Assembly of 2016, ECPM members said farewell to resigning president Peter Östman and elected Branislav Škripek as Interim President from 2017 until the first General Assembly of 2017. The members also re-elected George Rukhadze as the Vice-President of ECPM. Benjamin Harnwell resigned as a board member after serving for one term.

During the meeting, Heiner Studer, President of the Advisory Council (AC), gave a favourable report on the work of ECPM and extended his gratitude to the ECPM staff and members for their cooperation. During the GA, the AC also presented a resolution rejecting the misrepresentation of Israel by UNESCO. This resolution was unanimously accepted by all members. At this meeting, ECPM announced the official start of a petition to stop EU-Turkey accession talks. This petition can be signed at [www.freedomfirst.eu](http://www.freedomfirst.eu).

ECPM's think tank presented their new name and logo. The new name of the former Christian Political Foundation for Europe is Sallux, referring to the Latin words for salt (sal) and light (lux). Read more at [ecpm.info/events.html](http://ecpm.info/events.html).



5 December 2016 | Brussels, Belgium | main speakers:

- Peter Östman, ECPM President, 2013-2016
- Branislav Škripek, ECPM Interim President

## 8 DECEMBER | Terrorism and Security. What the EU can learn from Israel

On 8 December, ECPM organised a conference on “Terrorism and Security: what the EU can learn from Israel” at the European Parliament. Terrorism remains the number one concern across EU member states, according to the latest Eurobarometer Survey on Europeans’ attitudes towards security. The need for international cooperation and effective legislation and implementation was addressed by the speakers

and presentations at our conference.

The event was organised in collaboration with the NGO European Coalition for Israel. ECPM’s MEP Bastiaan Belder (SGP, the Netherlands), who co-hosted the event, spoke of Israel’s past as “a history of a permanent fight against terror” and the (probably uneasy!) lessons that the EU can learn from their achievements in counterterrorism. With the memory of the Holocaust in mind, Israel absolutely prioritises the security of its citizens in the fight against all forms of terrorism. Tomas Sandell, Founding Director of the European Coalition for Israel, spoke of the need for a “a coherent security

8 December 2016 | Brussels, Belgium | main speakers:

- Bastiaan Belder, ECPM MEP (the Netherlands)
- Branislav Škripek, ECPM MEP (Slovakia)
- Tomas Sandell, Founding Director of the European Coalition for Israel
- MK Yehiel Hilik Bar, Deputy Speaker of the Knesset in Israel
- Shuli Davidovich, Representative of the Israeli Mission to the EU on security and relations with NATO
- Rabbi Avi Tawil, Executive Director of the European Jewish Community Centre



policy which builds on universal values” both inside and outside of the European Union, including our responsibility to prevent terror financing and EU funding being used to further radicalisation.

ECPM’s MEPs Marek Jurek (PR, Poland), Arne Gericke (Familien-Partei Deutschlands, Germany) and co-host of the event Branislav Škripek (OL’ANO, Slovakia) were also present.

Arne Gericke: “For Christians, their relationship with Israel is part of their identity and the history of their faith. The central point of our Christian-Jewish dialogue in times of terrorism must be hope, not fear! Another important goal of Jewish-Christian

dialogue consists in jointly combatting all manifestations of racial discrimination against Jews and all forms of anti-Semitism, which have certainly not yet been eradicated and re-emerge in different ways in various contexts. We have to fight for religious freedom together.”

MK Yehiel Hilik Bar, Deputy Speaker of the Knesset in Israel, stated that “at a time when terrorism and matters of security have become critical concerns internationally” it is of the utmost importance that Israeli and European leaders work together to maintain safety and security. MK Yehiel Hilik Bar was also representing the Christian Allies Caucus, an interparliamentary group with 18 Members of the Knesset from seven different political parties, focused on developing relationships with Christian politicians worldwide. Keynote speaker Shuli Davidovich, Representative of the Israeli Mission to the EU on security and relations with NATO, expanded on the opportunities for cooperation between the EU and Israel. “Israel and Europe are a part of the same family”, she stated. “It is only natural, therefore, that we also face together the same threats and challenges of incitement and radicalism. Israel stands with Europe in the joint fight against the plague of terrorism”.

Rabbi Avi Tawil, Executive Director of the European Jewish Community Centre, stressed that the solution to violence and discrimination against the Jewish communities in Europe, which are particularly affected by terrorism, is to have “more presence in public conversations as proud members of the European family”. Rabbi Tawil also stressed that, at the same time, “we cannot afford to lower security standards in Jewish institutions in Europe,” even after a relatively calm period since the summer terror attacks.

Leo van Doesburg, ECPM’s Director for European Affairs, gave a concluding speech on behalf of ECPM. The conference was attended by several Members of the European Parliament and a wide range of representatives of different communities and NGOs.





# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WORKING GROUP ON HUMAN DIGNITY MEETINGS

The Working Group on Human Dignity is a group consisting of Members of the European Parliament from different political groups and affiliations. The group was established back in 2009 by Prof. Dr Hans-Gert Pöttering MEP, then President of the European Parliament, and relaunched in 2015. The MEPs in the group believe that it is of key importance to maintain the original vision of the EU's founding fathers by putting human dignity at the forefront of EU policy making.

In 2016, the group had three meetings. On 13 April, the meeting was on the theme of Elderly and Palliative Care. The conclusion of this meeting was that the terminally ill deserve palliative care with respect and human dignity. On 22 June, the second meeting of the group was on Refugees and Human Dignity. In the discussion that followed, all participants agreed that protection of the human dignity of refugees should be at the centre of everyone's concerns and that more effective collaboration is needed among policymakers and the people on the ground. The last meeting, on 11 October, was about Combatting Human Trafficking. The common appeal of this meeting was that human trafficking must be stopped. One of the best ways to achieve this, according to many MEPs in the room and also ECPM, is to criminalise the purchase of sex in all circumstances.





**ECPY** **YOUTH**

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN POLITICAL YOUTH

# ECPYOUTH 2016

2016 was a busy year for ECPYouth! As well as welcoming three new board members, including a new President, we welcomed the new member organisation DDF (Ukraine). We successfully organised events that drew together members from Western and Eastern Europe, including a Summer School in Switzerland and Regional Conferences in Georgia and Estonia. Additionally, ECPYouth proposed a Resolution at the ECPM General Assembly, which was adopted, and initiated a refugee campaign. In December 2016, ECPYouth also held its second ever Prayer Breakfast at the European Parliament; it was a fantastic opportunity to meet alongside supportive MEPs and pray for unity among our nations and amidst the rise of polarisation. The new board is keen to implement the Strategy 2020 paper that was written for ECPYouth by independent commissioners and is currently transforming our goals and values into achievable deliverables so that ECPYouth can more effectively live out its mission to inspire, encourage and equip young Christian politicians across Europe.



## Regional Conferences

We had two very successful regional conferences in Estonia and Georgia, building on relationships with local organisations in these countries and building up new networks. The conference in Tallinn, Estonia in April 2016 was run in collaboration with PerspectieF and aimed to equip young Christians involved in politics and business; the conference was entitled “how to be a young Christian with a successful start-up”. With Estonia being an inspirational country in terms of its start-up culture and innovation, it was the perfect host to facilitate lively discussions and idea-sharing between young, enthusiastic participants who are hoping to combine passion with activism. The Regional Conference in Tbilisi, Georgia in September 2016 similarly aimed to motivate young politicians to combine their faith with their work, with the theme of “Religion in Politics: from Inspiration to Impact”. In recognition of the struggle that many people throughout Europe face when integrating Christian beliefs into their sphere of influence, this conference provided an arena to debate ideas of religion and secularism in today’s society, as well as workshops, seminars and even a gala dinner and city tour!



## Summer School

The 2016 Summer School took place in Bern, Switzerland, and the chosen theme mirrored a political campaign about the Syrian refugee crisis that had been started by the board earlier in the year. In acknowledgement of the drastically changing political landscape and the number of new policies that were coming into Europe due to the refugee influx, ECPYouth sought to unite members to make known the plight of ordinary Syrian refugees, to raise support for minority Syrian Christians and to hinge the Summer School upon this topic. We were blessed to have speakers from Christian Solidarity Worldwide, the Evangelical Alliance, national politicians and our own board to biblically challenge and spur us on to reassess our responses to this crisis, which affects us all.



## Strategy

In 2016, the board was determined to take stock of the work done so far and strategically plan for the future. A Strategy Plan 2020 was created by a group of external Commissioners for ECPYouth, and it was voted in at the General Assembly in July 2016. The strategy document provided us with top strategy goals, analysis and opportunities for growth. As a result, we established a Politics Working Group to determine the vision and values of ECPYouth, and the board has transformed these goals into achievable deliverables. The board is confident that, going forward into 2017, ECPYouth will more clearly and succinctly be able to realise its mission to bring together Christian political networks, be visible on the European Political scene and create future politicians based on the values demonstrated in the Bible and the teachings of Jesus Christ.





# RESOLUTIONS ACCEPTED DURING BOTH 2016 GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

**ECPM Resolution on Turkey – Proposed by ChristenUnie, the Netherlands** | *accepted during the ECPM General Assembly on 11 June 2016 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands*

## **The European Christian Political Movement:**

Considering the increased crackdown on Christians and their churches and other properties, illustrated by the Turkish authorities' recent seizure of the six churches of Diyarbakır;

Considering the many worrying reports about Turkish treatment of migrants and refugees, as well as the extremely worrying information that Turkish officials and AK Party officials are threatening Christian refugees and putting them under pressure to convert to Islam;

Considering the worsening situation regarding media freedom in Turkey, as for instance observed by the Committee to Protect Journalists, who wrote to Turkish Prime Minister Davutoğlu in March 2016 that press freedom in Turkey is “under siege”;

Considering the questionable role of Turkey in the war in Syria and Iraq and its violent crackdown on Kurdish, Syriac and other minorities in southeast Turkey;

Considering Turkish President Erdoğan's moves to consolidate his authoritarian hold on his country, his brazen statements on EU-Turkey cooperation and his refusal to fully fulfil the 72 criteria for visa-free travel into the Schengen Area;

**Urges the European Council and Parliament to refrain from granting Turkish citizens visa-free travel into the EU;**

**Asks the European Commission to freeze accession negotiations and instead present Council and Parliament alternatives to EU membership for Turkey;**

**Believes that the EU should seek cooperation with Turkey regarding migration issues, but not allow itself to be held hostage;**

**Encourages the Commission and the Member States to work on a plan B for managing migration and refugee flows, which must include the following elements:**

- **Proper protection of the EU's external borders by the Member States in cooperation with the proposed European Border Guard Agency.**
- **Proper functioning of hotspots in Greece and Italy.**
- **A mechanism for relocation of asylum seekers with a fair chance of receiving a status, with the possibility of an opt-out in exchange for an indirect financial contribution through EU structural funds.**

Asks its secretariat to forward this resolution to the President of the Council, the President of the Commission and the President of the European Parliament.

**ECPM Resolution on the Defence of Religious Freedom and the Combat of Anti-Religious Manifestations – Proposed by ECPYouth |**  
*accepted during the ECPM General Assembly on 11 June 2016 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands*

Across the European Union (EU), anti-religious manifestations are increasing. People following a certain religion are under threat, whether it be Jews, Christians, Muslims or others.

According to the Community Security Trust (CST), in the last two years anti-Semitic incidents in the United Kingdom doubled from 535 (2013) to 1,179 (2014) and 924 (2015)<sup>1</sup>. On 24 May 2014, four people lost their lives when the Jewish Museum of Belgium was attacked by a radical Islamist Frenchman.

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<sup>1</sup> Community Security Trust, Anti-Semitic Incidents. Report 2015 (2016), p. 42

It was the first deadly attack against Jews in Belgium since the 1980s<sup>2</sup>. The Jewish community in France was seriously hit in January 2015, when a Jewish supermarket in Paris was attacked and four people were murdered. While Jews represent less than one percent of the general population of France, 40% of all registered racist acts in 2015 had an anti-Semitic character<sup>3</sup>. In February 2015, a Jewish security guard was shot at the Great Synagogue in Copenhagen (Denmark) during a bar mitzvah ceremony. In the Netherlands in 2015, anti-Semitic incidents at secondary schools reached their highest level for over a decade.<sup>4</sup> According to the Pew Research Centre (PRC), Jews face social hostility in 34 of the 45 European countries (76%) – more than in any other region in the world.<sup>5</sup> The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) points out that anti-Semitic attitudes are strong in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia and Hungary.<sup>6</sup> Here, the most widespread anti-Semitic opinion is that Jews have too much power in the business world and the international financial market.

Sadly, anti-Semitism is not the only anti-religious manifestation that Europe faces, as adherents of other religious groups are threatened as well. The PRC finds that Muslims experience intimidation in nearly as many European countries as Jews: 32 out of 45 (71%).<sup>7</sup> Anti-Muslim behaviour increases after the occurrence of terrorist attacks undertaken by extremist Muslims. This objectionable phenomenon occurred, for example, after the attacks in France (November 2015) and Belgium (March 2016).

Besides anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hatred, intolerance against Christians is widespread.<sup>8</sup> In 2015, attacks on Christians and Christian buildings rose significantly in Europe and throughout the world. Therefore, in February 2016, Members of the European Parliament proposed a resolution calling on the

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<sup>2</sup> Antisemitisme.be, Antisemitisme in België. Jaarlijks verslag 2014 (2015), p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Jewish Community Security Service, Report on Antisemitism in France in 2015 (2016), p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> CIDI, Monitor antisemitische incidenten in Nederland 2015 (2016), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Pew Research Center (PRC), Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities (26 February 2015), p. 5, 28.

<sup>6</sup> Anti-Defamation League, Global 100. An Index of Anti-Semitism (2016), 6, 18.

<sup>7</sup> PRC, Latest Trends, 29.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.intoleranceagainsthchristians.eu>

European Commission to do everything within its power to combat anti-Christian acts and to protect Christian buildings.<sup>9</sup> A few weeks ago, Open Doors Deutschland presented a deeply distressing report showing that Christian refugees in Germany are suffering from discrimination, intimidation and even death threats and sexual assaults.<sup>10</sup> In December 2015, proposals to protect Christian refugees had already been made.<sup>11</sup>

**Considering the above, the European Christian Political Movement condemns all anti-religious violence in the strongest possible terms. Anti-religious manifestations are an attack on the most important fundamental values that the EU is built upon – freedom of faith and conscience, freedom of opinion and expression, plurality and respect.**

While stressing and greatly appreciating the role of the Council of Europe (CoE) in fighting the infringement of human rights, **the ECPM calls on the European Commission to protect the fundamental rights of faith communities and to fight for mutual understanding between religious minorities, based on the positions taken by the CoE.**

Every believer should experience a sense of freedom and safety. The Members of the ECPM support the recent initiatives undertaken by the European Commission to combat anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hatred<sup>12</sup>, and call on the European Commission to take a similar stance regarding intolerance against Christians.

However, the ECPM wants to go further than the Commission in positively acknowledging the societal importance of religion in the Member States of

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+MOTION+B8-2016-0229+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>10</sup> Open Doors Deutschland, Religiös motivierte Übergriffe gegen christliche Flüchtlinge in Deutschland (2016).

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+MOTION+B8-2015-1428+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>12</sup> Such as the Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights in the EU, first held on 1-2 October 2015, and the appointment of Coordinators for combating anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hatred.

the European Union. Religion – especially Judaism and Christianity – made a priceless contribution to European civilisation and European integration. Faith and faith communities such as churches are the cement of society.

**Therefore, the Members of the ECPM call on the European Commission and the Member States to intensify funding of faith-based organisations that have a broader political and societal importance and that aim to foster the well-being of the whole society, while stressing that the aims and measures of these organisations should not conflict with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).**

Education – as a responsibility of the Member States – is a starting point for increasing mutual respect.

**The ECPM stresses that the battle against anti-religious behaviour, discrimination and hatred, whether it be anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred or anti-Christian attitudes, cannot be fought anywhere better than in classrooms.** As the First Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans recently said, education is and should always remain the most important instrument against “ignorance, intolerance, indifference”.<sup>13</sup>

However, education should play a role not only in combatting negative attitudes, but also in stimulating positive attitudes towards religion.

**The ECPM calls on the Member States of the European Union to acknowledge and strengthen religious teaching – again, not conflicting with the ECHR – as a substantial and essential part of primary and secondary education.**

### **ECPM Resolution on Pornography – Proposed by PCD France |**

*accepted during the ECPM General Assembly on 11 June 2016 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands*

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (Александр Солженицын), a Nobel Prize in Litera-

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<sup>13</sup> Speech by First Vice-President Timmermans at the 3rd Inter-Parliamentary Conference for Combating Anti-Semitism in Berlin, 14 March 2016.

ture winner (1970) and Soviet dissident, spent 11 years of his life in a gulag in Siberia – 11 years behind barbed wire, 11 years being deprived of his freedom and dignity. These 11 years left a mark on his whole life. However, he publicly stated that it was easier to enslave people with pornography than with watchtowers.

Years later, studies conducted among young Europeans testify to the trivialisation of pornography and its subsequent impact. A study ordered by the French CSA (Conseil Supérieur de l’Audiovisuel), an independent authority for the protection of audiovisual communication freedom, investigated almost 10,000 young girls and boys with the following worrying results<sup>14</sup>:

- 67% of 14-year-old boys watched a pornographic movie in the last 12 months;
- Nearly 20% of 14-year-old boys watched more than ten pornographic movies in the last 12 months.

The consequences are massive:

- Among regular viewers of pornographic videos, the risk of attempting suicide is increased three-fold and the risk of being frequently drunk is increased four-fold;
- Consumption of pornography is associated with a significant increase in self-destructive behaviours such as tobacco, alcohol and suicide, in boys as well girls.

Therefore, pornography is not a personal choice with only private results. It is an addictive behaviour with consequences for public health. Unfortunately, this phenomenon is not restricted to a single country. On the contrary, similar situations can be found in the US<sup>15</sup>, Italy<sup>16</sup> and most likely in other countries, although additional data is needed.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://en.www.csa.fre05d.systranlinks.net/Etudes-et-publications/Les-dossiers-d-actualite/Les-effets-de-la-pornographie-chez-les-adolescents/Pres-de-10-000-eleves-interrogés> (English), 2004

<sup>15</sup> 2014 Pornography Survey and Statistics. Proven Men Ministries. <http://www.provenmen.org/2014pornsurvey/> (accessed Dec. 29, 2014).

<sup>16</sup> Silvia Bonino, Silvia Ciarirano, Emanuela Rabaglietti and Elna Cattelino, “Use of pornography and self-reported engagement in sexual violence among adolescents,” *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 3 (2006): 265-288.



Today, a political move is required. The example of the state of Utah (US) is encouraging: on 19 April 2016, Utah recognised pornography as a public health hazard.<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, pornographic or pornography-inspired content is more and more present in public space. Pornography is widespread in magazines, television broadcasts and films, advertisements, etc., and is therefore visible at any age. Access is even easier thanks to free-of-charge pornographic websites. Every second, more than 3000 US dollars are spent on pornography worldwide<sup>18</sup>. Per year, pornography is estimated to drain more than 50 billion US dollars.

The underlying problem is that pornography gives young people a degraded view of sexuality and thus largely harms human dignity, not only of the “actors”, but also of the viewers. Young people are encouraged to live according to their sexual urges and get used to a representation of their own body and of the bodies of others (especially women) without any hint of respect.

### **Therefore, the European Christian Political Movement:**

Is convinced that young Europeans are called to become free men and women who are also free from the conditioning promoted by the pornographic industry. This freedom can only be built on an education in which each other's body is deemed worthy of respect.

**Calls on all Member States and the European Commission to assess the negative consequences of pornography on public health and to promote prevention campaigns against this addictive behaviour.**

**Calls on the European Parliament to investigate the actual influence of the pornographic industry in Europe and to make available up-to-date data on the presence of pornographic pictures in European public space.**

**ECPM calls on all European parties and NGOs promoting human dignity, youth education, prevention of sexual addictive behaviour, school drop-out and youth suicide to work together to increase awareness in Europe of the destructing impact of pornography.**

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<sup>17</sup> <http://le.utah.gov/~2016/bills/static/SCR009.html>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/porn-business-of-pleasure>

**Resolution on the EU's relations with Ukraine – Proposed by CDU Ukraine** | *accepted during the ECPM General Assembly on 11 June 2016 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands*

**The European Christian Political Movement:**

Considering that visa-free travel between the EU and Ukraine will give many benefits and opportunities for Ukrainian entrepreneurs and other citizens;

Considering that accepting the proposal of the European Commission on visa-free travel is a clear sign of partnership between the EU and Ukraine;

Considering the need for clear support from the European Union for Ukraine in its struggle against Russian-supported aggression;

Considering countries like Georgia who face similar circumstances;

**Calls on the European Institutions to complete all the procedures for visa-free travel between the EU and Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia as soon as possible.**

**Specifically calls on the European Parliament and the European Council to accept the proposal of the European Commission on visa-free travel with Ukraine<sup>19</sup>.**

**ECPM Resolution Rejecting UNESCO's Misrepresentation of Israel as an Occupier and Affirming its Legal Rights and Historic Connection to the Land of Israel and Jerusalem as its Capital – proposed by the Advisory Council of ECPM** | *accepted during the ECPM General Assembly on 5 December in Brussels, Belgium*

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) officially passed a resolution on 26 October 2016 denying any Jewish connection to Jerusalem and its holy sites, including Temple Mount. The document demands that Israel cease what it calls the “intentional destruction” of Jerusalem’s holy sites, referring to these solely by their Islamic names.

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<sup>19</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-1490\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1490_en.htm)

UNESCO's resolution is based on a misinterpretation, as if Israel were an occupier and the land belonged to the Arabs. The resolution ignores a vast number of well-documented facts demonstrating that the nation of Israel has been connected to the land for over 3.5 thousand years. Jerusalem became the capital of Israel over 3000 years ago and remained so for a thousand years, and no other occupying country has made it its capital during the past 2000 years. Israel's connection to the land is documented in all the different books of the Bible's Old and New Testament, many non-Biblical writings and other archaeological tangible materials that all support the texts.

Based on the Jewish connection to the land, all major world powers agreed to encourage and help the Jewish people to resettle in their historic homeland and re-establish an independent Jewish state, starting the process a century ago. Several documents have been issued to make this happen. The UK issued the Balfour Declaration on 2 November 1917. The League of Nations issued the San Remo Resolution on 25 April 1920, as well as Article 22 of the Covenant, the Mandate for Palestine, modified by the 1922 Demarcation Agreement. The US-UK Treaty was signed in 1924.

In 1947, UN Resolution 181 gave Israel the green light for re-establishing its contemporary State of Israel, which was finally realised in 1948. Although it suggested dividing Judea and Samaria, unlike the former agreements, the question of Jerusalem was left open in the resolution. Jerusalem has been reunited with Israel since 1967. After several wars of self-defence, Israel is still willing to negotiate the status of Judea and Samaria. Jerusalem remains annexed according to the decision by the Knesset. Gaza has been given away and unfortunately taken over by a terrorist group, Hamas.

Taking all the reasons above into consideration, we support the Jewish State of Israel in asserting its legal rights to sovereignty and self-defence of the entirety of its lands and territories, including Jerusalem, the capital of Israel.

We call upon governments, institutions and leaders around the world, as a matter of official policy, to reject UNESCO's recent resolution seeking to deny Jerusalem's Jewish origins and Christian beliefs and heritage, and furthermore the misrepresentation of the Jewish State of Israel as an occupier, duly noting the anti-Semitic nature and effect of the term's improper usage against the State of Israel.



**we thank Peter Östman for his  
service as ECPM president**

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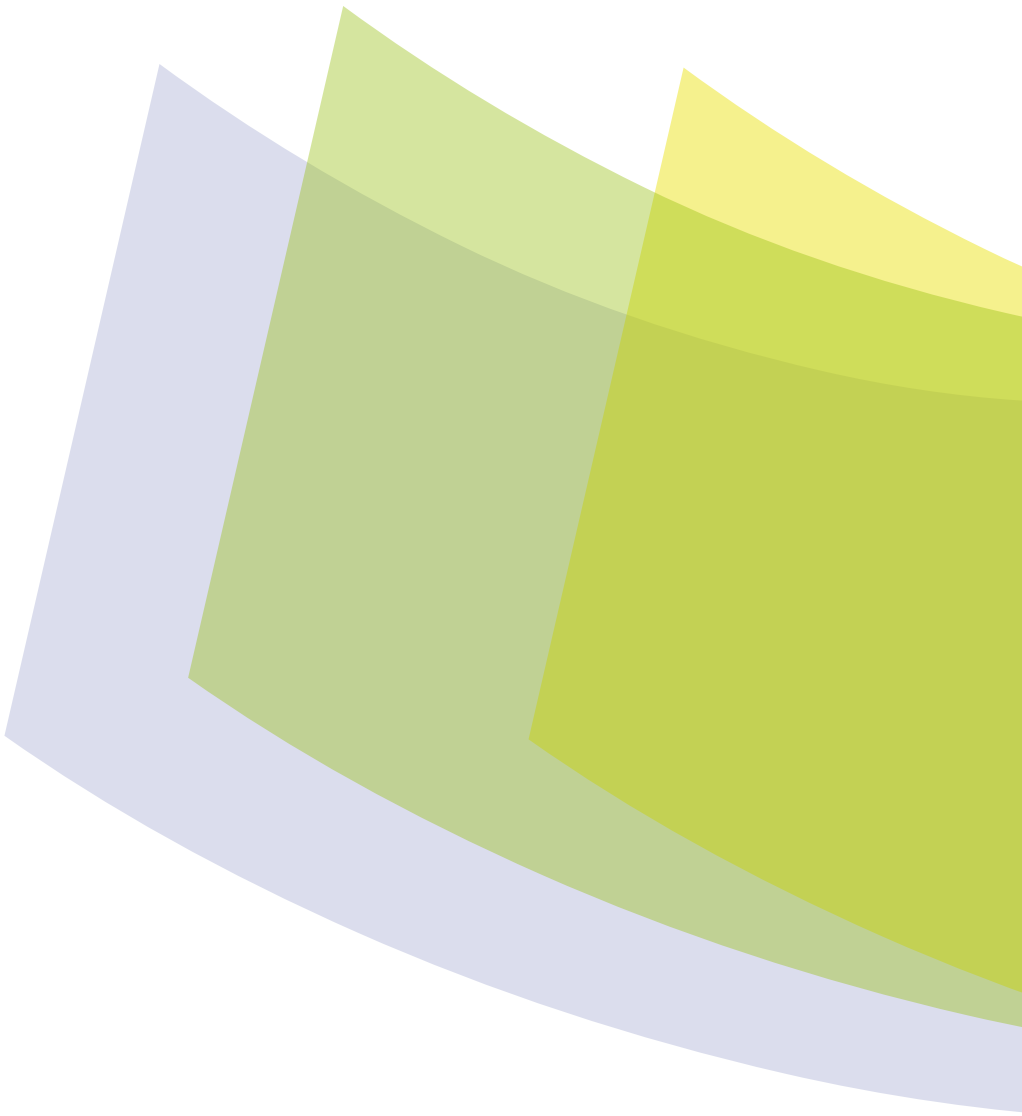
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“Europe needs to show leadership when cross-border problems arise. However, the European Union should always respect the national sovereignty of its member states and regulate only what member states cannot regulate themselves.”

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