

BRUSSELS' PROCLAMATION (en)

Article rédigé par *La Fondation de service politique*, le 03 mars 2003

Conclusions drawn from the Conference "God and Europe ? Political and religious freedom in the founding treaties of reunified Europe"

European Parliament, Brussels, 3 April 2003.

"We,

Members of the European Parliament,

Members of the Parliaments of the Member States and Candidate States,

Delegates from the Convention of Christians for Europe and delegates from the Foundation of Political Service,

Representatives of the European civil society from both EU and non-EU countries,

Gathered at the European Parliament in Brussels today to held a conference on "God and Europe? Political and religious freedom in the founding treaties of reunified Europe",

We are calling for recognition, in the founding treaties of the reunified Europe, of the common heritage and sources from which our citizens draw the values that have contributed to the construction of a European Community.

We notice that Europe is the result of an original and specific synthesis of the Greek philosophy, the Roman law and the Germanic, Celtic and Slavic cultures. This synthesis was made possible through the adhesion of the peoples to the Christian values. Without claiming exclusivity or denying the influences of other philosophical or spiritual sources, Christianity has definitely moulded our common civilisation, thanks to the values of responsibility, liberty and respect for human dignity, the rule of law, subsidiarity and solidarity.

We affirm that Europe is a combination of this common founding heritage with the specific contribution of each people. The recognition of this heritage on the fields of law, arts, literature, philosophy and politics is right and faithful to the historic legacy.

We reject the narrow view of a European reunification based solely on economic terms. To successfully unite eastern and western traditions, we believe it is necessary to fully and objectively express the European identity in order to build it on a basis of recognised and shared values. This is the way in which a common future of unity and solidarity will be crafted.

I – Religious and political liberty – The statute of Churches

As a consequence of the above stated considerations,

We call for religion to be recognised in the future founding treaty of reunified Europe in order to neutralise any ideological and political attempts to regulate people and religion. Recognition of religion does not, however, signify the expression of a one-sided political opinion. It stems from an objective review of the reality of religion in Europe and allows for the demonstration of universal convictions by the laity on a broad scale, respectful of all convictions, without preferential treatment for any particular group.

Whereas we respect the lay character of the political institutions and the ecumenical spirit of the proposals made by the Church-Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches and by the Commission of Episcopates Of the European Union (COMECE), we request that the following be recognised:

- The religious freedom in its individual, collective and social expressions.
- Dialogue and consultation between Churches, communities of believers and the European institutions, as set out in the EU Commission's White paper on European Governance issued in July 2001, which stated that "Churches and religious communities have a specific contribution to make".
- Respect for the legal statute of Churches and religious institutions to the extent of such statutes exist in member states.

II – The respect of dignity of human person.

Besides, we ask the recognition of the universal value of the principle of dignity of human person, in all its expressions.

1. Right to life.

The founding treaty of the reunified Europe must solemnly proclaim respect for the dignity and life of every human being, regardless of his or her stage of development or state of health. It should reject any scientific research or technique that is contrary to this fundamental right. Respect for dignity of every human being excludes all research carried on human embryos and any practice of cloning. The right to life, as an inherent ontological right of every human being, must be respected, honoured and protected from conception through to natural death.

2. The family as the fundamental group-unit of society.

The family, established by marriage between a man and a woman, is the fundamental group-unit of the society. The family is where life enters the world, education is given and participation in society is taught. It is the indispensable framework in which children grow and develop. If public authorities, which are at the service of every citizen, must take into consideration other emerging forms of cohabitation, they should not assimilate them, on a legal point of view, to the family as it is here defined. The specific definition of family noted above should be protected. In addition, the EU should allow for the correct balance of family life and professional activity by taking appropriate measures.

3. Subsidiarity, freedom and responsibility.

Nations and citizens of the Member States have rights and obligations. They effectively and freely carry out their responsibilities in the frame of the European Union. The founding treaty of reunified Europe must recognise the role of citizens united in intermediary structures, particularly in relation to family, education, culture, society, social aspects, humanitarian activity and trade unions. Such recognition will allow all citizens to express their concerns and to develop and realise the objectives of related NGOs. Recognition will also ensure that each individual takes responsibility for the success of a new Europe. The EU must recognise the principle of subsidiarity in relation to every aspect of society.

4. Solidarity and the struggle against extreme poverty as a condition for peace in Europe and in the world.

The leitmotiv of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October) states that, "Wherever men and women are condemned to live in poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty". This message is engraved on a plaque in front of the European Parliament in Brussels. To show solidarity with the poorest citizens, the most marginalized members of

society should be placed at the centre of every project of society in order to allow sustainable development based on access of all to universally agreed human rights. This not only encompasses education, health service and professional promotion, but also respect of human dignity and of a culture of life. This is the way the reunified Europe will respond to the needs and aspirations of its most deprived population.

5. Economic progress, social justice and solidarity.

Peace is established first and foremost through truth, freedom, justice and love. This leads directly to solidarity and the sharing of natural resources, in relation to which we are all jointly accountable before the whole human community. The economic development of society is rooted in justice and peace. These roots are clearly defined in the European Convention on Human Rights. The reunified Europe must respect and take into account the political and cultural experiences of the new Member States. After forty years spent under communist rule, they have a strong aspiration to freedom, democracy, economic development and respect for their cultural and political identities.

The reunited Europe bears an increased responsibility toward the poorest countries, particularly those of Africa, which wish to develop in accordance with their own sovereign model.

Brussels, 3 April 2003.

*This is a translation of the original text, which has been written in French. Only the French text constitutes a reference.

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