

Conference of European Churches  
Governing Board

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Topic: EU Elections

Agenda Item: **15**

Staff in Charge: Elizabeta Kitanovic

Recommendation: *For information*

Annex: Not applicable

Earlier docs: Not applicable

# Conference of European Churches

## Project Description

### A: Brochure Text

#### Europe: It's OUR future

*A guide to the 2019 European Parliament Elections  
from the Conference of European Churches and  
Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe*

#### **A few minutes to vote, years of impact**

The next European Parliament elections take place from 23 to 26 May 2019. Through a direct vote, citizens of the European Union will elect 705 Members of Parliament (MEPs) who will shape life in Europe for their five-year term . . . and beyond!

You are part of the largest democratic electorate in the world that crosses national boundaries. This is your chance to learn, act, and participate in a better Europe for all.

#### **Justice, peace, solidarity**

Churches are aware of their responsibility toward the European Union and Europe as a whole. Shared concerns connect our lives across all kinds of boundaries and borders. The global ecological crisis, economic struggles and unemployment, the arrival of refugees, rising nationalism all dramatically shape life in Europe today.

Through voting and participation in democracy, we raise our hopes for a better Europe and a better future. The European Union commits itself to just, peace, solidarity, and human dignity. Churches share these values and stress that the Union must not be limited to an economic grouping of member states. It can be more than this. It should be more than this. Economic, social, and ecological aspects of our lives are intertwined and cannot be dealt with in isolation.

We are committed to working for a better Europe and support the integration of the European continent. We seek to build bridges and overcome historical divisions, while heightening Europe's sense of responsibility to the world. We consider the diversity of our regional, national, cultural and religious traditions to be enriching for Europe. In view of numerous conflicts, the churches are called upon to serve together the cause of reconciliation among peoples and counteract any form of nationalism that leads to oppression.

The Conference of European Churches and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe imagines a Europe where people can encounter and respect each other, with deep appreciation for how our decisions impact the rest of the world, especially those living in politically, economically, and ecologically vulnerable situations. Our Christian faith and self-understanding emphasises justice, peace, solidarity, and human dignity. Together we will do our part towards giving migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers a humane reception in Europe. We look for these same commitments in those who shape Europe's future.

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The churches support an integration of the European continent. Without common values, unity cannot endure. We are convinced that the spiritual heritage of Christianity constitutes an empowering source of inspiration and enrichment for Europe.

On the basis of our Christian faith, we work towards a humane, socially conscious Europe, in which human rights and the basic values of peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, participation and solidarity prevail” – *Charta Œcumenica*

In 2001, churches in Europe jointly and boldly pronounced in the *Charta Œcumenica* support for bringing Europe closer together. We continue to respond to this call. We work with our members, supporters, and partners on issues of common concern, including dialogue with European Union. Today these include migration and asylum, economic and ecological justice, human rights, employment and social affairs, education, and technology.

#### About the Parliament

Seats in the parliament are mostly distributed by the population of EU Member

The European Parliament has launched a platform in 24 languages to help people get involved and increase voter turnout in the upcoming elections. Visit [thistimeimvoting.eu](http://thistimeimvoting.eu) to learn more.

States, with six being the smallest number for Malta, Luxembourg, Cyprus, and Estonia. Germany is at the other end of the scale with 96 MEPs. While the elections take place along national political party lines, most elected representatives decide to participate in transnational parties with others who share common views.

The parliament has an important role to play in European Union democratic life. It has legislative power and budgetary authority, and exercises democratic and political supervision of the European Commission and other European institutions. Importantly, the parliament is accountable to you—the electorate—and can be a haven of accountability and participatory democracy.

Through legislation and funding, the next European Parliament has the opportunity to respond to the most pressing issues for the Union, it’s neighbours, and all those impacted by its decisions.

### Migration and Asylum

- Will Europe remain a continent of hospitality for those in need of protection or close off its border towards them?
- Will Europe find opportunity in migration, including as a response to the need to diversify labour markets and address aging populations? Or will it remain something that needs to be prevented?
- Will Europe be a place where ethnic, religious and other kinds of diversity are encouraged and cherished? Will challenges relating to such diversity be addressed?
- Will Europe be a continent where solidarity is the guiding principle in addressing migration and diversity challenges or one where national interests are the only determining factor?

### Climate Change and Sustainable Development

- Can the European Union commit to reducing Green House Gasses emissions to align with international targets of no more than 1.5°C as set out in the Paris Agreement and reinforced by the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report?
- Can the European Union do justice to Europe's responsibility in supporting the most vulnerable victims of climate change? This includes allocating in a transparent way finances to address loss and damage caused by climate change in vulnerable parts of the world, supporting implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, intensifying efforts for energy saving and renewable energy production, and promoting an economy of sustainable production and consumption.

### **European Social Model and the Future of Work**

- In November 2017 the European Union agreed on the European Pillar of Social Rights, aiming to delivering to all European citizens' equal opportunity and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion. How will this pillar be implemented and built into the life of all Europeans?
- Over the last years social and economic inequality has risen between EU countries, but also within countries and societies. This has resulted in, among other things, people leaving their country and families to find a future elsewhere. What will the European Parliament do to combat social inequality and to seek upward convergence?
- Digitalisation leads to a transformation of labour and working conditions with opportunities and risks. One aspect of this is that more and more people will be able to work from everywhere at any time. How will European legislation ensure that private and family life but also voluntary societal engagement is protected against the demand of ever flexible availability? Going beyond this, will European policy be ready to launch a European debate how Europeans want to shape the future of work and of society regarding the technological progress in digitalisation, automation, robotisation and artificial intelligence?

### **European Economic Governance**

- Can the EU take steps towards an economy that will not only guarantee prosperity but will be balanced with social and ecological objectives?
- Can the EU take steps towards increasing the overall transparency and fairness of the banking and finance sector?
- Economic growth is not a guarantee against poverty and social exclusion. What steps will the EU undertake to guarantee higher quality of life?

## Europe in the World

- Development aid that the EU and its Member States provide is very important. How can the EU ensure that development policies of the EU and individual Member States is better coordinated and more effective?
- How can the EU contribute to developing fair partnerships with countries all over the globe?
- How can the EU contribute to addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in their home countries on other continents, to promoting sustainable systems of food production and consumption at home as well as internationally, and to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals?
- How can the EU contribute to giving the most vulnerable a life of dignity and hope, with decent living conditions, without forcing them to leave their home countries?

## Human Rights and Religious Freedom

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## What can you do?

- Get to know candidates and their parties before the May election. What is important to you? What is important to them?
- Vote for peace, justice, human dignity, and sustainability.
- Learn about polling options in your country and encourage others, especially young people, to get out and vote.
- Write to candidates about your concerns and hopes for the future of Europe. Follow and interact with them on social media.
- Participate in local debates
- Learn more about your churches position on key platform issues.
- Encourage thoughtful debate. Fact check and use balanced language, especially on social media where information can spread quickly.

## Contact Us

*CEC/CCME information, social media website, etc.*

## B: Postcard Text

CEC/CCME logo

## Europe: It's YOUR future

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### C: Videos

Short 30 second video series with members of the governing board, reflecting a diversity of age, gender, confession, and languages answering something like “Why are you voting in the EU elections?” Or “What future do you want for Europe?” Then we can invite people to make their own videos and submit.