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Conference of European Churches  
Conférence des Églises européennes  
Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen  
Конференция Европейских Церквей



churches' commission for migrants in europe

# EUROPE: IT'S OUR FUTURE



A TOOL FOR CHURCH ACTION IN THE 2019  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS FROM THE  
CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES  
AND CHURCHES' COMMISSION  
FOR MIGRANTS IN EUROPE.

# IT'S OUR FUTURE

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 the European Union for their five-year term ... and beyond!

Through participation in democracy, we raise our hopes for a better Europe and a better future. The European Union commits itself to justice, peace, solidarity, and human dignity. Churches share these values and believe that the economic, social, spiritual, and ecological aspects of our lives are intertwined and cannot be dealt with in isolation. Shared concerns connect our lives across all kinds of boundaries and borders. The global ecological crisis, economic struggles and unemployment, the arrival of refugees and rising nationalism all dramatically reshape life in Europe today.

The issues that are most pressing for the churches in Europe today include migration and asylum, climate change and sustainable development, the European social model and the future of work, economic governance, human rights and religious freedom, and the role of Europe in the world. We hope to inspire and enable our Member Churches, Organisations in Partnership, and National Councils of Churches to become active in the elections.

## THE EUROPEAN UNION: AN AREA OF SHARED VALUES

Human dignity, justice, freedom, peace and reconciliation, tolerance and solidarity are core values at the heart of the European project. Churches are committed to working for a better Europe and support the European project in order to pursue shared values and the common good. We seek to build bridges, overcome historical divisions and increase sense of responsibility to the world. In the face of conflict, we are called to act as agents of reconciliation and fight oppression.

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 ECUMENICA



In 2001, churches in Europe jointly and boldly pronounced in the Charta Ecumenica support for bringing Europe closer together. We continue to respond to this call by working with our members and partners on issues of common concern, including dialogue with European Union.

The Conference of European Churches and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe imagine a Europe where people encounter and respect each other. Our Christian self-understanding places justice, peace, solidarity, and human dignity at the heart of all we do. Together we want to create a secure, socially just and open Europe. We hope for the same commitment in those who shape the future of Europe.

## ABOUT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The European Parliament is the key instrument of representative and participatory democracy in the EU. Through election of Members of the European Parliament, citizens contribute their voice and participate in the guidance and public oversight of the European Union. The parliament plays an important role in the life of the European Union. It has legislative power and budgetary authority, and exercises democratic and political supervision of the European Commission and other European Union institutions.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HAS LAUNCHED A PLATFORM IN 24 LANGUAGES TO HELP PEOPLE GET INVOLVED AND INCREASE VOTER TURNOUT IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS. TO LEARN MORE VISIT: [THISTIMEIMVOTING.EU](http://thistimeimvoting.eu)

## FUTURE OF THE EU



Seats in the European Parliament are allocated according to the population of the Member State, ranging from six to 96 MEPs per country. While elections take place along national political party lines, most elected representatives decide to participate in transnational groups with others sharing common views. For more information about the parliament, you can visit:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>

### OUR CONCERNS

Churches do, along with individual Christians have perspectives and concerns for political decision makers and for those who run for political office. According to the Treaty of Lisbon (Article 17, TFEU) the EU – including the European Parliament – shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with churches and religious communities, recognising their specific contribution. Churches' concerns are driven by respect for human dignity, a life of freedom and justice, and a commitment to respect, peace, sharing, and cooperation.

These concerns are taken up in the text that follows.

The European Union has been constructed as a community of shared values from its very inception. This vision is further enshrined in the first articles of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The ideal of common values has, however, recently been under increasing pressure. The danger of populism and political extremism has reached unprecedented levels in modern EU history. It is, nevertheless, a constant task of the Union not to withdraw from the responsibility to keep the ideal of shared values alive.

**HOW WILL THE EU STRENGTHEN THE IDEAL OF SHARED VALUES, CONSIDERING THE DECISION OF ONE OF ITS MEMBER STATES TO WITHDRAW FROM THE UNION?**

**HOW WILL THE EU STRENGTHEN ITS COMMITMENT TO THE COMMON GOOD?**

**HOW WILL THE EU RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGES OF GROWING POPULISM AND POLITICAL EXTREMISM?**



## MIGRATION, REFUGEES, AND ASYLUM

Migration is an integral part of Europe's history and an important part of life in on the continent today. European citizens move throughout Europe, while migrants and refugees from elsewhere arrive to build new lives in a European home. Although there are challenges, migrants contribute to Europe's economic wellbeing and enrich its already diverse societies.

**HOW** WILL THE EU DO TO OFFER HOSPITALITY TO THOSE IN NEED OF HELP, ASSISTANCE, AND PROTECTION?

**HOW** WILL THE EU FIND OPPORTUNITY IN MIGRATION, INCLUDING AS A WAY TO RESPOND TO AGING POPULATIONS AND GAPS IN THE LABOUR MARKET?

**HOW** WILL THE EU PROMOTE SOLIDARITY IN POLICIES RELATING TO MIGRATION?

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The challenges arising from recent economic crises, ongoing economic inequality and injustice, and the growing urgency of ecological problems are issues that affect all Europeans. Christian faith calls us to address in a radical way consumption and production patterns. These patterns lead to increasing demands on natural and human resources, and call into question what is sufficient for our lives. To combat climate change, we must change how we live as individuals and communities.

**HOW** WILL THE EU REDUCE GREEN HOUSE GASSES TO MEET THE TARGETS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE?

**HOW** HOW WILL THE EU HONOUR EUROPE'S RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD THE MOST VULNERABLE VICTIMS OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

**HOW** HOW WILL THE EU PROMOTE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, INTENSIFY RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION, AND PROMOTE AN ECONOMY OF SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION?

## EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

Churches advocate putting people at the centre of labour and employment issues through fair working conditions, social protection, and inclusion. Labour is not only about material wellbeing, but an opportunity for flourishing, service to society, and care for Creation. Work, along with labour in the home and volunteer commitments, should empower people to participate in society to the fullest of their desires and abilities.

**HOW** WILL THE EU IMPLEMENT THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS AND GUARANTEE THAT IT IS BUILT INTO THE LIFE OF ALL CITIZENS?

**HOW** HOW WILL THE EU COMBAT SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND PROMOTE PARITY WITHIN AND AMONG MEMBER STATES?

**HOW** HOW WILL THE EU PROTECT PRIVATE AND FAMILY TIME FROM THE DEMANDS OF DIGITALISATION AND INCREASINGLY FLEXIBLE WORKING CONDITIONS?



## EUROPEAN ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE

The European Union seeks to raise the quality of life for its citizens. Increasingly, churches are concerned with how economic development and the ecological limits of our planet are linked. Effective economic governance must work from this perspective and always move toward a Union attentive to the natural world that sustains us and makes all things possible.

**HOW** WILL THE EU TAKE STEPS TOWARDS AN ECONOMY THAT BALANCES PROSPERITY WITH SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS?

**HOW** HOW WILL THE EU IMPROVE THE OVERALL TRANSPARENCY AND FAIRNESS OF THE BANKING AND FINANCE SECTOR?

**HOW** HOW WILL THE EU PROMOTE THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION ALONGSIDE ECONOMIC GROWTH?

## EUROPE IN THE WORLD

The EU is the largest development aid donor in the world. Financing aid alone, however, will not eliminate global poverty or resolve the crises that perpetuate it.

**HOW** WILL THE EU IMPROVE THE EFFICACY AND COORDINATION OF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES?

**HOW** HOW WILL THE EU CONTRIBUTE TO FAIR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO GIVING PEOPLE LIVES WITH DIGNITY AND HOPE?

**HOW** HOW WILL THE EU RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THE MOST VULNERABLE DIRECTLY IN THEIR HOME COUNTRIES, PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION, AND ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

## A MORE EQUAL AND INCLUSIVE EUROPE

CEC Member Churches advocate for the promotion and protection of human rights at the highest standards inside Europe and beyond its borders. We devote attention to a number of specific issues including freedom of religion or belief, anti-discrimination legislation, and developing resources for training and human rights education.

**HOW** WILL HOW WILL YOU ENSURE THAT THE EU PROMOTES AND RESPECTS HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF?

**HOW** WILL YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE FIGHT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION, ESPECIALLY AS OUTLINED IN THE CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION?\*

**HOW** WILL YOU ENSURE THAT THE EU RESPECTS GENDER EQUALITY?

\* Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union states that "Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited."



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We encourage everyone to get involved in the upcoming European elections and participate in the development of the European project. Here are some suggestions of how YOU can get involved in the process:

VOTE FOR PEACE, JUSTICE, HUMAN DIGNITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS, ESPECIALLY YOUNG PEOPLE, TO VOTE.



GET TO KNOW CANDIDATES AND THEIR PARTIES BEFORE THE ELECTION.



LEARN ABOUT POLLING OPTIONS IN YOUR COUNTRY.



SHARE YOUR CONCERNS AND REFLECTIONS WITH THE CANDIDATES. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO USE THE REFLECTIONS AND QUESTIONS IN THIS LEAFLET IN YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH THE CANDIDATES.



FOLLOW AND INTERACT WITH CANDIDATES AND PARTIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA.



PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL DEBATES.



LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR CHURCH'S POSITION ON KEY ISSUES. PROMOTE DISCUSSIONS AND EVENTS RELATING TO THE ELECTIONS IN YOUR OWN CHURCH.



ENCOURAGE THOUGHTFUL DEBATE. FACT CHECK AND USE BALANCED LANGUAGE, ESPECIALLY ON SOCIAL MEDIA WHERE INFORMATION CAN SPREAD QUICKLY.

