

A year in review



elevate.
empower.
engage.

A year in review



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About us

The European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) is the only European political party explicitly promoting Christian values in politics.

We are genuinely anchored in the political tradition that contributed significantly to the founding of the European Union: Christian Democracy. Our goal is to bridge the gap between extremes in European politics by re-establishing Christian Democracy as a viable political alternative, with an emphasis on the Christian relational worldview.

We dream of a Europe where human dignity is protected, where people are free and safe, and where governments serve their citizens.

ECPM acts as a platform for its members and associates: we want everyone to feel elevated, their voice heard and aware of their value. Through our events, trainings and resources, we empower our members with knowledge and connection so that they will effectively and successfully engage their parliaments and communities and be the voice that influences Europe.

Our movement brings together over 50 Christian- democratic political parties, individual politicians, NGOs and think-tanks from all across Europe.

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Introduction

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Our values



Dignity

Human dignity expresses the intrinsic value of every human being. It is inviolable and must be respected and protected, as stated in Article 1 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

We believe this universal principle rests on the human being as created by God in His likeness, and is the cornerstone of all the other human rights. Therefore, life should be protected from conception to natural death.

We align ourselves with the principles stated in the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine and recognize that it is the sole competence of EU Member States to legislate on bioethics and healthcare matters.



Family

We see the family as the most important social entity and the foundation for a thriving society.

We call on the European Union to respect the sovereignty of the family, based on the marriage between one man and one woman. Family policy is foremost the responsibility of EU Member States and, according to the principle of subsidiarity, European institutions should not interfere.

ECPM members support national policies which promote parenthood and flexible conditions for child-rearing. We support programs protecting children and youth, preventing addiction and violence, and we condemn all forms of domestic violence.



Sustainability

ECPM advocates for a relational view of the economy where healthy relationships between people is the end goal of systems, rather than increasing profits.

To that end, we favor SMEs, family-owned business and stakeholder business models. We support innovation as long as it does not violate human dignity and doesn't harm the environment.

Cohesion funds should support regional companies and inclusive business models instead of large multinationals; reducing disparities between EU regions must be a priority. We believe that wise stewardship of the natural resources is a biblical assignment.



Freedom

Foreign affairs must be rooted in the human dignity principle, that promoting human rights is the best way of countering extremism and violence.

Foreign policy remains the competence of EU Member States. We encourage solidarity among Member States when it comes to migration and border security, and increased collaboration against (cyber)terrorist threats.

We call for a serious assessment of the foreign aid the EU sends to third countries, and we believe countries and regions which respect human rights should be prioritized.



Abolition

We condemn all forms of modern slavery which reduces people to commodities.

ECPM advocates for due diligence in business practices and for consumers to choose companies vetted for their fair and sustainable practices. We support the Nordic Model as a means of fighting sexual exploitation and encourage Member States to adopt legislation criminalizing the buyers of sex services and the traffickers.

We urge European governments to increase prosecution rates of traffickers, to develop national prevention campaigns, and to work closely with NGOs in implementing exit programs and ensuring legal assistance to victims.



Reform

ECPM calls for the European Union to reduce its directive role and to act more as a facilitator between strong, sovereign Members States.

We reject uniformity and turning the EU into a superstate; instead, we propose a confederal model, where clusters of Member States increase their cooperation around a common issue or priority.

EU agencies which have no added value and operate outside EU competences should be eliminated. We want more transparency on how the EU budget is spent on projects across the EU. We remain opposed to Turkey joining the EU.



Heritage

We believe that Christian values such as freedom, truth, solidarity, human dignity, which were at the root of founding the EU, are still relevant today.

We stand for the freedom of religion/ belief of all people, including the right to worship publicly, wear religious symbols, and teach their children in the faith. ECPM stands with the millions of persecuted Christians around the world.

We condemn the rise in discrimination of Christians in Europe, the violations of their freedom of conscience and the lack of reasonable accommodation.

Foreword by the ECPM President

Dear ECPM friends,

When putting together this catalogue of all our work this year, it made me realize “our years quickly pass, and we fly away”, as Moses said in his prayer (Psalm 90 NIV). The good part is that we are never alone on our journey. God is always with us, He promised so: “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Joshua 1:5 NIV)

This year was marked by a record number of elections in Europe, and around the world. Over twenty parliament and presidential, including European elections, took place all over Europe. This brought a lot of change and challenges.

When it comes to the European elections, we are grateful that ECPM succeeded to retain four seats and add a fifth post elections. It is for the first time that we have five MEPs from the beginning of the mandate. Another highlight during the European elections was our first participation in the public debate for the presidency of the European Commission. I had the honor to be the ECPM Spitzenkandidat in this debate which took place in Maastricht on April 29th. It was a great opportunity to present our party and our values to the European citizens.

The numerous mentions in the media regarding our position on key issues concerning the European citizens provided further visibility for our party.

While most elections in Europe were peaceful, unfortunately there were also some turbulent ones. Georgia was one of them; violent protests erupted after the Parliament elections. In Romania, the presidential elections were cancelled by the Romanian Constitutional Court. This tells us that the rule of law and democracy are still vulnerable in Europe when confronted with foreign interference by actors seeking to destabilize our nations.

Coming back to the ECPM, I would like to underline several important decisions that were made. Prior to the elections, we adapted our political program which became our political manifesto. The political program is our political foundation, on which member parties can build their own programs. Later in the year, the board of ECPM proposed to slightly alter the name of the party in order to better reflect what we do and who we are. At our General Assembly in December in Brussels we voted in favor of the new name: European Christian Political Party, ECPP.

I would like to conclude by encouraging you to trust God and keep our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout these changes and challenging times. I am reminded by what the prophet Daniel told the Assyrian king Nebuchadnezzar when asked to interpret his dream: “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.” (Daniel 2:27–28 NIV). We do not know what the next year will bring us, but we know that there is a God in heaven who knows all the mysteries. We also know that our lives and our nations are secure in Him. Let us move forward while fully trusting Him and His love for us!

Valeriu Ghilețchi

President of the European
Christian Political Movement



Secretary General's Reflection

Faced with polarization, choosing connection

In 2024, European politics have undergone significant shifts. The results of this year's EU elections, along with elections in several member states, have contributed to an increasingly polarized political landscape. At the same time, global developments—in Africa, the Middle East, and the USA—have deepened fear and pessimism, casting doubt on the future. Yet, I continue to believe in hope and new possibilities. Over the past year, I have seen glimpses of that hope—hope for individuals, for the European Union, and for the world. As we reflect on 2024, let us turn our attention to what truly matters: connection and relationships—within the EU, across the globe, and in our own lives.

I was heartened to see the record-setting number of youth show up to vote and get engaged in civic life. The European leaders have also shown increased unity when it comes to Europe's defense capabilities and have collectively agreed to strengthen it. The standardization of the USB-C charging ports, as well as legislation passed to protect nature and consumers are all hopeful signs that we care for each other, for the planet, and for our children's future.

It has been an eventful year for ECPM, as well. Following the elections, ECPM had four seats in the European Parliament, and a fifth MEP joined us in the Fall. This marks a milestone in our history, as the most successful campaign and election results. New parties and individuals joined our party while we sharpened our focus on European political issues. This has resulted in more political debates and in more media exposure.

The two foundational documents we used the most in the Euro campaign have been the Identity Declaration and our Political Program/ Manifesto. The Identity Declaration begins with the following verse:

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind'. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself' (Matthew 22:37–40 NIV).

This summary of the Law by the Lord Jesus Christ is one of the driving forces behind our politics. ECPM wishes to transcend the polarization and division in our societies today and strive for love and understanding. We believe God created mankind in His likeness as a relational being. Connection and relationship are in our DNA, it's who we are. In turn, we should reflect this in our politics, and in our governance. The Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of a life of connection and relationship, not of polarization or division.

In the Advisory Council, Inga Bite succeeded Florica Chereches as president. For the last four years, Florica led the meetings and activities of the AC with dedication, and we are grateful for her efforts. We support and work closely with Inga for the upcoming projects, while Florica continues as honorary member of the Advisory Council.

There has been a reshuffling of the staff as well. After eleven years, Compliance Officer Maria van Oost left ECPM to pursue other career goals. We are thankful for her work and wish her many blessings for the future. At the same time, we welcomed former MEP Márton Gyöngyösi as Director for Political Relations, and Dominic Potters as Youth Liaison Officer.

The sudden and tragic passing of board member Michal Považan shocked us all. We continue to remember Michal and pray for his wife and three daughters, entrusting them to God's protection and provision.

As we ponder what is next for our party, we strive for greater collaboration among our member parties and we work to support their European political work. Through cooperation on projects, events and trainings such as our new Study Days initiative, we aim to help each other grow into stronger and larger parties, capable of making a greater impact at national and European level.

To conclude, I urge you to always seek connection and relationship, and not get pulled into polarization. Through His teachings and life, Jesus set an example for us personally and for ECPM.

In 2025, ECPM will continue to support and assist you in your European political work; I look forward to our cooperation.

Yours in Christ,

Maarten van de Fliert

Secretary General of the
European Christian Political
Movement



In Memoriam

We take this space to remember our good friend and colleague- Michal Považan - who passed from this life to be with the Lord. Michal had served on the ECPM board for several years and we greatly appreciated his input, guidance and expertise. His death is a great loss for all of us who knew him and worked with him, and he will be dearly missed. We pray God's comfort and strength over his wife and four children. Our hope is in our Lord Jesus Christ who was raised from the dead and it is because of this hope that we know we will be reunited one day.

"Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him." (1Thess. 4:13-14 NIV)



Introduction

In this yearbook, you will find summaries of the events ECPM organized in 2024, either as sole organizer or in partnership with our party members, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and non-governmental organizations.

The year 2024 was marked by the European Parliament elections which took place June 6–9. As a result, our activities focused primarily on campaigning in different Member States, in seven countries, to be exact. Aside election-related activities, ECPM continued to organize regular events, centered around the seven spearheads that form the foundation of our political program.

The campaign enabled us to reach more people. Through campaign events, television appearances, newspapers and social media advertisements, as well as meeting voters face-to-face in the streets, more people now know about ECPM and what we stand for. A particularly significant moment was our president, Valeriu Ghilețchi, participating in the Maastricht Spitzenkandidaten Debate, where he debated Ursula von der Leyen and the other lead candidates. Never before had ECPM been represented on such a prominent stage. As a party, we are proud of this achievement.

We are encouraged by the growth of our party: four new parties joined the ECPM family, and we welcomed MEP Ondřej Dostál from Czechia. The appointment of former MEP Márton Gyöngyösi as Director of Political Relations and Dominic Potters as Youth Liaison Officer strengthens the staff's ability to liaise with members, build relationships, and explore new opportunities.

We continue to work on ECPM's message, visibility and purpose, to refine and adapt it in order to accurately describe us and our work. Our dream is to see the voices of European Christians in politics elevated, recognized, and making a difference. What you see in this booklet are ways we empower our members and associates with resources, information and tools, ways we create the space for them to connect and exchange experiences, for all of us together to be powerful agents of change (to be salt and light, as Lord Jesus called His followers) in the European political environment.

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EU Election Campaign



Belgium

Hungary’s Choice: Europe or Moscow. Perspectives on the Rule of Law

April 9 – Brussels, Belgium
MEP¹ Márton Gyöngyösi
Prof. Peter Róna, Economist and Professor at Oxford University
Maarten van de Fliert, Secretary General ECPM
Balázs Gulyás, Journalist

Together with the office of MEP Márton Gyöngyösi, ECPM co-organized a panel discussion at Thon hotel in Brussels regarding the breaches of the rule of law in Hungary and the various ways the EU institutions have responded. We have focused on ECPM’s values of relational economics and on our propositions for EU reform in the Hungarian context.

Since Hungary is holding the Presidency of the EU Council at the moment and since there have been rule of law breaches in other Member States as well (Spain, most recently), we believe the discussion was of a far-reaching relevance.

Prof. Róna stated the importance of Christianity and its concept on human dignity in the European culture and politics. He also commented on some EU politicians’ intentions to lead a more Moscow-friendly foreign policy, underlining

¹ Member of European Parliament

that he does not see the necessity of building bridges with countries he regards as dictatorships. Róna also talked about the demographic challenges of Hungary – the massive demographic downturn and the migration of Hungarian citizens to Western Member States. He advocated for more power being returned to the citizen level and to villages and towns’ councils who should have a higher autonomy in how to spend their resources strengthening their communities.

Mr. Gyöngyösi echoed the gravity of the demographic situation and decried the fragile economic state of affairs as the reason most Hungarians move to Western Europe. A secondary reason is the gradual deterioration of democracy in Hungary. He gave as examples the shutting down of several media outlets that were critical of the Orbán regime, as well as educational institutions that had to relocate in the last several years because of state pressure and interference.

MEP Gyöngyösi stressed that Russia and its propaganda poses a great threat to the European democracies. He explained how that has already permeated Hungarian society and how Orbán’s recent diplomatic games regarding Sweden’s

accession to NATO and the veto for Ukraine aid are telling signs of Putin’s influence on a EU Member State. Mr Gyöngyösi also warned about the real danger of Hungary being taken out of the EU.

The conclusion of the event was that Europe has to strengthen itself in the face of authoritarian challenges fueled by Moscow and that the EU should hold fast to and enforce strictly the Rule of Law, respect for the freedom of the individual based on the Christian ethics and of the freedom of information and free speech.

On behalf of the European Christian Political Movement, the Secretary General Maarten van de Fliert spoke about the importance of the European elections, about ECPM’s focus described in our slogan: Elevate.Empower.Engage and about the seven spearheads which bind our members from all over Europe together.

The panel discussion was moderated by journalist Balázs Gulyás.



ECPM Campaign Launch

April 11 – Brussels, Belgium

The members of the European Parliament affiliated with the ECPM, board members, Sallux and the ECPYouth gathered in Brussels for the official kick-off to the election campaign. Each of the MEPs shared their campaign priorities, their challenges and victories so far. They were then presented with the Political Manifesto of the ECPM which was finalized and adopted in December 2023.

Maarten van de Fliert, ECPM’s Secretary General, then spoke about the campaign strategy and about focusing on three major themes in our events and projects with our members across Europe:

- Reforming the European Union
- Migration and Asylum
- The Agriculture Policy and Food Security in the EU

Van de Fliert also informed the audience present about the European Code of Conduct to which ECPM is now signatory party and he highlighted our commitment to running an honest and ethical campaign and to safeguarding the integrity of elections.

The ECPYouth had the opportunity to speak about their activities and own campaign and to present their manifesto and the Christian Changemakers program.

The event concluded with our think-tank and foundation– Sallux– launching their newest publication on migration trends from Africa.

Our launch is available to watch on our YouTube channel.





Germany

EU Elections Workshop in Billerbeck

March 23 – Billerbeck, Germany
MEP¹ Helmut Geuking
Maarten van de Fliert, ECPM Secretary General
Jacques Bazen, ECPM board member and Lecturer at Saxion University

ECPM organized a workshop together with Familien Partei on the origins of the EU project, the way the EU institutions work, and the significance of the upcoming elections. Keynote speakers were Jacques Bazen, ECPM board member and senior lecturer at Saxion University (NL), Maarten van de Fliert, ECPM’s Secretary General, and MEP Helmut Geuking. The workshop was attended by members of Familien Partei, campaign officers, and other interested people.

Jacques Bazen lectured on the history of the European Union, focusing on the founding fathers, the first cooperative initiatives such as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the introduction of the Euro, and the functioning of the EU’s internal financial market. The exemplary quote of Jean Monnet “People only accept changes when they are faced with necessity and only recognize necessity when a crisis is

¹ Member of European Parliament

upon them” stood central to his explanation of the historical development of the European Union from the ECSC to what it is today. Bazen also discussed the start and growth of the EU’s internal market, emphasizing its role as a key instrument of economic and financial cooperation, which has helped maintain peace in Europe for decades.

Secretary General of ECPM Maarten van de Fliert shared about Christian values in politics and the foundation of the ECPM’s political platform. He explored the concepts of governance and the rule of law within the EU framework, stressing the deep connection between Christian thought and democracy. Van de Fliert reminded the audience that we are all God’s creation; therefore when Christian politicians are seeking the good for the society, they are serving God. Serving in government can be a calling, an act of worship to God. Even if each country’s political framework is designed by people, the Kingdom of God is above it and, as citizens of the Kingdom, we are called to pursue peace and seek justice in the places we find ourselves.

Van de Fliert also spoke about the founding fathers of the EU: Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, and Alcide De Gasperi—leaders deeply committed to their Christian faith. He highlighted that for Schuman, often referred to as the Father of the European Union, Christian values were foundational both to

his personal life and to his vision for Europe. Schuman believed that Europe’s reconstruction was only possible if it was “deeply rooted in Christian values.” Similarly, Adenauer viewed the union as both a Christian obligation and an economic goal. Van de Fliert shared a historical anecdote about the three leaders participating in a prayer retreat at a Benedictine monastery before traveling to Paris to sign the treaty that established the European Coal and Steel Community.

In his concluding remarks on the development of the EU, van de Fliert provided detailed insights into the role of European political parties within the Union. He highlighted the key priorities of the ECPM: Human Dignity, Healthy Families, an Economy Benefitting People and Planet, Freedom, Security and Stability, Fighting Modern Slavery, Reforming the European Union, and Honoring the EU’s Christian Roots.

MEP Helmut Geuking and his temporary successor in the European Parliament, MEP Niels Geuking, offered insights into the development of the Familien Partei Deutschlands, its relationship with the ECPM, and plans for the upcoming campaign for the European Parliament elections.



The EU Green Deal and Supply Security

April 25 – Karlsruhe, Germany
Karin Heepen, Chairwoman of Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland and Vice-President of the ECPM
Andreas Schick, Managing Director of Netze-Gesellschaft Südwest mbH
Helmut Jäger, Chairman of the Karlsruhe District Farmers’ Association
Dominic Potters, entrepreneur and board member of the European Christian Political Youth (ECPYouth)

During our European election campaign we looked at and analyzed one of the largest and most costly legislative packages in the Union: The European Green Deal (EGD). The event organized together with Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland focused in particular on security of supply in three key areas: food, energy and housing.

We are convinced that the sensible use of natural resources is a Biblical mandate and that we need to improve resilience and act in responsible ways for the sake of future generations. This event aimed to inform the voters in Germany of the details



of the Green Deal and the inherent challenges, as well as to explore the opportunities for innovation and adaptation to the new climate realities.

Andreas Schick, Managing Director of Netze-Gesellschaft Südwest mbH, spoke about the energy sector and in particular about hydrogen being the ‘transition fuel’ which could run on some of the existent gas infrastructure, is cleaner than fossil fuels, will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve our energy security while we develop other types of renewable energy.

Helmut Jäger, Chairman of the Karlsruhe District Farmers’ Association, addressed the food security by detailing the Farm-to-Fork strategy and underlining its shortcomings. In his view, although the European Commission’s strategy is to reduce farming overall, and to turn it all organic, in the end it will hinge on the market demands. He also informed the audience of the hidden costs of farming and dispelled the myth that the agricultural sector gets all the subsidies it needs to function.

Dominic Potters, entrepreneur and board member of the European Christian Political Youth (ECPYouth), tackled the housing security issues. He presented the requirements in the Green Deal regarding housing, old and new (insulation, carbon footprint, sustainable construction materials etc.), as well as the housing shortages and the ever-rising costs. As Christians we should not disengage or wholly dismiss the policies prescribed in the EGD but take this opportunity and be creative about how we do things. We can all play a part in making our cities greener, in adapting buildings to make them more sustainable, being conscious of our consumption, choose transportation which pollutes less etc. Potters provided the city of Antwerp as an example implementing some of these efforts, sometimes successfully, other times with mixed results. He recommended wisdom and a balanced approach towards the housing policies stipulated in the EGD: some of them make sense and can be implemented fairly easy while others are counter-intuitive, radical and/or expensive and threaten to accelerate poverty or leave areas behind.

Chairwoman of Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland and Vice-President of the ECPM, Karin Heepen, concluded the event by echoing the points made by previous speakers, as well as adding ECPM’s commitment to relational thinking (meaning change and innovation should be bottom-up and should benefit all shareholders: people, the environment and businesses). She spoke critically of the associations between big business and politicians/ government and advocated for support and priority given to SMEs and family-based businesses, which are the backbone of a healthy economy.

Migration and Europe: What Our Politics Can Change

May 17 – Dresden, Germany
Karin Heepen, Chairwoman of Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland and Vice-President of the ECPM
Johannes de Jong, Director of Sallux
Michael Ragg, journalist and speaker

ECPM, together with Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland, organized a seminar in Dresden on the pressing topic of migration, how it is tackled at national and European levels and how it affects the larger geopolitical environment.

The event began with Karin Heepen, Chairwoman of Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland and vice-president of ECPM, introducing the ECPM to the audience, our values and work at national and European level. Then she addressed the European Asylum and Migration Pact which was approved in December 2023 at European level. The Pact aims to speed up the screening process, it keeps people in the asylum process at the EU borders (or outside them), puts in place a solidarity mechanism among the EU Member States and makes the return more straight-forward. A critical view of the Pact shows that it has limitations in solving the migration problem in Europe, particularly by ignoring the root of it. Ms. Heepen argued that the EU should focus a lot more on improving the lives of people in their home countries so that they are not forced to leave, and on supporting democratic regimes which uphold fundamental rights. Any foreign investment and development in Africa and the Middle East should be long-term and serve the local communities, not Western economic interests.

Johannes de Jong, Director of Sallux think-tank, was the keynote speaker of the event and presented at length an alternative and more sustainable approach to asylum policy. First, he emphasized the shared human dignity of all people involved, from both host and source countries. This should be reason enough to engage in an honest and open dialogue, and to seek to truly understand and assess the reality on the ground in many of the troubled areas. Then, building bridges and collaboration with local actors willing to work towards the betterment of their community.

De Jong pointed to the often-inflammatory rhetoric of “just send them back to where they came from”, which is often not feasible legally without the express permission of the respective country. Making deals with repressive and dictatorial regimes, like with Turkey, Tunisia, or the case of Sudan, has proven to be ineffective and to backfire causing even more migrants from/ through these areas into Europe. At the same time, we cannot let in everyone who wants to come,



our systems would not be able to withstand it. He criticized the EU foreign policy arm, the European External Action Service (EEAS), for offering temporary measures while ignoring the larger issue, and argued that the EU institutions need to press more for change at the source: developing democratic societies based on human rights and rule of law.

The speaker offered the example of Pakistan and the West’s approach towards it while engaging in a war against the Taliban in Afghanistan. The Pakistani regime supported, financed, and harbored the terrorists the EU and US were fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, while the Western powers did not exert pressure on Pakistan to change its behavior. This all led to a massive waste of investment made in Afghanistan after the US troops pulled out and the Taliban returned to power.

In Africa, several factors are complicating the situation: the West’s appeasement of dictatorial regimes, failure to support freedom movements, ignoring the escalation of religious conflicts between Muslims and Christians in countries like Nigeria, and the failure to rein in multinational corporations which engage in extraction of resources but devastate the communities.

In the conclusion of his presentation, de Jong proposed that the foreign policy of the EU and of the member states be always and consistently guided by protecting and advancing fundamental freedoms, not corporate economic interests. Secondly, that we draw “red lines” and actually enforce the principles we stand by (freedom of religion and belief, equality and freedom of women, etc.) when it comes to engaging with extremist and dictatorial regimes. Thirdly, that we support ethnic groups and minorities and foster dialogue between them.

The third speaker, Michael Ragg, touched on the issue of integration of immigrants in Europe. He unpacked the idea of culture and what makes European culture distinct. He pointed to a research study done by the University of Peking and to an Indian philosopher’s thesis who pointed out to Christianity being the distinct factor in shaping Europe’s culture. In particular, the belief that all people are created by God and with inherent human dignity, which led to the development of concepts like freedom, dignity, justice, solidarity. It also led to the foundation of a new work ethic: fair pay, balance between work and rest, labor rights etc. Even though Christians were a minority in the Roman Empire, because of their unity around the same beliefs, they became a decisive force; that is a lesson for us today as well.

World Children Day

June 1 – Berlin, Germany
MEP² Helmut Geuking
Valeriu Ghilețchi, ECPM President
Sarah Drewes, Familien Partei candidate for EP elections

Together with member party Familien Partei Germany and their main candidates– Helmut Geuking and Sarah Drewes– we organized a special event for families and children, on the World Children Day. It was held on the banks of the river Spree, on a ship converted into a restaurant and event venue.

Hundreds of families with children and people of all ages passed by the path alongside the river and stopped to speak to us, play a game, and learn about the work ECPM and MEP Geuking are doing in the European Parliament for children in particular.

The special guest was ECPM President Valeriu Ghilețchi who greeted the Familien Partei volunteers as well as guest families on the ship on behalf of ECPM and then spoke about the importance of children–centered policies at national and international level. His presentation focused on the rights of the children established in several international or European charters: the right to survival, to protection, the right to development and the right to participation.

The right to survival includes the right to be born, and Mr. Ghilețchi emphasized that ECPM is a strong and vocal advocate for children’s right to life from the moment of conception.

The right to protection, development and participation are

² Member of European Parliament

very important aspects and where a balance must be struck between the best interests of the child and the rights of parents. Mr. Ghilețchi had worked on a PACE report affirming precisely this balance which must be kept. Children have the right to a safe environment, where they can develop in a healthy way and flourish; ECPM believes the best environment for that is within the family. Food, health and education are basic needs to which a child is entitled, which is why at this point Mr. Ghilețchi commended the work of MEP Geuking in the European Parliament fighting child poverty and arguing for universal child allowance.

When it comes to the protection of children, we are adamant that as much as they need to be protected in real life, they also must be protected online. Cyber bullying is a horrible phenomenon taking place everywhere, every day, and many times it ends tragically with the bullied child losing their life. Similarly, children are being exposed to graphic content and predators online, which is why we advocate for parental control software, for teaching children how to protect themselves and we support the Better Internet for Kids at European level.

The President ended by reiterating that as a Christian political party, we believe children are a blessing from God. He gives life and he is creating us in our mother’s womb, to His likeness. And no matter what that looks like in the end: tall, short, brown, white, with one chromosome more or less, we carry God’s image and spirit in us. Because of that, every life is precious, every child brings joy and has a purpose in this world.

MEP Geuking thanked Mr. Ghilețchi for his words of encouragement and briefly spoke about the initiatives he began in the European Parliament and which he and the party would like to complete in case of a new mandate.

Sarah Drewes concluded the moment with sharing her testimony as a mother and underlining the importance of proper support and resources for parents and children, especially for those struggling financially.





Hungary

Quo Vadis Hungary? Christianity & Civil Liberties in Europe

April 19 – Budapest, Hungary
MEP Márton Gyöngyösi
Prof. Peter Róna, Economist and Professor at Oxford University
Pál Csáky, former MEP, former Deputy Prime Minister of Slovakia for
European Affairs, Human Rights & Minorities
Jacques Bazen, ECPM board member and Lecturer at Saxion University
Teplán István, President of Prosum Foundation

On 19 April in Budapest, we held a panel discussion focused on the connection between Christian thought and values and the strengthening of democracy on the European continent. The panel was moderated by Teplán István, President of Prosum Foundation.

Former presidential candidate in Hungary and Professor of Economics at Oxford University, Péter Róna, opened the panel by setting the historical context. He argued that Europe in the form it is now is inconceivable without the likes of Shakespeare, Kant, Descartes, Bach, Spinoza etc.; likewise, we cannot imagine it without St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, Luther and the Christian faith. Christianity is part of the story of Europe, the ethical structure of our European civilization is inextricably linked to Christianity. Modern European democracy is built on the teachings of Jesus and the tenets of St. Paul: (1) that all human beings are created by God and are His children– this is what the concept of equality is based on; and (2) that we have a soul, a conscience and free will. From this second tenet comes the idea of personal responsibility for our own acts to ourselves and to God. A secular power, therefore, cannot own, subject or control our soul and conscience.

Professor Róna continued in subsequent interventions to speak about the role of Constitutions as tools to limit political power, to hold those in power accountable and he pointed to the ironic contradiction in Hungarian law which says that changes to the Hungarian Constitution cannot be decided via referendum.

The next speaker, Pál Csáky, former Deputy Prime Minister of Slovakia for European affairs, human rights and minorities and former MEP, spoke about the role and place of ethnic minorities in the European landscape. He shared his personal story and spoke about his lifetime work in service of minorities, concluding that the European Union is an extraordinary force for good in that respect, the best form of government to protect minority rights, cultural diversity, and to ensure their harmonious co-existence.

Jacques Bazen, ECPM board member and Lecturer at Saxion University, the Netherlands, presented the ECPM, its history and the work we do at European and national level. He spoke



about our priorities and values during this campaign and about the collaboration with MEP Márton Gyöngyösi and Jobbik Conservatives party. During the panel discussion, he focused on the global economic landscape and its implications for Europe. He offered a brief analysis of the economic power of some of the countries with imperialistic tendencies: while

Russia's power of disinformation and cyberwarfare capabilities are effective, its economic might is the size of Benelux. China's profile grew considerably in the last decade and although its economic influence is considerable, it lacks soft power which is equally valuable in the global order. The United States are certainly a force to reckon with, especially militarily. But their society is dysfunctional and they are deeply divided politically. He concluded saying Europe has real economic power, it is the largest trading block in the world, and has the potential to be even larger and more influential if there is political will and courage.

MEP and Jobbik Conservatives president Márton Gyöngyösi spoke about the threat of Russia to the European way of life and to our values, especially through disinformation. He took Hungary as example and started with a brief history review in which he demonstrated that his country has had to make a choice repeatedly: either to align with the powers in the West or with the ones in the East. Joining the European Union was another such choice and Hungary chose the West then once again. It is thus disheartening and shocking to him and to the Western powers how at this time Hungary is slowly being turned Eastward and there are doubts creeping up as to whether it belongs in the Union. He concluded saying that Europe must take this threat seriously and be vigilant, especially with Hungary taking over the Council Presidency in the next semester.

The event was attended by 40 people: academics, students and civil society representatives who networked with the panelists and ECPM representatives over a light meal and drinks following the conference.





Latvia

Digital Currency and Threats to Privacy in the Age of Digitalization

May 10 – Riga, Latvia
MEP¹ Cristian Terheş (via Zoom)
Jūlija Stepaņenko, chairwoman of Suverēnā Vara and former MP²
Dāvids Kļaviņš, board member of Suverēnā Vara, entrepreneur
Adriana Rus, ECPM campaign manager

We held a conference in Riga, together with Suverēnā Vara party, featuring key speakers on the topic of digital currencies and the privacy implications. The event attracted fifty-five participants from various sectors of society, highlighting the importance of this issue to the Latvian public.

On behalf of ECPM, campaign manager Adriana Rus opened the event with an overview of ECPM's origins, activities and objectives. She underlined the significance of Christian perspectives in European politics and emphasized ECPM's commitment to human dignity and relational economics. The party places a great importance on robust privacy safeguards and transparent regulatory frameworks to harmonize technological progress with freedoms and right to privacy.

Dāvids Kļaviņš, member of Suverēnā Vara, defined and explained what Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDC) are, and informed the audience about their widespread use, with 90% of the world's central banks exploring or piloting this type of currency. He highlighted the big difference between decentralized cryptocurrencies, like Bitcoin, and CBDCs, which are controlled and issued by central banks and where

1 Member of European Parliament
2 Member of Parliament

the government can interfere and impose restrictions, freeze accounts, lock users out, etc. Although governments are advocating for CBDCs, citing benefits such as quicker and safe payments, Kļaviņš cautioned potential loss of financial privacy and increased state control over a citizen's financial activities.

MEP Cristian Terheş presented a strong critique of the ongoing debates in the European Parliament about the digital euro. He cautioned that while aiming to combat money laundering and tax evasion, introducing digital currencies could pave the way for increased state surveillance and erosion of personal freedoms. Terheş painted a grim picture where governmental access to personal data and control over digital currency holdings could result in extensive monitoring of financial transactions, ultimately leading to what he termed as a "digital prison." Despite mounting concerns from experts, discussions on this matter persist, compelling Terheş to call for resistance against this trend to safeguard individual liberty and curb authoritarian influence.

Jūlija Stepaņenko, chairwoman of Suverēnā Vara, emphasized the significant risks associated with digital currencies. She is using her platform and voice to urge decision-makers to reconsider implementation, arguing that digital currencies could lead to increased surveillance and restrictions on individual freedoms, exacerbating social inequality and consolidating power in the hands of a few. She stressed the importance of preserving cash circulation within the European Union to maintain consumer and business freedom, warning that digitalization can limit human freedom.

The event concluded with Q&A, when participants were encouraged to pay attention to euro candidates' platforms and political proposals, and to vote for those who commit to defending fundamental freedoms and. On behalf of ECPM, Ms. Rus encouraged them to use their vote on June 8 and not let others decide for them.



Returning to the Roots of Europe

May 24 – Riga, Latvia
MP Vladimir Gjorchev, North Macedonia
Valeriu Ghilețchi, ECPM President
Jeff Fountain, director of Schuman Centre for European Studies
Aiga Rotberga, gynaecologist-obstetrician

Together with our member party, Latvia First (Latvija Pirmajā Vietā), we organized a seminar in Riga on the importance of Christian values in the European story.

ECPM President, Valeriu Ghilețchi, started off the seminar by welcoming everyone and by introducing them to ECPM, our work, our MEPs and our values. He explained that the reason for our party’s existence is to remind people that Christian values like love, freedom, justice, peace and solidarity promoted by Jesus in his time are also the foundation of our current society and modern systems of law, education, economics and politics. Ghilețchi then focused his attention on one of the ECPM spearheads, namely our work on promoting family-friendly policies. He emphasized the importance of healthy families, and of pro-life, pro-family policies, which create the environment for people to balance work and family life successfully, where institutions strike a balance between the interests of children and that of parents and comes to their rescue when struggling financially.

The second speaker, Jeff Fountain, took the audience through the entire history of European civilization and successfully pointed out how Christian thought and ethic is at the root of many of the systems and concepts we take for granted today. He pointed to the fact that this year, on May 9th, there were three celebrations which coincided: Europe Day, the end of the WWII, and Ascension Day. There would not be a Europe Day without Ascension Day and the Great Commission. It was due to the work and faith of the early Christians and Church Fathers that faith had spread all over Europe in the first century. Europe Day is a long-term fruit of the missionary movement, he argued. Then, he continued to show how monasteries had been the building blocks of the new order that was being shaped in Europe: they were centers for art, music, law study, and commerce. Till this day, the largest and best schools and universities in Europe are connected to, or have their origins in, a monastery or a church. Despite the dark chapters of Christianity, Europe’s identity, culture, and values are shaped by the story of Jesus and the Bible.

The Schuman Declaration on May 9, 1950 was a 3-minute speech which laid the foundations to the European house where 450 million people would live in peace and

collaboration. Schuman had a deep personal faith which inspired his political thinking. Advised by a friend who told him that the next generation of missionaries will be “saints in suits”, he pursued a career in law and politics. He served as prime minister of France before WWII and was arrested when the Germans invaded Paris. He believed that “love your neighbor” was a democratic principle which, applied to nations, meant serving and loving neighboring peoples. Similarly, Konrad Adenauer, a close friend of Schuman’s and the chancellor of Germany at the time, was also a man of faith and equally believed that reconciliation and friendship were going to be vital for the reconstruction of Europe. Never had a defeated nation in war been invited at post-war discussions as an equal, but because of it, Germany is a leading force in Europe (and the world) today and has an unbreakable bond with France and the United Kingdom.

The third speaker was Vladimir Gjorchev, member of Parliament from North Macedonia, and an expert on demography trends in Europe. He spoke about demographic trends in Europe as well as in Latvia and presented basic principles regarding demography for a society to function optimally. He mentioned several news articles from European and global media, as well as statistical analysis, sounding the alarm about the demographic downturn in Latvia. The demographic disaster Latvia is facing will have serious economical and societal





Malta

Reclaiming Power for the EU Member States

April 6 – Malta
MEP Cristian Terheş (via Zoom)
Valeriu Ghileţchi, ECPM President
Ivan Mintoff, Abba Partit President

Ahead of the European elections we organized an event in Malta regarding the erosion of the sovereignty of EU Member States, in particular in areas like healthcare, education and foreign policy.

The European Union project was meant as an instrument for peace and economic prosperity. But we are witnessing an encroachment into exclusive national competences by the European institutions and agencies. We see how education content, style and format is being dictated from Brussels and from the UN and how uniformity is being pursued. There are louder voices now calling for a European army and for significant investments into defense and security, ever since Russia invaded Ukraine and has been carrying out a war of aggression on its territory. Billions of euros are disbursed to foreign countries and entities as aid, without any input or consultation of the European citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic was the catalyst for the European Commission to gain an even bigger influence over the Member States’ national healthcare systems, after it had already pushed some countries to give up their pro-life policies.

The event in Malta explored all these issues and our speakers addressed the various aspects connected to them. MEP Cristian Terheş addressed the guests assembled at ODYCY Hotel in St. Paul’s Bay via Zoom and spoke about his efforts

to draw attention over these aspects in the European Parliament. He recalled his fight against the COVID-19 health passports and against the travel restrictions brought about with insufficient data to justify them, but causing enormous disruptions to people’s lives, to the supply chains and to Europe’s economy. It tampered with the right to free movement in the Union guaranteed by the treaties and it exposed people’s medical, private data. It sowed division among people and also undermined people’s trust in institutions, as his fight to make public the vaccine contracts proved there is conflict of interests and corruption at the highest echelons in Brussels. He spoke about the WHO’s push for a Pandemic Treaty, which would further centralize and risk our personal medical data. MEP Terheş provided another example of interference in EU Member States sovereignty by pointing to the upcoming resolution to the European Parliament floor which states that access to abortion is a fundamental right, an immense overstep by the EU institutions. Another instance is the push for digital currency and the digital wallet. He ended his presentation by encouraging people to be alert and to choose wisely in the upcoming elections, to choose patriots who fight to preserve the national sovereignty of European countries.

ECPM President Valeriu Ghileţchi spoke about the origins of our political party and about our profile and current work. He reminded people that the Christian values which guide our activities are at the root of Europe, at the foundation of the EU project. Values like peace, justice, freedom, solidarity are what inspired the founding fathers and are ideas we should continue to be proud to name and promote today. He mentioned briefly EU’s interference in education thus undermining the national competences and parents’ rights over the material taught to their children. Ghileţchi mentioned the PACE reports he was part of which aimed to protect children and strengthen parental rights.

Ivan Mintoff, our member Abba party’s President concluded the conference by speaking about Malta’s loss of sovereignty when it comes to foreign policy. He reminded the audience that there are very strong legal protections against this, namely the Maltese Constitution and the article of accession of Malta to the EU. These documents clearly and unambiguously state that Malta is a neutral country actively pursuing peace by maintaining a policy of non-alignment, and that although Malta supports the EU’s common foreign policy, it does not prejudice its neutrality. He made clear that Abba fights the federalization of Europe and its abandonment of pro-life policies.

The event ended with questions from the audience on the revision of treaties, on the future of the EU and on how regular citizens’ voices can be heard in Brussels. A lively discussion followed regarding a path forward where power is closer to citizens and the EU goes under serious reform.





The Netherlands

ECPM-SGP EU event: Vote with one foot on the brakes’

February 10, 2024 – Nijkerk, the Netherlands
MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen
Valeriu Ghilețchi, ECPM President
Maarten van de Fliert, Secretary General ECPM
Henk van der Wind, farmer and member of the Vallei & Veluwe water board

In early February, ECPM organized a campaign event together with its member party SGP. The aim of the event was to draw attention to the European Parliament election in June, to inform attendees about ECPM’s role as European political party, its promotion of Christian values in EU politics and its relationship with SGP. It also served to discuss various European policies in the context of the upcoming elections.

ECPM president and lead candidate Valeriu Ghilețchi praised the longstanding relationship and cooperation between ECPM and SGP. “Together with other MEPs we are able to raise our voice in the European Parliament about Christian values”, he stated. Ghilețchi expressed his appreciation for MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen, who leads the list of SGP for the EP elections, and encouraged the attendees to use their vote in the upcoming



elections and make their voices heard. He spoke about ECPM, its political program for the election, and its role as a European political party. He emphasized ECPM’s commitment to amplify the often-marginalized voices of Christians, empowering them, and connecting them to an extensive network of like-minded people across Europe.

MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen shared about his work and experiences in the European Parliament. He explained how his work aligns closely with two of the spearheads of ECPM’s political program- ‘Human Dignity’ and ‘Freedom, Security and Stability’- the latter being the core of his parliamentary efforts. In the next term of the EP, Ruissen plans to focus on the freedom of religion and belief (FORB).

Ruissen’s presentation was followed by a panel discussion on various EU policies. Both Ruissen and Ghilețchi shared their positions on EU Foreign Affairs issues, especially the relations with the state of Israel, and the rising of antisemitism in the EU. Henk van der Wind, farmer and member of the water board, contributed to the discussion on European Agriculture and Fisheries, pointing at the impact of EU policies on Dutch farmers. Ruissen, who serves on the Agriculture and Fisheries committee, acknowledged these challenges and shared his ongoing efforts in the European Parliament to support farmers and fishers in sustaining their way of life.

Freedom and Security in Europe and Its Neighborhood

March 16 – Apeldoorn, The Netherlands
MEP Anja Haga
Valeriu Ghilețchi, ECPM President
Kees van Ekris, Dutch theologian laureate
Viktor Biyagov, Armenian Ambassador to the Netherlands
Mart de Kruif, retired Lt. General and former commander of the Royal Dutch Army
Erwin de Pagter, candidate for the CU for EP election and APA to Anja Haga

On the occasion of the upcoming European Elections in June, ECPM together with its member party ChristenUnie held a campaign conference focused on the topic of freedom and security in and outside the EU. Russia’s aggressive war in Ukraine, the annexation of Nagorno–Karabakh by Azerbaijan, the war in Gaza and its resonance in European cities are proof that freedom and peace are not to be taken for granted in Europe and its larger neighborhood.

Dutch theologian laureate Kees van Ekris opened the event with a reflection on a passage from the Gospel of John, chapter 12, which he used as support to point to the fact that humans are flawed and broken but that institutions in our world (like the Church, the government, democratic systems, the law etc.) are there to guide and correct us. He reminded the audience that Jesus is the Light and as long as we walk with him, darkness will not overcome us. Jesus’ teachings of love, unity, a servant heart are (or should be) at the core of these corrective systems and institutions meant to protect and safeguard us.

He was followed by Viktor Biyagov, the Ambassador of Armenia to the Netherlands who spoke about the dire situation in Armenia and Nagorno–Karabakh and ways the EU could engage in the area. He impressed upon the audience that Armenian democracy is under great pressure, still reeling from the COVID–19 pandemic, from Azerbaijan’s offensive in Nagorno–Karabakh and from tens of thousands of internally displaced people. The conflict in Nagorno–Karabakh led to the destruction and erasure of many historical and cultural sites, especially of Christian heritage and significance. On this point, he sees a great contribution CU and ECPM can have by raising awareness and bringing this region and conflict in the international political spotlight.

Mart de Kruif, retired Lt. General and former commander of the Royal Dutch Army delivered a sobering speech on the state of war in Ukraine, on Europe’s defense policy and the role of European politics. The General’s perspective is marked

by the experiences of his parents who lived through WWII. From them, he learned that forgiveness and reconciliation are the reason Europe has experienced an almost uninterrupted period of peace and stability for 80 years. De Kruif emphasized that freedom for all these years required intentionality and continual action to uphold, but that lately Europe became complacent and ignored the signals indicating Putin’s imperialistic ambitions long before the invasion of Ukraine happened. He also touched on the fragility of NATO, especially if Donald Trump will become president again, in which case the European countries must swiftly work towards integrating their military and equipment. De Kruif concluded with a call to vigilance and preparedness, to increasing societal resilience and to strengthening young people’s formation and education.

ECPM President Valeriu Ghilețchi spoke about our campaign across the European Union and about the common work with the ChristenUnie MEP, Anja Haga. He explained that ECPM is one of the ten European political parties in the European Parliament and its uniqueness lies in its explicit promotion of Christian values in European politics which ECPM does together with Anja Haga and its other MEPs. He also introduced the audience to our seven spearheads and political manifesto for the EU2024 elections. The president expressed appreciation for CU’s election slogan: ‘your freedom, our mission’. Having been born and raised in a time when Moldova was part of the Soviet Union, he knows what it is like to not live in freedom. Ghilețchi especially emphasized the importance of defending the freedom of religion and belief in Europe and

beyond, echoing the ambassador’s description of the situation in Armenia.

The ChristenUnie head of list for the European elections is Anja Haga. She shared with the audience her experience in the European Parliament and what it felt being a Christian woman in European politics. Ms. Haga also spoke about the importance of freedom of religion or belief and about the persecution of Christians worldwide, as she made it a priority in her current mandate. She also spoke about the Christians’ duty to care for the environment and that she welcomed and supported the EP’s efforts and leadership on global standards for sustainability.



The Christian Voice in Europe

May 17 – Gouda, the Netherlands

MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen

Maarten van de Fliert, Secretary General ECPM

Geert Kraaijenveld, Sallux board member

Harold Hooglander, SGP candidate for EP elections

Kees van der Staaij, former MP and SGP leader

Nathanaël Middelkoop, SGP alderman in Urk, the Netherlands

An ECPM campaign event in collaboration with SGP took place in Gouda, the Netherlands, on Friday, May 17th. The event focused on the upcoming June 6th elections and the importance of Christian politics and politicians in the European Parliament. Keynote speakers included ECPM Secretary General Maarten van de Fliert and Geert Kraaijenveld from Sallux, ECPM’s think tank. Other notable speakers were MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen, Kees van der Staaij (former MP and leader of the SGP), Harold Hooglander (SGP candidate for the European Parliament), and Nathanaël Middelkoop (SGP alderman).

Maarten van de Fliert began by explaining the composition of the European Parliament and the roles of European political parties and groups. He clarified the common confusion between political parties and political groups and explained the distinctions. ECPM’s unique position in the political landscape stems from its lack of affiliation with a single political group. ECPM MEPs can be found among Christian-Democrats, Conservatives and the non-affiliated, united by their commitment to Christian politics.

Van de Fliert emphasized that the European Christian Political Movement is the only European political party explicitly promoting Christian values. ECPM collaborates with its member parties at the national level and with its MEPs in the European Parliament. These member parties, though diverse in their interpretation and application of Christian ethics, share a common vision that human beings are created by God and in His image, which underpins ECPM’s approach to politics and supports fundamental human rights, such as the right to life and the protection of the vulnerable. Van de Fliert stressed the importance of the engagement of Christians in politics.

The discussion also touched on the war in Ukraine and the European response. An attendee expressed concerns about Europe’s safety, citing perceived inaction by the European Union and uncertainties surrounding NATO, particularly in light of a potential Donald Trump presidency. Van de Fliert acknowledged these concerns and noted that ECPM and its member parties are actively discussing these issues at both national and European levels, with significant contributions from Sallux. ECPM’s political program supports Ukraine’s territorial integrity, condemns Russia’s invasion, and advocates

for military cooperation within NATO.

Geert Kraaijenveld addressed the EU’s decision-making procedures, particularly during wartime. He pointed out that unanimous decision-making can impede swift action due to the difficulty of achieving consensus. Kraaijenveld explained that Sallux is developing ideas for procedural reforms. He also highlighted internal security threats, such as Hungary’s increasing openness to China, which could lead to indirect Chinese influence on EU decisions. He stressed the need for the EU to safeguard its security and prevent foreign interference.

Former MP and SGP party leader Kees van der Staaij noted that European countries are increasingly investing in national security and military, indicating a trend towards convergence and closer cooperation. Harold Hooglander, SGP candidate for the European Parliament, advocated for maintaining NATO as the primary defense mechanism and cautioned against moving from unanimous decision-making to majority rule in defense matters, as it could undermine national sovereignty.

SGP Alderman Nathanael Middelkoop underscored the importance of the European Union to national citizens. As an alderman in Urk, a Dutch city reliant on fisheries and agriculture, he provided examples of how EU laws and regulations impact his city. Middelkoop explained the significance of the EU’s E-numbering system for the food and automotive industries in his hometown. He conveyed that the EU significantly influences everyday life, making it crucial to vote in the European Parliament elections on June 6th.

MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen concluded the event with a summary of his work in the European Parliament during the last term and his role with ECPM. Attendees gained insight into parliamentary procedures and sessions in Brussels and Strasbourg. Ruissen showcased some of his speeches in the parliament and emphasized the importance of voting, stating, “Every vote counts, especially in the elections for the European Parliament.”





Spain

Open Borders or Fortress Europe. A Christian Reflection on Migration and the New EU Pact

February 24, 2024 – Toledo, Spain
Dr. Noemi Mena Montes, Senior Lecturer at Radboud University and expert on migration and asylum
Dr. Jean- Frédéric Poisson, president of VIA party France, author, and ECPM board member
Dr. Alfonso Galdón, president of Valores party Spain and professor of environmental science

In response to the recent finalization of the European Migration Pact, the European Christian Political Movement together with member party Valores, convened in Toledo, Spain, to critically assess the Pact’s implications and advocate for a more humane approach to migration in Europe.

The European Pact on Migration and Asylum has sparked contentious debate since its proposal (September 2020), with some arguing that it fails to uphold fundamental principles of human dignity and rights, while others saying that it is giving migrants (and smugglers) carte blanche to enter Europe and

imposing unfair burdens on the border countries. In December 2023 a political agreement was struck between legislators on the five most debated aspects of the matter, with other proposals having already been agreed upon: the Screening Regulation, the Eurodac Regulation, the Asylum Procedure Regulation, the Asylum & Migration Management Regulation, and the Crisis/ Force Majeure Regulation.

The speakers at the conference addressed some of these measures, spoke about the Pact’s shortcomings, and proposed alternative frameworks in line with Christian thought and tradition and our European values. Jose Carlos Abellan, professor of law and bioethics, made a brief introduction about the Pact’s five new agreements and asked some probing questions about our duty as hosts, as Christians, and as Europeans.

Dr. Noemi Mena Montes, professor of International Affairs & Communication at Radboud University, investigative journalist in migration and asylum, and expert in intercultural communication and reconciliation, opened the conference with defining the terms (migrant, expat, asylum seeker) and busting some myths about migration. She expertly showed data which contradicted what we often hear in the media about the number of migrants, the frequency and their origin. The figures showed that, for example, the majority of refugees and displaced people in Africa move around inside the continent, almost 30 million. The data she presented also showed that irregular immigration into Europe is much, much lower than colloquially believed and much lower than regular immigration. The reason why the problem feels bigger is because the media focuses on a few isolated cases or on only one type of phenomena and present it as representative of a larger picture.



Dr. Montes also spoke about the reasons for migration, poverty and lack of opportunities being the main ones. Foreign companies sweeping in and buying fishing and exploring rights in the coastal waters of some African countries was another factor mentioned. The speaker also addressed the myth that migrants are stealing the jobs which the locals could otherwise get, by showing how temporary workers are essential in agriculture for example, and that many times farmers struggle to find workers in season. She criticized the Migration Pact's externalization of borders, via the agreements the EU made with Tunisia and Morocco where they receive aid on the condition they keep migrants from crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

Dr. Montes ended her presentation by talking about another myth we oftentimes hear, namely that most migrants are men. She recounted the personal stories of a few women she met and talked about their struggles and how their challenges during displacement or migration can be very different and much more dangerous than we can know. Besides poverty or lack of employment, women also may be prevented from getting an education, may be facing horrific physical and sexual abuse, including genital mutilation, forced marriage etc.

The second speaker, Dr. Jean- Frédéric Poisson, president of VIA party in France, author, and board member of ECPM, invited the audience to reflect around the question: Do we have a duty to welcome foreigners? He began by dissecting some of reasons invoked which may underpin this duty: namely the need for cheap manual labor, the declining birth rate, charity, the colonial past, etc. He reminded the audience that as Christians, indeed, we are called to love our neighbor as ourselves, and our neighbor is every human being no matter how close or far.

While he concluded that the duty is valid, even if only because we share the same human nature, Dr. Poisson also invited us to use prudence and wisdom in fulfilling this duty. He spoke about two dangers connected to the process of migration: the overwhelm of the host country's systems on one hand and the uprootedness, displacement and indignities which migrants suffer. He mentioned as possible solution the view which ECPM also holds, namely that the richer, host countries from the North and West should insist in their foreign policies towards 'source' countries on the respect for fundamental rights, rule of law, protection of women and other measures which would reduce or eliminate displacement and the need to migrate in the first place. Cooperation and economic agreements between countries should lead to development and people thriving in their country of origin, not merely enriching the West. Mr. Poisson ended his presentation with a call to resistance against fragmentation and an 'us versus them' mentality. He encouraged the audience to hold fast to inherited values and traditions, to the primacy of the family, to the love of neighbor, and to reject the idea that unfettered

mass migration is a solution to all that ails Europe.

Dr. Alfonso Galdón, president of Valores party in Spain and professor of environmental science, spoke about his party's approach to migration. He criticized the powers in Brussels who have abandoned the Christian values on which the European project was founded, and denounced the failures of multiculturalism. Europe is having a crisis of identity, forgetting its roots, and therefore abandoning boundaries and limits. He recalled the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas regarding the reception and treatment of immigrants, who said that those who choose to live as guests in the host countries merely abiding by the responsibilities which correspond them but

without fully integrating, that they should be shown mercy but not given citizenship. While those who wish to fully integrate and assimilate and seek the common good of the country which receives them should be considered citizens from the third generation. St. Thomas also advised receiving the foreigners with whom the host country might have an affinity, like common language or ancestry, common values and culture etc.

Dr. Galdon reminded the audience that every person has the right to shelter and a home and that corrupt governments are to blame for the instability and poverty people often experience which causes them to leave their home. And then,

once they immigrate to a foreign country, many times they form separate communities and segregate themselves from the host people and culture. This is why his party, Valores, values greatly this principle of affinity guiding the process of immigration, saying that Spain should favor immigrants of Hispanic heritage, as they have the same culture and language as Spain and same values as Europe.

The conference ended with questions from the public, which was comprised of people from Latin America as well who shared their perspective on the challenges of migration in Europe.



Regular events



EFN Conference– The Bridge: Connect, Collaborate, Create

March 18– March 21 – Lisbon, Portugal
Dr. Leah Edwards, researcher and consultant for European Freedom Network (EFN)
Stieneke van den Graaf, former Dutch MP, lawyer
Sheldon Armitage, interim director European Freedom Network
Connie Main Duarte, co-general secretary of the European Evangelical Alliance

This year’s Bridge conference theme was ‘Connect, Collaborate & Create!’ and it gathered over 100 organizations and individuals engaged in fighting modern slavery all over Europe.

The conference opened with an interactive session led by Dr. Leah Edwards, a senior researcher, where the purpose was to see and discuss the trends in the Network. After running a survey among the organizations present in the conference, a panel of representatives had the chance to discuss and reflect on them. We noticed that most organizations witnessed an increase in the number of girls and women being trafficked and that the people the organizations are helping also come from China and Latin America but still a majority are from Eastern Europe. The most concerning trend observed was how prostitution moved online significantly and how young are the girls engaging in it, often underage.

The next day, during the first session, Sheldon Armitage, interim director, spoke about the changes and expansion the Network is going through. They thanked Leanne Rhodes (longtime EFN Director who stepped down earlier this year) for her vision and leadership over the years and have introduced one of the directors who will take her place, Christoff Kaufmann. The special relationship with the European Christian Political Movement was highlighted as well and the participants got to hear about the ECPM’s work in the European Parliament and our efforts on raising awareness on this issue and the support for the Nordic Model approach.

During the afternoon, the attendees split up into groups focused on specific aspects of the trafficking phenomenon, as part of the ‘collaborate & create’ side of the conference. One of the groups focused on placing survivors of trafficking at the center of the healing process, listening to them, and letting them lead the way to defining and creating what lasting freedom and aftercare looks like for them. Another group presented how European tools and resources can be accessed to conduct research into the aspects of this problem which does not have enough data; we focused in particular on getting data through interviews with survivors and with traffickers. The other groups focused on raising awareness and prevention work and on organizational care– caring for the staff of an NGO

and avoiding burnout.

The third day focused on the role the churches can play in the anti-trafficking work. The co-general secretary of the European Evangelical Alliance spoke about being Jesus’ hands and feet for the vulnerable people around us, about being the good Samaritan who binds up wounds and plays an active role in people’s healing. She reminded everyone that as followers of Jesus we are all called to engage in justice. The afternoon breakout sessions focused on telling the stories of survivors in ethical ways, making sure we have consent for telling it and resisting the urge to sensationalize it.

The last day of the conference dealt with policy changes organizations and abolitionists would like to see take place. Stieneke van den Graaf, former member of the Dutch Parliament who tabled initiatives related to trafficking and prostitution in the Netherlands, spoke about the Dutch approach to legalize and regulate prostitution and pointed out how later studies have shown the model falling short. She dispelled the myth that prostitution is ‘sex work’, that it is a job like any other one, and emphasized that there is almost always an element of coercion or pressure, that no woman would choose this lifestyle voluntarily. During the pandemic, it was revealed that the regulatory aspect of prostitution in Netherlands had many gaps and shortcomings, so she concluded that it is not a successful model. The later breakout sessions took a closer look at the Nordic Model and one of the organizations in Germany shared their efforts in this respect and how policy is slowly changing to recognize the victim correctly, and to place the blame and burden on the exploiters and sex buyers. Ms. van den Graaf concluded her speech encouraging the organizations to be present and to be vocal in the spaces where they can interact with their elected officials, to ask tough questions, to make lawmakers uncomfortable and to make them see the reality of exploitation and trafficking.



EDI Croatia: Giving Hope and Encouragement in a Changing World

August 15 – August 23, 2024 – Tuk Vojni, Croatia

Dr. Justin Kagin, founder and director of Economics, Diplomacy & Integrity (EDI)

Márton Gyöngyösi, former MEP

Mihaela Kovacs, Roma coordinator for Sighisoara city hall, Romania; President of Baraca org.;

Klariska ten Napel, city councilor Zwolle, The Netherlands

Jack Fallow, director of Globis Mediation, trustee of Polylogos

Robert Maričak, business investor and executive consultant

Igor Mateski, owner and CEO of WebMaxFormance

Dr. Noemi Mena Montes, journalist, professor of intercultural communication at Radboud University

Momir Blazek, CEO, Art Director of MI Design, Croatia

ECPM, together with Economics, Diplomacy, and Integrity (EDI) Croatia, organized a weeklong conference to educate and train young people in leadership with integrity to prepare them for a fruitful life in European politics, business, or diplomacy. The event was packed with insights, testimonies, and practical workshops designed to inspire participants to serve their communities with love, integrity, and creativity.

The week began with Mihaela Kovacs, who shared her testimony and reflected on how God can use anyone to bless others. Through the metaphor of vessels of varying textures and worth, she emphasized that love is the defining ingredient in service, creating a ripple effect that impacts others. Dr. Justin Kagin followed with a session on the importance of integrity in economics and diplomacy. Drawing from the story of Zaccheus, he explored how honesty in business reflects a commitment to justice and faith. He underscored the need for skill, experience, and unimpeachable character for success, emphasizing transparency and accountability as cornerstones of ethical governance.

Former MEP Márton Gyöngyösi who joined via Zoom, shared his personal story of growing up as a son of a business diplomat and attending school in India, Iraq, Hungary and Ireland. His education and growing up in foreign countries, in multicultural settings informed his worldview and inspired social and political ideas which brought people and countries together. He staunchly advocated for unity, for working together across division lines, for seeking common goals in all areas of society. Gyöngyösi offered the example of the creation of the EU and of the founding fathers: they were very different people, from different countries, with a common faith and a common vision, and when they focused on that we can see now what a monumental project resulted from that vision!

Saturday's discussions explored overcoming limitations and fostering creativity. Momir Blazek explained how innovative ideas often emerge toward the end of brainstorming sessions and stressed the importance of inclusive ideation. By reflecting on God's creativity, participants were encouraged to channel their originality into positive change. Noah Maričak shared his journey of balancing faith and a filmmaking career amid health challenges, illustrating how reliance on God transforms adversity into growth. Robert Maričak discussed his experiences as an entrepreneur, emphasizing how God's provision shaped his professional path and deepened his spiritual life.

The presentation on women in leadership offered profound insights into workplace dynamics and systemic challenges. Jack Fallow spoke about the unique strengths women bring to leadership, such as relationship-building and collaboration, while highlighting barriers they face in advancing their careers. He emphasized discernment and balance between challenges and capabilities to foster growth. Dr. Noemi Montes addressed migration realities, dispelling stereotypes and focusing on the need for a compassionate response. She provided data to counter misconceptions and challenged participants to embrace the Christian call to hospitality, rooted in Jesus' teachings.

Throughout the seminar, practical applications and personal stories enriched the discussions. Robert Maričak shared principles for conducting business with integrity, advocating for seeking God's guidance in all aspects of work. Klariska ten Napel used the story of the Samaritan woman to illustrate the power of clear and charitable communication. She emphasized the importance of thoughtful framing and shared values to build bridges and address differences with compassion.

On the history and theology of work, Igor Mateski provided a thought-provoking exploration of how different perspectives have shaped the understanding of work through time. He invited participants to view work not merely as a transactional activity but as a meaningful pursuit aligned with God's mission of restoration and healing. Referencing thinkers like Miroslav

Volf and Tim Keller, he proposed that work should contribute to relationships, community, and making the world better.

The week closed with Justin Kagin's reflection on love as the foundation for all endeavors. Using Jesus' life as the ultimate example, he encouraged participants to embody love in their leadership and business practices. Laura Radu shared a personal story of resilience, transforming a traumatic experience into a vision for a community-centered festival promoting health and safety.

The seminar concluded with participants presenting their ideas for small businesses or career growth. With guidance and mentorship, they refined their plans and developed practical strategies for making a meaningful impact. Over the course of the week, the event highlighted the power of love, integrity, and creativity to inspire leaders to align their work with God's purpose, fostering communities rooted in compassion and hope.

Faith & Politics: Bridging Divides and Reclaiming a Civil Discourse in European Politics

October 30– November 3 – Crikvenica, Croatia
Bojan and Rachel Ruvarac, CEOs of Renewing Our Minds (ROM)
Alojze Peterle, former prime minister of Slovenia, former MEP
Carlton Deal, pastor
Heather Staff, council woman for Islington, UK
Anja Haga, former MEP
Dr. Naomi Mena Montes, journalist, professor of intercultural communication at Radboud University
Klariska ten Napel, city councilor Zwolle, Netherlands
MEP Davor Ivo Stier, former MP Croatia, former Minister for Foreign Affairs
Marko Marina, historian and professor at University of Zagreb

For four full days, politicians, entrepreneurs and members of the civil society gathered in Crikvenica, Croatia to explore peaceful and faith-based solutions to today’s polarization, especially in politics. ECPM partnered with Renewing our Minds (ROM) organization for this event, an organization focused on peace and reconciliation in Central/Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

Bojan and Rachel Ruvarac, the CEOs of Renewing our Minds, opened up the event encouraging everyone to be fully present, to keep an open mind, and to be intentional in connecting and networking.

On the first day, former prime minister of Slovenia and former MEP Alojze Peterle, together with pastor Carlton Deal talked about fostering unity among people(s) and concluded that investing in and building community is a useful countermeasure to division and segregation.

Heather Staff, councilwoman for Islington, a suburb on the Northside of London, approached the separation of Church and State on the second day of the conference. She reviewed the complicated history between these two institutions in the U.K. as well as on the continent, and pointed to both the positive and negative effects of the relationship. She mentioned the Christian figures like William Wilberforce and the Cadbury family, Quakers who fought against the slave trade and child labor, as examples whose politics were informed by their faith and convictions. During the Reformation, Christian leaders and pastors were critical of the mainstream Church becoming corrupt and political, showing bias and using religion as a manipulative tool.

A panel discussion led by Rachel Ruvarac described what the

juxtaposition of faith and politics looks like in practice; the people on the panel were journalists, entrepreneurs, elected officials and non-profit founders from U.K., Spain, Montenegro, the Netherlands and Kosovo. Some described how religion is inextricably linked to their national identity and questioning or changing your religion/ denomination is tantamount to betraying your country. Others emphasized the strict separation their countries make between religion and politics and about religious diversity being the basis for cohesion of the city or community.

On Saturday, Anja Haga, former MEP on behalf of Christian Union (Netherlands) and the ECPM, delivered a lecture on finding consensus on environmental policies. She provided examples from her work in the European Parliament, when working on the Nature Conservation Law and on the protected status of some animals. Coming to a compromise is extremely difficult in politics, especially at European level, since the parliamentarians represent very different groups of people and national interests. The former MEP emphasized that creating a scenario where everyone feels heard and that they got something out of the negotiations is paramount, and even then last-minute surprises may appear and undermine the consensus or compromise. She encouraged everyone to hold fast to their core values but to be willing and open to always hear the other side and extend the benefit of the doubt. Later that day, she lead a workshop on living plastic-free and the urgency of eliminating one-use plastics from our daily consumption.

Dr. Noemi Mena Montes and Klariska ten Napel led two other workshops focused on the media contributing to the polarization (Dr. Montes) and on St. Benedict’s approach to work and prayer/ meditation as a healthy rhythm of living (Ms. ten Napel).

On the last day of the conference, we had the pleasure of hearing from MEP Davor Ivo Stier (EPP, Croatia) who shared about instances in his career when his faith and ethics made a difference and broke through walls and obstacles in negotiation talks. He served as a diplomat in the foreign service of Croatia and advised the Prime Minister who negotiated Croatia’s accession to the EU. He stressed the importance of building trust between politicians and counterparts, keeping your word and leading with courage and integrity– these values move people from a confrontational stance to a cooperation one.

The last lecture came from Marko Marina, professor of Early Christianity at the University of Zagreb, who provided a historical analysis of Jesus and his context. He acknowledged the existence of various historical sources who make some reference to the existence of Jesus in the first century, but underlined that the most reliable and complete account are the four Gospels. The strongest criteria for this are the



contextual credibility, meaning Jesus’ teachings and things described in the Gospels fit into what we know about the first century context.

The participants had the space and opportunity to reflect on the complex (and complicated) aspects of being a person of faith involved in the political or social aspects of one’s own country. The nuances of this overlap and interplay were acknowledged and that it was not always black & white, positive or negative. The speakers offered encouragement and examples which centered on the Christian belief that every person is created by God, with intrinsic worth, and that in the face of polarization and fragmentation we should prioritize the person/ our neighbor, that we should seek the common good over our desire or need to be right.



Europe at a Crossroads: Thinking About Its Future while Honoring Its Roots

November 1– November 2 – Bad Blankenburg, Germany
Márton Gyöngyösi, former MEP, ECPM Director of Political Relations
Karin Heepen, Chairwoman of Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland, Vice-President of the ECPM
Michael Ragg, writer and journalist
Ludwig Grünert, founder of Bündnis C Youth

ECPM vice-president and chairwoman of Bündnis C, Karin Heepen, opened the event by welcoming everyone, introducing the speakers, and highlighting the importance of the relationship between the European party– ECPM– and its German member– Bündnis C.

Márton Gyöngyösi, ECPM Director for Political Relations, spoke about the role of European political parties and presented ECPM’s work, our MEPs, and their position in the current setup of the European Parliament.

He also presented the priorities of the new European Commission. First, a free and democratic Europe, which encompasses upholding European values within the EU and living up to these values at a global level. Europe needs to be strong and secure in current times when the world order which dominated since WWII is challenged by other powers. Secondly, ensuring coherent and influential external action by increasing the strength of European security and defense that can protect the EU citizens. A strong Union must approach migration and border management in a comprehensive way. Finally, a prosperous and competitive Europe.

Gyöngyösi outlined our party’s stance by pointing to the key points in ECPM’s political program: a Europe whose Christian roots are valued and acts as a facilitator; belief in the intrinsic value of every human being; ECPM’s relational view of the economy that prioritizes well-being for all; belief in healthy families as the basis for thriving societies; the commitment to fight all forms of human trafficking; and the protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief. Finally, he underlined the dangers emanating from different political corners who use Christianity opportunistically as means to achieve political goals.

Ludwig Grünert, founder of Bündnis C Youth, briefed participants on the latest ECPYouth Summer School in Bucharest which was attended by representatives from 14 countries. Participants reflected on the Christian roots of Europe and the need for people of faith active in politics to stand firm, look for role models and allies in order to become

trailblazers themselves and contribute to society.

Michael Ragg, writer and reporter, concluded the event with a lecture on the origins of European values. He spoke at length about the Christian roots of Europe and highlighted the fact that the soul of Europe was Christianity. Christianity brought to Europe the idea of human dignity. Throughout history, Christians upheld the dignity of the marginalized in society: various religious orders built hospitals and orphanages. He further elaborated on how the concept of human dignity influenced different aspects of societal behavior. He gave examples of solidarity and helping the fellow man (following the parable of the good Samaritan); giving a special value to

children (“let the children come to me”); equality between women and men; freedom of expression; and a Christian work ethic following the command “subdue the earth” which opened the way for exploration and technological advancement.

Today, our culture is in decline to some extent, Ragg continued. Oswald Spengler, in his book The Fall of the West, written 100 years ago, presents a pessimistic theory. Cultures are like plants – they grow and eventually die. Christianity, however, does not follow this pattern. Philosopher Arnold Toynbee supported the view that cultures don’t perish, they don’t collapse, but they self-destruct. When things become critical, when a culture is at a crossroads, disorientation occurs.

It is not the masses that decide the direction of a culture, but creative minorities. In the Roman Empire, Christians were only 15% of the population but they were determined, connected, and they became a decisive force. Christians should give orientation today to a society that has largely forgotten what defines our culture. We have more to offer to our environment than we believe. Even if we lack the power and numbers, we can inspire others and spark new ideas.



Conservative Summit: A Gathering of Shared Values

- November 11 – Bratislava, Slovakia
- MEP Ondřej Dostál
- MP Anna Záborská, Kresťanská únia Slovakia
- MP Marek Krajčí, OĽaNO Slovakia
- Valeriu Ghilețchi, ECPM President
- Vladimír Palko, former interior minister of Slovakia
- MP Branislav Škripek, former MEP, former ECPM President
- Dr. Christiaan Alting von Geusau, Professor of Philosophy of Law and Education at the Catholic University ITI (AUT)
- Milan Krajniak, ECPM board member, former Slovak minister of Labor, Social Affairs and Family
- Márton Veisz, Director of Foreign Affairs at the Foundation for a Civic Hungary
- David Engels, historian
- Gladden Pappin, president of the Hungarian Institute for International Affairs
- Jana Ježíková, healthcare expert
- Juraj Šúst, philosopher and publicist
- Rod Dreher, writer and publicist
- Zoltán Koskovics, geopolitical analyst for the Center for Fundamental Rights
- Zoltán Szalai, historian

The Conservative Summit brought together thought leaders and activists to discuss pressing challenges facing society today. With sessions ranging from education to geopolitics, the conference highlighted the importance of shared values, resilience, and proactive leadership in addressing the pressing issues of today.

The summit began with a poignant address from the Ladislav Hanus Institute, emphasizing the need to counter society’s rejection of conservative values. The Fides & Ratio Foundation echoed this sentiment, stressing the international nature of conservative ideals and urging action in governance and education. A Catholic priest set a reflective tone for the day with a prayer honoring St. Martin.

Former Slovak Minister Vladimir Palko delivered a powerful keynote, reflecting on 35 years of democracy post–Velvet Revolution. He critiqued the utopian promises of NATO expansion, the Green Deal, and LGBTQ ideologies, calling for a distinction between loyalty to Western values and allegiance to elite–driven narratives. Palko lamented the Christian community’s alignment with liberal media and called for European conservatives to unite. A spirited Q&A followed, addressing strategies to make conservatism appealing, comparing European and American conservatism, and discussing the moral responsibilities of Christian politicians

Panelists, including historian David Engels and Slovak politician Branislav Škripek, explored strategies for revitalizing Europe. Topics ranged from economic prudence to the pitfalls of polarization. Engels suggested building “parallel societies” as a foundation for broader conservative success. The discussion also touched on the influence of nationalism and the need for balanced leadership; MEP Ondřej Dostál urged rejecting labels and embracing nuanced alliances, as well as strengthening the economies of Europe through hard work and manufacturing, not speculation.

The importance of grassroots activism and institutional resilience dominated discussions on building a “parallel polis.” Speakers like Márton Veisz of Fidesz emphasized the role of consistent, long–term efforts in Hungary’s conservative resurgence. Zoltán Koskovics highlighted Hungary’s success in policies like immigration control and education reform.

Christiaan Alting von Geusau and Zoltán Szalai underscored the transformative power of classical and Catholic education. Von Geusau advocated for deregulating education to allow churches to reclaim curricula, emphasizing the importance of cultivating thinkers rooted in timeless principles. He also said healthy curricula will necessarily include students spending extensive time outside, observing the natural world. Szalai argued that conservative values are common sense ideas and that more high–quality research and materials need to be put out there from the Conservative side, to counteract the academic bend to the Left. Juraj Šúst called for theological and philosophical grounding to foster robust conservative values. A lively Q&A addressed homeschooling and the role of education in a polarized world, emphasizing the importance of dialogue and mutual respect.

A few panel discussions were held on topics with both European and conservative implications. A discussion on the state of the healthcare system featured MEP Ondrej Dostál, MP Anna Záborská, MP Marek Krajčí, and health care expert Jana Ježíková. The panel addressed the challenges healthcare systems face today and in the future at both national and European levels: a shortage of medical personnel and experts, the vulnerable financial situation of hospitals, and the need for reform and coordination. The speakers asserted that the future demographic challenges will further intensify the pressure on healthcare systems across Europe. The discussion concluded with reflections on the regulatory responsibilities of member states and the coordinating role of the EU, along with the role of private actors such as health insurers in the managing of patient journeys and reducing waiting lists.

In the next round table discussion, ECPM board member and former Slovak minister of Labor, Social Affairs and Family, Milan Krajniak, shared his experience reforming the pension system for the benefit of families during his time as minister. He argued that policies which support families, enabling them to take

care of themselves and their communities, should serve as a model Europe–wide.

In a session focused on spirituality, speakers grappled with modern society’s moral relativism. Panelists shared personal journeys of faith and discussed the philosophical underpinnings of truth, drawing from figures like Tertullian and St. Augustine. They stressed the need for a return to natural law and the humanization of ideological opponents.

MP Anna Záborská reflected on the need to spiritually uplift Europe by drawing on its rich Christian heritage, which has shaped values like human dignity, justice, and the common good. Highlighting the courage of Christian leaders and witnesses throughout history, especially during times of persecution, she urged for a renewed commitment to truth and unity. “Courage in the search for truth,” she noted, “has been a mainstay for many Christians in the darkest chapters of our history.” This courage, rooted in faith, is essential to overcoming moral relativism and preserving Europe’s spiritual legacy for future generations.

Valeriu Ghilețchi, ECPM President, spoke about the rise in discrimination and marginalization of Christians in Europe, as evidenced in the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination Against Christians in Europe (OIDAC) report. He mentioned the PACE resolution based on his report, Tackling Intolerance in Europe with a Special Focus on Christians, from 2015. These two documents clearly show the fast erosion of Christian values on which Europe was

founded, which begs the question of what will anchor its future. “Our Europe is more than a union of nations; it is a shared heritage, a community bound by principles that emerged from Judeo–Christian values. These values shaped not only our culture but are also the bedrock of our laws, human rights, and democracy itself. The dignity of every human being, the family as a pillar of society, and the sanctity of life—these are not merely abstract ideas. They are the living principles that give us identity, continuity, and purpose”, said Ghilețchi.

The potential impact of the 2025 U.S. elections on Europe was a hot topic. Rod Dreher, Gladden Pappin and other panelists highlighted the polarized nature of American politics, predicting significant shifts in foreign policy and domestic governance depending on the outcome. The panel was unified in its opposition to the war in Ukraine, urging a pragmatic and human–centered approach to international relations.

Throughout the summit, the recurring themes of courage, unity, and long–term strategy resonated. From education to geopolitics, participants were urged to act decisively, uphold their values, and prepare for the ideological battles ahead.



Cornerstone Annual Dinner for Young Professionals

December 4– Brussels, Belgium

Jeff Fountain, director of Schuman Centre for European Studies

Daniel Kim, pastor involved with the Prayer Breakfast Movement

Klariska ten Napel, city councilor Zwolle, Netherlands

Valeriia Petrechiv, ECPYouth president

Together with the Cornerstone team, ECPM organized the annual dinner which brought together young professionals engaged in European politics to discuss and connect with each other. The main topics of the event were the European project and Jesus’ teachings on politics.

Jeff Fountain, director of Schuman Centre for European Studies, emphasized the foundational Christian influence on Europe, which introduced values of dignity, human rights, and reconciliation. Robert Schuman’s vision, he noted, went beyond economics: “Europe needs a soul, an ideal, and a political will to serve this ideal.” The Schuman Declaration in 1950, which began with pooling coal and steel production, aimed to foster “de facto solidarity” and prevent further wars. Fountain highlighted the character of the founding fathers—Schuman, Adenauer, and de Gasperi—noting their proximity to borders, their shared Catholic faith, and their vision of peace, even in times of adversity. He shared an inspiring note from Schuman smuggled during WWII: “We, the French, have to learn to love and forgive Germans in order to rebuild France.” Fountain urged Christians to “fight passivity and inaction” and engage as “salt and light” in today’s polarized society, focusing on reconciliation and recognizing God’s image in others.

Pastor Daniel Kim shared insights on the Prayer Breakfast Movement, which builds relationships and fosters reconciliation through political, religious, and social collaboration. He cited the friendship between Korea’s Foreign Minister and Japan’s Prime Minister as an example of reconciliation at a global level. Kim encouraged Europeans to embrace their diversity, stating that “young Europeans are a modern example of unity and peace,” while the EU remains a model of stability. He called on participants to “utilize time wisely” for purposeful and intentional engagement in society.

ECPYouth president Valeriia Petrechiv presented ECPYouth’s mission and values of catholicity, dignity, and cooperation. She highlighted the biblical foundation for unity and respect, connecting these principles with human dignity and cross-cultural cooperation within Europe. ECPYouth aims to connect young politicians, provide training for the next generation, and amplify the voice of Christians in public life. Petrechiv shared ongoing initiatives, including regional conferences, the

Christian Changemakers program, and working groups focused on politics, events, and communication.

Klariska Ten Napel, a city councilor in Zwolle, addressed how foundational EU values like peace and stability can inspire political engagement today. She expressed concern over destabilization and greed but encouraged others to remain steadfast in their faith and purpose. Reflecting on her personal journey, she emphasized the need to overcome fear and stay committed to one’s values. “If you want a strong, united Europe, you need to be strong inside yourself,” she said, urging participants to fight for a better Europe by living out love, purpose, and resilience.

The gathering provided inspiration to engage with Europe’s challenges through the lens of faith, reconciliation, and purposeful action, while drawing on the values that formed the foundation of the European project.



Patients’ Rights in Global Health Policy: Vaccination and Pandemic Management

December 17 – Riga, Latvia
MEP Ondřej Dostál (via Zoom)
Jūlija Stepanenko, chairwoman of Suverēnā Vara and former MP
Dr. Jean-Frédéric Poisson, president of VIA party France, author, board member of ECPM
Inga Bite, president of ECPM Advisory Council
Dāvids Kļaviņš, board member of Suverēnā Vara, entrepreneur
Agita Galiņa, lawyer and social worker
Edgars Mednis, pediatric homeopathic doctor

ECPM organized this conference in collaboration with Suverēnā Vara to offer the space for reflection and hindsight on the significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected not only health systems but also human rights. The conference featured lawyers, politicians, and medical experts who shared their experiences from the pandemic as well as ideas for future challenges, such as the WHO Pandemic Agreement.

Inga Bite, president of the ECPM Advisory Council, presented ECPM and described its position at the European level. She emphasized ECPM is the only European political party explicitly defending Christian values and that it seeks to guide the EU back to the Biblical values it was founded on, most notably the value of human dignity. Ms. Bite reiterated ECPM's support for the Oviedo Convention and its condemnation of discrimination of those who refused vaccination during the Covid-19 pandemic. She asserted that the EU overstepped its authority during the pandemic, compromising the rights and freedom of individuals.

Jūlija Stepanenko, president of Suverēnā Vara, shared her experiences with court cases involving unvaccinated employees. As the only member of the Latvian parliament banned from participating in online sessions, she sought to assist numerous individuals who lost their jobs for refusing vaccination. She argued that any law imposed by the state must not carry risks of health damage or death.

Dāvids Kļaviņš discussed the phases of Covid-19 policies: initial panic, societal division over vaccines, and restrictions on questioning their effectiveness. The Covid-19 politics resulted in societal, psychological and economic damage while the pharmaceutical industry financially thrived, he assessed. Kļaviņš concluded with a call for prudence in future global

health crises.

MEP Ondřej Dostál gave a speech on the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic. He advocated for upholding traditional bioethical values, such as human autonomy and the right to choose. As a lawyer specialized in healthcare, he explained that these values can only be overridden in cases of necessity or urgency subject to delicate procedures to assess proportionality. During the Covid-19 pandemic, these principles were disregarded and not applied and the measures taken were not proportional and violated human rights. Regarding vaccinations, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled in the Vavříčka case that only vaccines that create herd immunity can be made mandatory. However, there is no conclusive evidence that Covid-19 vaccines led to herd immunity. The mandatory vaccination of individuals who had already recovered from Covid-19 was a particular violation of their human rights.

Jean-Frédéric Poisson discussed France’s experience during the Covid-19 pandemic and the societal and economic consequences of the measures taken by the French authorities. He criticized the lack of transparency in the healthcare decision-making during the pandemic. He then addressed the World Health Organization (WHO) and Pandemic Agreement arguing the current text of the Agreement

contains an imbalance in power to declare pandemics and impose health care policies, potentially undermining national autonomy and sovereignty. He urged national parliaments not to ratify the Agreement. Mr. Poisson concluded by acknowledging the WHO’s beneficial contributions to global health care, particularly in developing countries. However, he advised caution regarding certain WHO programs that do not align with Christian values, for example campaigns on birth control and sexual education.

Dr. Edgars Mednis, a pediatric homeopathic doctor, shared his perspective on the autonomy of doctors during the pandemic. He defended the right of physicians to make individualized treatment decisions for their patients. “Doctors are often given guidelines that do not suit everyone, and they must have the freedom to determine the best course of action for each patient.”

Lawyer and social worker Agita Galiņa contributed to the conference by discussing the mRNA technology used in the Covid-19 vaccines. She stated that mRNA technology should be adequately regulated and supervised so that its safety is guaranteed and prevent any potential harm.

The conference concluded with a Q&A session. s



General Assembly

Extraordinary Post-Election General Assembly

June 19 – Brussels, Belgium

ECPM convened in Brussels, Belgium for an extraordinary General Assembly (GA) to evaluate the European Parliament elections that took place on June 6–9, 2024. Representatives of member parties were present together with ECPM Board, individual members, staff, and associate members.



The newly elected MEPs were officially welcomed: Bert-Jan Ruissen (SGP), Niels Geuking (Familien Partei), Cristian Terheş (PNCR), and Vilis Krištopans (Latvia First). Additionally, the Assembly was informed the board had accepted four new parties and four individual members into the alliance: Latvia First, the Lithuanian Christian Union, Jobbik Conservatives, and PNCR. Peeter Võsu, Florica Cherecheş, Branislav Škripek, and Inga Bite were welcomed as individual members. Furthermore, Secretary General Maarten van de Fliert announced the termination of membership of several individuals and parties due to loss of contact and/or dissolution.

During the meeting, board member and Vice-President Karin Heepen was re-elected for a second term. Treasurer Jacques Bazen presented the Financial Report of 2023, along with the external audit. Following a discussion, the report was unanimously adopted.

Campaign Manager Adriana Rus presented ECPM's election campaign. She highlighted the growth in social media traffic

and the significant presence in mainstream media compared to previous campaigns. Several members expressed their gratitude to ECPM's campaign team for their support and cooperation. President Valeriu Ghileţchi also thanked outgoing MEP Márton Gyöngyösi and MEP Anja Haga for their work and collaboration during their time in the European Parliament.

The board initiated a discussion on the future of ECPM. To better communicate that ECPM is a political party, a name change was suggested. Also, the Board expressed its intention to make its leadership more politically orientated by increasing the involvement of MEPs and separating political and administrative tasks. During the discussion, members shared their thoughts on the potential name change and expressed univocally it should maintain a reference to Christianity. To follow-up the discussion, the Board will prepare suggestions for a new name and forward them to the members.

27th General Assembly

December 4 – Brussels, Belgium

The European Christian Political Movement (ECPM) convened its 27th General Assembly at the Thon Hotel in Brussels. The reunion brought together board representatives, members and staff to reflect, discuss, and decide on the future and the growth of the party.

The assembly began with a heartfelt remembrance of Michal Považan, a valued member whose sudden passing was deeply felt by all. Members took a moment to honor his memory and pray for his family and loved ones. Milan Krajniak was inaugurated to fill the vacant seat on the board.

A new Advisory Council president was elected during the meeting. ECPM expressed its gratitude to Florica Cherecheş for her years of dedicated service, as she handed over the presidency to her successor, Inga Bite. The assembly warmly welcomed Ms. Bite to her new role.

The agenda also included discussions on enhancing internal dialogue and fostering party growth, with further steps taken to advance these goals.

The gathering provided a valuable opportunity for members to meet, network, and exchange ideas. It reaffirmed ECPM's commitment to its mission of promoting Christian values in European politics and preparing for the challenges and opportunities ahead.



ECPYouth

Introduction

2024 has been a milestone year for ECPYouth, filled with growth, celebration, and a renewed sense of purpose. Marking our 20th anniversary, we reflected on two decades of empowering young Christian leaders across Europe while setting our sights firmly on the future. This year, we made significant strides in professionalizing our organization, ensuring that we are equipped to face new challenges and seize new opportunities. A highlight of this process was the development of our Strategy Plan, crafted in collaboration with Niek Bakker, which will guide us towards sustainable growth by aligning our ambitions with our organizational capacities.

From the International Summer School in Bucharest to the introduction of a Model EU-simulation in Berlin, our activities have embodied ECPYouth's mission of equipping young Christians with the skills and knowledge to impact Europe politically and spiritually. The year also saw inspiring leadership transitions during our General Assembly in Brussels, where the board was brought to its full capacity, ready to take on the challenge of bringing Christian values to the European youth.

With a successful campaign Forward in Faith, insightful panel talks, hands-on workshops, and thought-provoking debates, we strengthened our position as a platform for meaningful political engagement rooted in Christian values. As we prepare for the challenges and opportunities of 2025, we remain committed to expanding our reach, enhancing our impact, and fostering a vibrant community of changemakers. Together, we look forward to shaping a brighter, more hopeful Europe.

For the following year, we choose to focus on one of the most pressing issues of our time: European security and defense. ECPYouth members agreed that this is a complex topic and that we need to explore and understand it well as we establish a position and approach to it as a political youth organization. We will look at current defense policies, procurement, NATO's roles, the idea for a European army and, most importantly, how we as Christians in European politics can contribute to achieving peaceful resolutions to global conflicts.





Campaign for the European Elections

At the end of 2023, ECPYouth members highlighted the need for a dedicated campaign team to prepare for the European Parliamentary elections of June 2024. Under the leadership of Board Member for Politics, Jonathan de Koeijer, the campaign team became fully operational by early January, supported by ECPM. The team's first task was to draft a comprehensive campaign program, outlining priorities for the next five years. Collaborating closely with our members, the campaign was titled "Forward in Faith" and structured around three key themes: A Human Digital World, The Borders of the EU, and Care for the Living.

To bring this vision to life, the campaign team organized events with members across Europe, hosting gatherings in the Netherlands, Germany, Hungary, Belgium, and France. The kick-off event in Strasbourg set the tone for an active season. Beyond in-person events, the campaign gained visibility through published articles on the core themes and a widespread poster campaign in various European cities.

The Forward in Faith campaign not only increased ECPYouth's visibility but also strengthened connections with member organizations and individual members. Reflecting on the season, we celebrate a successful effort that has solidified ECPYouth's presence and impact across Europe.

ECPYouth Campaign Kick-off

March 2 – Strasbourg, France
Valeriia Petrechiv, ECPYouth President
Jonathan de Koeijer, ECPYouth board member politics
Koen Strijk, ECPM campaign assistant
Klariska ten Napel, Christian Changemakers project leader and CU candidate for EP elections

ECPYouth President Valeriia Petrechiv kicked off the election campaign by welcoming everyone, followed by a reflection on the current situation of the EU and its challenges of war, digitalization, and youth mental well-being. ECPYouth offers proposals to address these challenges, she said. Ms. Petrechiv expressed gratitude for the great work of writing the political program and thanked all those who contributed. She ended her talk with a call to action and a prayer.

Jonathan de Koeijer, ECPYouth board member for politics, gave an overview of the last five years' challenges the EU has faced and of what is ahead, including climate change, war, the rising cost-of-living, and polarization. De Koeijer highlighted the impact of these challenges on young people and pointed to the Bible as a guide and hope for these times. He reminded everyone that the ECPYouth's political program is founded on Biblical principles, and that we can approach the future with hope for Europe, that "we go forward in faith."

ECPM campaign assistant Koen Strijk gave a presentation about ECPM, outlining its political program and campaign strategy. He presented the seven spearheads of the ECPM's political program and emphasized campaign plans for increased visibility, notably by participating in the Spitzenkandidaten debates. Strijk also presented the campaign event tracks on migration, EU reform, and agriculture and creation care. He encouraged ECPYouth to be visible and strategic in their campaigning and invited ECPYouth (members) to join ECPM campaign activities.

Central to the campaign launch was the unveiling of ECPYouth's political manifesto 'Forward in Faith'. The manifesto centered around three themes: digitalization, EU's institutional design, and care for life and was presented in an interactive way that included discussion and reflection on the document. This showcased the diversity and room for respectful discussion in ECPYouth. After the presentation, the political program was ceremoniously signed by the present audience.

Klariska ten Napel continued with a workshop on how to communicate the political program and shared best practices. She explained the problem-feel-action method in speechwriting which entails defining why a certain issue is problematic, why it affects people, and what action is needed

to solve the issue. The attendees were challenged to apply the presented method to the Forward in Faith manifesto and to create a social media post. The presentation by Ms. Ten Napel proved very useful as evidenced by the results of the exercise.

Later that day, participants had the opportunity to campaign in the city center of Strasbourg. The event concluded with a working dinner.



The Future of the EU: Accession, Security and Geopolitics

May 17 – Utrecht, the Netherlands
Dr. Teuta Voda, Former Deputy-Minister of Justice of Albania and
lecturer at Science PO, Paris
Lourens van Bruchem, SGP candidate for European Parliament

ECPYouth and its member organization SGP-Jongeren organized a campaign event on the future of the European Union addressing the issues of EU accession, security and geopolitics. Keynote speakers of the event were Dr. Teuta Voda and Lourens van Bruchem.

Lecturer at Sciences Po University, Dr. Teuta Voda, tackled the issue from a technical perspective and outlined the different procedures for EU accession. Coming from Albania herself, she presented the various effects of a country joining the European Union. She pointed out that the process of becoming part of the EU is lengthy, with several countries currently in negotiations with the Union’s leadership but not yet admitted. The current geopolitical situation may influence these processes, as the war in Ukraine poses both a threat and an opportunity for the EU, she explained.

Lourens van Bruchem, SGP candidate for the European Parliament, spoke about his party’s platform and proposals, and about the relationship between the EU and Member States. He approached the topic from a political perspective, asserting that accession to the EU can be an option for some countries, but the process should not be rushed at the expense of existing standards and agreements.

The contributions of the main speakers were followed by a Q&A session. The event provided the attendees with meaningful insights on EU expansion and its implications.



Why Christian Politics?

June 3 – Zwolle, the Netherlands
Klariska ten Napel, ChristenUnie candidate for European Parliament
Martine Wursten, ChristenUnie candidate for European Parliament
Jeff Fountain, director Schuman Centre for European Studies
Mink de Fries, Professor of Religion

In cooperation with Perspectief, ECPYouth organized a campaign conference in Zwolle, the Netherlands. The event focused on Christian values in European politics and featured candidates for the EP elections as well as experts in religious studies and European history.

ChristenUnie candidates Klariska ten Napel and Martine Wursten explained why they are running for election. Both emphasized the relevance of Christian values in both national and European politics, and explained the ways EU institutions and Member States can influence each other and work together.

Jeff Fountain, director of the Schuman Centre for European Studies, spoke about how Christian values shaped European history, law education and politics, most notably values such as dignity, human rights, and reconciliation. He emphasized the shared Catholic faith and commitment to peace of the founding fathers—Schuman, Adenauer, and de Gasperi—who sought solidarity through cooperation, particularly to prevent future wars. He concluded by highlighting Schuman’s message of healing and forgiveness after WWII.

Mink de Fries added that, despite the increasing secularization of Western Europe, religion remains relevant today. He argued that Christian values have something to offer everyone, both at a personal level and at a societal one.

ECPYouth General Assembly

Saturday, April 13 – Brussels, Belgium

On April 13, ECPYouth held its General Assembly in Brussels, marking an important moment for leadership and organizational growth. Victoria Meller was re-elected Treasurer and assumed the additional role of Vice-President, recognizing her dedicated service to the organization. Dominic Potters was elected Board Member for Events, bringing fresh energy to the planning and execution of ECPYouth’s key gatherings. Marguerite-Marie du Pontavice joined the Board as Secretary, enhancing the team’s administrative strength and strategic focus.

The Assembly underscored ECPYouth’s commitment to gathering a full board that focuses on teamwork, professionalization, and enhancing the organization’s overall quality as a political youth party.



Christian Changemakers 2024: EU elections edition

[Valeriu Ghilețchi](#), President of ECPM
[Maarten van de Fliert](#), Secretary General ECPM
[Márton Gyöngyösi](#), ECPM Director for Political Relations, Former MEP
[Anja Haga](#), Former MEP
[Dr. Noemi Mena Montes](#), Senior Lecturer at Radboud University
[Valerii Petrechiv](#), Christian Changemakers (CCM) Coordinator
[Klariska ten Napel](#), city councilor Zwolle, NL and trainer at School voor Spreekvaardigheid
[Jeff Fountain](#), Director of Schuman Centre for European Studies
[Johannes de Jong](#), Director of Sallux
[Niek Bakker](#), Campaign Expert and Youth Worker
[Philip Powell](#), Jubilee Centre
[Dominic Potters](#), ECPYouth Board Member Events
[Joshua & Juliana Heinrichs](#), Founders of the Consul Group
[Akil Pano](#), Pastor

The 2024 edition of the Christian Changemakers program focused on equipping participants with skills to design, implement and run in a political campaign. Titled “European Elections Edition: How to Campaign Like a Pro”, the program offered useful information and strategy about campaigning in European elections, coupled with skill-development such as public speaking, writing motions and resolutions, and debating. The program aspired to nurture a new generation of skilled professionals— Christian activists, policy advisers, and politicians—who will serve ECPYouth, ECPM, and their Member Parties across Europe with excellence and a steadfast commitment to their values.

The Christian Changemakers program consisted of in-person sessions in Strasbourg and Brussels, complemented by a series of interactive online activities. The kickoff session in Strasbourg called “The Person Behind the Change”, set the tone for a transformative experience. Through a series of questions and group work, the trainees were encouraged to think on who they are, what they want to be and how their story could inform their public work.

The second in-person event, “How to Create Change,” brought participants to the political heart of Europe, in Brussels, Belgium. They were taken on a guided tour of the European Quarter by Jeff Fountain, followed by meetings with MEPs Márton Gyöngyösi (Hungary) and Anja Haga (The Netherlands), who shared their experiences on the workings of the EU and the challenges of exercising a European mandate.

The subsequent workshops and sessions expanded on essential themes, including “Kingdom and Calling”, “Stage Training”, “Political Communication Mastermind”, trainings on

interviewing and media exposure, writing a press release and crisis management, given by Klariska ten Napel, Akil Pano, Dr. Noemi Mena Montes, and Niek Bakker. The program concluded with a thought-provoking lecture on Europe and Schuman’s speech by Jeff Fountain, offering historical and spiritual insight into European unity. Participants were also given the opportunity to apply their newly acquired skills during a Social Media Challenge held during a city walk, blending practical experience with an exploration of the city.

The participants engaged in the ECPYouth and ECPM EU election campaigns in their respective countries. From helping them set-up these events to being featured as a speaker on a panel discussion, this year’s CCM-cohort had the unprecedented opportunity to roll up their sleeves and go to work.

True to tradition, Bible study remained central to the program, ensuring that participants grew spiritually while honing their skills through a Christian perspective. Led by Joshua and Juliana Heinrichs, the studies focused on building character, leading with integrity, and communicating one’s values.



International Summer School – Bucharest, Romania

[July 18–21 – Bucharest, Romania](#)
[Klariska ten Napel](#), City Councilor Zwolle, NL and trainer at School voor Spreekvaardigheid
[Dr. Noemi Mena Montes](#), Senior Lecturer at Radboud University
[Johannes de Jong](#), Director of Sallux
[Niek Bakker](#), Campaign Expert and Youth Worker
[Dr. Teuta Vodo](#), Former Deputy Minister of Justice, Albania & EU Lecturer at Sciences Po, Paris
[Philip Powell](#), Jubilee Centre
[Victoria Meller](#), Vice-President & Treasurer of ECPYouth
[Jonathan de Koeijer](#), Board Member Politics of ECPYouth
[Dominic Potters](#), Board Member Events of ECPYouth

The ECPYouth International Summer School made its highly anticipated return in 2024, following a two-year hiatus, due to renewed funding. Held in Bucharest over three days, we celebrated ECPYouth’s 20th anniversary and explored the theme “What Makes Europe, ‘Europe’.” The Summer School served as a platform to equip young leaders with essential skills for impactful Christian political engagement. The program offered dynamic workshops on debating, opinion writing,

media engagement, and Europe’s identity, alongside debates tackling critical European issues such as migration, geopolitics, and the role of Christian values in modern society. Bible study focused on obedience and trust, ‘cultural Christianity,’ and the influential role of Christian minorities in shaping Europe’s future.

True to ECPYouth Summer School tradition, the event featured an international evening, fostering cultural exchange among participants from 12 countries. Over 30 attendees, including alumni and first-time participants, built meaningful connections while gaining practical tools for Christian democratic politics. The occasion also highlighted two decades of ECPYouth’s impact, sparking interest in future initiatives such as the Christian Changemakers program and the organization’s Working Groups.

On the final day of the Summer School we held the ECPYouth General Assembly, where we shared updates and evaluated the Forward in Faith campaign, we welcomed new members, and decided on the 2025 theme: “European Defense and Security.” The event successfully combined celebration, education, and inspiration, reaffirming ECPYouth’s mission to shape a brighter European future.



Model EU: CCM Alumni Edition

December 12–15 – Berlin, Germany

Klariska ten Napel, City Councilor Zwolle, NL and trainer at School voor Spreekvaardigheid

Márton Gyöngyösi, ECPM Director of Political Relations, former MEP

Niek Bakker, Campaign Expert and Youth Worker

Karin Heepen, Chairwoman of Bündnis C – Christen für Deutschland and Vice-President of ECPM

ECPYouth proudly hosted the Model EU: CCM-Edition in Berlin, an important gathering aimed at ensuring the continuity of the Christian Changemakers (CCM) program: engaging current alumni, and promoting the upcoming 2025 edition, which is set to begin in March. We welcomed 20 participants who received expert training from leading figures in European politics and Christian engagement, including Klariska ten Napel, City Councilor in Zwolle, Public Speaking Trainer, and Candidate for the 2024 EU-Elections, along with Márton Gyöngyösi, former MEP and current Director of Political Relations at ECPM, Niek Bakker, Campaign Coordinator for the 2019 EU-Elections for SGP & ChristenUnie, and Karin Heepen, Chairwoman of Bündnis C and Vice-President of ECPM.

A key feature of the event was a panel discussion on how to be a Christian politician, where Heepen and Gyöngyösi shared their experiences navigating the intersection of faith and politics at the European level. Additionally, participants took part in two hands-on workshops: “The Art of Plenary Debating” with Niek Bakker, who provided tools for effective political communication, and “Negotiating and Deal Making” with Klariska ten Napel, focusing on the critical skills needed for successful political negotiations.

The event also included a simulation of EU decision-making, with participants engaging in a debate over the EU Migration and Asylum Pact, enhancing their understanding of how European policies are crafted and debated. This immersive experience not only sharpened their political acumen but also provided a platform for alumni to collaborate and share experiences. Through these activities, ECPYouth reinforced its goal to empower young Christian leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary for impactful political participation in Europe.

Politics

After its relaunch in 2023, the Working Group Politics faced challenges in becoming fully operational, primarily due to an unexpectedly busy campaign season. As a result, the Board Member for Politics decided to temporarily suspend the group’s activities until the campaign concluded.

In October 2024, the Working Group Politics officially resumed its work with a renewed focus. The first session focused on clarifying the group’s goals and brainstorming ideas for future initiatives. Currently, members are engaged in writing several articles, and the initial groundwork has been laid for a campaign centered around a specific theme. This relaunch marks a promising new chapter for the Working Group Politics.

Events

The Working Group Events was established to enhance the quality and reach of event organization within ECPYouth. Driven by the ambition to attract more participants, provide impactful training, and foster meaningful connections, the group continues to grow. Several meetings with prospective members are scheduled for the end of the year. With the current level of interest and planned discussions, the working group aims to begin 2025 with a dedicated team of five active members, ready to make a significant impact.

Communications

The vacancy for the Working Group Communications has been advertised, and applications are currently under review. This group is envisioned as a key pillar in strengthening ECPYouth’s outreach, ensuring consistent and impactful communication across all platforms. Plans are underway to bring together skilled individuals who can craft compelling content, manage social media campaigns, and support the dissemination of ECPYouth’s core messages. The working group aims to officially launch in early 2025 with a dynamic team ready to elevate the organization’s visibility and engagement.

Podcast: The Brussels Breakdown

In November, ECPYouth launched its podcast, The Brussels Breakdown, as a platform to discuss and analyze pressing issues. Hosts Jonathan de Koeijer (Board Member Politics) and Dominic Potters (Board Member Events) talk about European politics, foreign affairs, and topics central to ECPYouth’s mission, inviting engaging speakers to provide nuanced perspectives.

With two episodes released each month, the podcast introduces a fresh way to share ideas and spark thought-provoking conversations. By January 1, 2025, five episodes will be available on Spotify, marking a strong start to this new initiative. Topics covered so far include: the American elections, populism in Europe, and the challenges of climate and energy transitions. To maximize its reach, the podcast is actively promoted on social media, drawing in a diverse audience.



ECPM MEPs



Ondřej Dostál

Political Party: Independent

Country: Czechia

Website: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/256851/ONDREJ_DOSTAL/home

Ondřej Dostál was elected to the European Parliament in the European elections in June 2024 and serves as a non-inscrit (non-attached) member. He is a member of the Parliamentary Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) and of the delegation for relations with the countries of Southeast Asia (DASE).

For more than twenty years, MEP Dostál has been a leading voice calling for solidarity in access to healthcare in Czechia and an advocate for patients' rights, informed consent and the implementation of the Oviedo Convention. His expertise as a lawyer includes health policy, bioethics, patients' rights and medical law.



Niels Geuking

Political Party: Familien Partei Deutschlands

Country: Germany

Website: www.wählefamilien.de

Mr. Geuking is MEP for Germany for the 2024–2029 EP mandate. He is a member of the Committees on Development (DEVE) and on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) and a substitute on the Delegation for Relations with Iran (D–IR).

Niels Geuking became a member of the Billerbeck city council in 2020 and of the Coesfeld district council in 2021, serving also as the chair of the Family Working Group in the same district council.

He is a defender of family rights, state-subsidized childcare, policies combating child and elder poverty, and is working towards making the marketplace a more family-friendly environment.

He lives in Billerbeck, Germany with his wife and children.



Vilis Krištopans

Political Party: Latvija pirmajā vietā

Country: Latvia

Website: <https://latvijapirmajavieta.lv/>

Mr. Vilis Krištopans is an experienced politician who served in the Latvian government as Prime Minister (1998–1999), and prior to that as Minister of Transportation. He served in the Latvian Saeima during three mandates (1993–1996; 2002–2007; and 2022–2024).

He was elected member of the European Parliament in 2024 and sits with the Patriots for Europe group. Mr. Krištopans is member of the Foreign Affairs committee and a substitute member in the Agriculture & Rural Development and in the Transport & Tourism committees.



Bert-Jan Ruissen

Political Party: SGP

Country: The Netherlands

Website: <https://eurofractie.sgp.nl/home>

Bert-Jan Ruissen is a Dutch MEP for the 2024–2029 mandate, his second term. He serves on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI), on the Committee on Fisheries (PECH) and on the Delegation for relations with Israel (D-IL).

Ruissen has worked for the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality for 19 years. He has represented The Netherlands in the EU Council in working groups and committees of DG AGRI. Ruissen has been the SGP representative in the city council of Krimpen aan den IJssel, his hometown.

He believes that Biblical principles are beneficial for the society at large, is critical of the increasing concentration of power in Brussels and is a strong advocate for a well-functioning single market, sustainable agriculture, better relations with Israel, and wants to fight modern slavery and oppression.

Mr. Ruissen is married, has 4 children, and enjoys playing the organ in his spare time.



Cristian Terheș

Political Party: Partidul Național Conservator Roman (PNCR)

Country: Romania

Website: pncr.ro

Mr. Terheș is a Romanian MEP for the 2024–2029 mandate, his second European Parliament mandate. He is vice-chair of the Committee on Budgetary Control, and a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee (AFET). He also serves on the Delegation for EU–Albania Stabilization and Association Parliamentary Committee, and on the Delegation for relations with South Africa.

He studied Theology, Journalism and Communication in Romania and The United States. He also served as a priest in the Greek–Catholic Romanian Mission and as the President of the Romanian Greek–Catholic Association in US for 10 years. Cristian Terheș has a natural flair for business development and uses technology and communication tools effectively to maximize return on investment and to market companies online. He has successfully used his skills in doing so for companies and non-profits for almost 20 years.

At a political level, he has been involved with organizations which unite Romanians in diaspora and strengthen relations between Romania and US, with an emphasis on religious liberty, the rule of law, and fighting corruption in Romania.

Cristian Terheș founded and leads the Romanian National Conservative Party since 2023, a party which focuses on defending traditional, Conservative values, and on strengthening Romania's sovereignty and rule of law.

ECPM Board

The board is responsible for protecting the best interests of the organization in several ways: establishing ECPP's mission and purpose; hiring, monitoring, and evaluating the General Director/ Chief Executive; overseeing the financials and managing resources responsibly; ensuring legal compliance and ethical integrity; enhancing ECPP's visibility and public standing. The ECPP board is made up of seven members, who meet at least five times per year



Valeriu Ghilețchi

ECPM President
Moldova / Romania



Leon Meijer

The Netherlands



Cristian Terheș

Romania



Karin Heepen

Vice President
Germany



Jacques Bazen

Treasurer
The Netherlands



Milan Krajniak

Slovakia



Jean-Frédéric Poisson

France

Advisory Council

The role of the Advisory Council is to provide guidance to ECPP board & members and financial oversight. The members of the Council may also propose discussion topics for the General Assembly, may check and amend program and statutes. It usually meets at least two times per year.



Inga Bite

President
Latvia



Branislav Škripek

Slovakia



Valeriia Petrechliv

Ukraine



Christophe Foltzenlogel

France

Staff

The ECPP Staff carry out the daily operations of the party, implement the board's decisions, and facilitate communication between members and stakeholders, ensuring effective project implementation.

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Maarten van de Fliert

Secretary General



Lefteris Kaloterakis

Policy Officer



Adriana Rus

Communication & Events Manager



Márton Gyöngyösi

Director for Political Relations



Koen Strijk

Communication & Policy Assistant



Dominic Potters

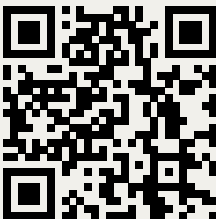
ECPYouth Liaison

Contact & Donate

Since 2010, the activities of ECPP are partly subsidized by the European Parliament.

However, in order to carry out significant work and to reach our audiences all across Europe, we need to independently raise 10% of the budget.

Please consider donating to the European Christian Political Party by scanning the QR code below.



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