Newsletter from the Council of Europe, January 2019

Dear friends,

2019 for us Europeans will be a decisive year because on 26 May the European elections will take place. As you, 70 years after its foundation, our Europe (of which our CEP proudly bears the name) is threatened on all sides by extremist dangers, by the rise of nationalism, from the fall of the values of peace, welcome, freedom, human rights and democracy which are the foundations of European identity.

Let's, however, remain optimistic because we will see each other from 27th July to 1st August in LVIV in Ukraine!

I returned from the Parliamentary session of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The most important points for the CEP were:

I - The meeting of Catholic-inspired NGOs
As always, it was held in the presence of Mons. Rudelli, permanent representative of the Holy See at the COE. These are the main topics discussed:

1. Worrying situation of the Conference of NGOs for political and financial reasons.
2. 17th of January 2019: Conference organized by the OIEC (Catholic International Education Office). Subject: Education to interculturality in line with the social doctrine of the Church. Great concern about the future of Catholic schools in certain countries (Portugal, Turkey, Slovenia, Italy ...). The EU does not care much about education.
3. 10th of January 2020: 2 days of talks are scheduled to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Holy See's presence at the COE (maybe our president Antonio will be able to attend to it? and others too? I will keep you informed)
4. 2019: We celebrate the 70th anniversary of the COE. Will we be able to speak there too?? The new Finnish president is very pessimistic about it. But our responsible of CINGO Daniel Guéry (who will be awarded the title of Commander of the Order of St. Gregory the Great in Rome by Mons. Parolini) will try it.
5. 26th of May 2019: European elections. All NGOs who wish it have been asked to make a written declaration on this matter. There are already: Pax Christi, Caritas international, FAFCE, Pax Romana, COMECE etc.;
6. The Migration Co-ordination Unit will hold a parallel event in October.
7. Accreditation of a new NGO at the COE: RENATE, Talita kum's European sector against girl trafficking.

Conclusions: we must be increasingly active in our NGO and present at the COE to remember that the European values of 1949 are always valid and that the social doctrine of the Church is good news for the world.

Before separating, we asked ourselves if our NGOs are truly European, if our meetings are a place of dialogue for the common good and to create social bonds?? ...

II - Parliamentary Assembly in the Hemicycle on January 24th
This day was dedicated to the war in Ukraine. I therefore participated in solidarity with our Ukrainian friends. For three hours dozens of parliamentarians and Ukrainian delegates spoke and testified about the realities experienced, the rights trampled, the 24 sailors detained in
Russia, their willingness to fight to the end to defend their country, including the Donbass provinces, the Kerch Strait and the Azov Sea. Only a Serbian representative took a position to state that Ukraine is part of the federation of Russia (which caused violent reactions).

This parliamentary assembly has reinforced my conviction that our colloquium 2019 has its place in LVIV to testify our attachment to our Ukrainian friends that we will see again soon in CLUJ.

25th of January 2019
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