



EN/RE

**THE EUROPEAN NETWORK CHURCH ON THE MOVE
RÉSEAU EUROPÉEN ÉGLISES ET LIBERTÉS
EUROPÄISCHES NETZWERK KIRCHE IM AUFBRUCH
RED EUROPEA IGLESIA POR LA LIBERTAD**

Association dotée du statut participatif au Conseil de l'Europe
Association enjoying participatory status to the Council of Europe

<http://www.en-re.eu> ; www.european-catholic-people.eu

Friday, February 17, 2012

Ms Katharina von Schnurbein
Adviser for the dialogue with churches,
religious associations, communities and
philosophical and non-confessional organisations.
BEPA
Commission européenne/Europese Commissie,
1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË

Dear Mrs. Von-Schnurbein,

Director General Jean-Claude THÉBAULT informed me by his letter of February the 6th that you have been appointed as Adviser for dialogue with churches, religious associations and communities as well as philosophical and non-confessional organizations. I am very pleased to congratulate you on this appointment and I wish you good success in your new and very important functions. As Secretary General, representing the European Network Church on the Move (EN/RE) at the Council of Europe, I am looking forward to meeting you with colleagues of the EN/RE to present the Network to you and some proposals about issues of interest to Europe, elaborated within our network and experience.

The European Network Church on the Move (EN/RE) has a slightly different name in each of its four main languages (English, French, German and Spanish) stressing variously 'change' and 'freedom' in the Church. It is an association of some thirty organisations representing, with very varying levels of support in each country, Austria , Belgium , the Czech Republic , Denmark , France , Germany , Hungary , Ireland , Italy , the Netherlands , Poland , Portugal , Spain , Switzerland and the United Kingdom . In addition, *Catholics for a Free Choice Europe* is a member, as is the *European Federation of Married Catholic Priests*. The *USA Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church* is affiliated and entitled to send representatives to the annual conference, as are *Call To Action*, *Catholic Organisations for Renewal*, *The International Federation for a Renewed Catholic Ministry* and *Catholics For a Free Choice*.

The European Network is 'a spontaneous convergence of organisations – associations, communities, informal groups and networks – of European Christians who are in majority Catholic, sharing (1) the vision of a Church prophetic, ecumenical, liberating, supporting, loving, which neither excludes nor discriminates and which follows in the steps of Jesus the Liberator, and (2) the will to work, respecting cultural and religious diversity, for peace, justice, freedom, human rights and democracy, including within the Catholic Church'.

Some of the EN's member organisations are very small, while others, like *Netzwerk Offene Kirche* in Switzerland and *PARVIS* in France are themselves national umbrella groups with many member groups each with varying numbers of individual members. There is for example the vibrant base community in Madrid *Iglesia de Base de Madrid*, and the UK 's pressure group *Catholics for a Changing Church*, respected in particular for publishing some fifty pamphlets on subjects ranging from priesthood to feminism, including the environment, the papacy, collaborative ministry, contraception and same-sex relationships. *We Are Church* is represented at the EN by member groups in Austria – where it all began of course – Denmark , France , Germany , Italy , Portugal , Spain and the United Kingdom . These are just a few example of the huge variety of activities and concerns represented within the membership of the EN/RE.

The EN/RE is working on topics of interest to Europe such as ‘The people of God in a world on the move’, ‘Do the three Abrahamic religions have a future without patriarchy?’ and, “Gender and Christianity” , “Universality of Human rights and religions”. “The EN/RE holds seminars in different European countries.

The EN has obtained recognition as an International Non-Governmental Organisation at the Council of Europe. This enables us to send representatives to discussions and meetings to give an alternative Catholic voice to that of the hierarchies of Europe in this secular forum on topics of interest to Europe . The EN is particularly concerned to press for secularism and prevent interference in the democratic process by religious entities such as the Council of European Episcopal Conferences that are not representative of Catholic citizens. We wish to be a Christian voice at the Council of Europe on such topics as poverty, social cohesion, Interreligious and interconvictional dialogue, north/south dialogue and solidarity, society and democracy, human rights, gender equality, social policy, education, culture and the environment . The EN/RE is looking forward to doing so at the level of the European Union Institutions. For instance, the EN.RE has organized study days on topics such as “Secularism and Secularisation in a multicultural and multi-convictional Europe in search of social cohesion based on common values’ or ‘Another world is possible with a renewed Church without gender discrimination’ “Christianity and homosexuality”, etc.

As General Secretary, representing the European Network Church on the Move at the Council of Europe, I shall be pleased to present you with some of the proposals prepared by the European Network Church on the Move on key issues of interest to Europe and its citizens.

Looking forward to meeting you, I remain
Sincerely yours

François Becker
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