

## War in Ukraine and Pentecost. COMECE and CEC: "May the Spirit of God enlighten the minds of those who seek violence"

"Let us pray for justice and peace and commit together in humility and hope to the Spirit of God who transforms and reconciles all. May the same Spirit enlighten the minds of those who seek violence, and "give them a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26). May the feet of all be guided in the way of justice, truth, reconciliation and peace." Thus reads the joint message of H.E. Mgr. Mariano Crociata and Rev. Christian Krieger, respectively presidents of CEC and COMECE, released today to mark the occasion of Pentecost. This year's message is devoted to the war in Ukraine. "Just as the early Christian community struggled to come up with answers to the problems it faced – the prelates write in the Message - Christians today struggle with the challenges of a world deeply wounded by violence, inequality and division. As the brutal war against Ukraine rages on, the humanitarian crisis continues. Social and political consequences, along with economic inequalities, also continue to surface, exposing the polarisation and fragmentation of our societies." "However, much as the disciples of the early church were filled with the Holy Spirit – remark CEC and COMECE - so Christians today are filled and guided by the Spirit." This can be seen in the many "Signs of the Spirit of God living and working in our lives" such as, for example, the churches' support of refugees." In this way, the Churches "respond to the humanitarian needs in Ukraine, express solidarity with the victims of this tragic war, and actively work for peace on the continent. They therefore call on the faithful to "be open to receiving the Holy Spirit" whose "power can heal and reconcile humanity and transform society." "May the Pentecost message to seek unity in diversity also inspire those bearing political responsibility in Europe, that their decisions be led by wisdom, integrity and compassion in the service of the common good of all."



[At their general assembly in Rome last March, Pope Francis entrusted the European bishops with advancing the cause of peace, through "prophecy, foresight and creativity", the Holy Father said on that occasion. In this spirit, on May 25, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union \(COMECE\) promoted a roundtable in Brussels that focused on the war in Ukraine and the ongoing security challenges in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood. The meeting, held at the European Parliament, was attended by Church dignitaries, EU decision-makers as well as representatives of civil society. The debate centred on "the unjust and inhumane military aggression of the Russian Federation", in the words of H.E. Mgr. Jan Vokál \(Czech Republic\), President of the COMECE Commission on EU External Relations. But there isn't only Ukraine. COMECE likewise denounced the "ongoing grave challenges to human rights and democracy in Belarus"; "frozen conflicts and other destabilising events both in the East and the South, often fuelled by external actors." These "ongoing geopolitical developments, and the rapidly changing world realities -it was said - are urging the European Union to realise how crucial it is to offer to the continent a renewed strategic vision for](#)

[stability, justice and peace.”](#)



[In the opinion of the COMECE experts, EU enlargement is of strategic importance for peace and prosperity in the entire region. Msgr. Vokál pointed out that the enlargement process must be “credible, and it has to adequately respond to the expectations of the citizens of the candidate countries.” If not, “it risks backfiring and fomenting anti-European sentiments.” But the process must be supported and “those aspiring for closer ties with the European Union or even a future membership, should be allowed to embark on this path.” In the context of Pentecost, COMECE and CEC will hold an “Ecumenical Prayer event for Peace and Christian unity”, which will take place at the European Parliament on Tuesday 6 June 2023 from 08:00 to 09:00. It will feature a reflection offered by Prof. Tomáš Halík, President of the Czech Christian Academy. The event will also include contributions from H.E. Mgr. Mariano Crociata, President of the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union \(COMECE\), and Rev. Christian Krieger, President of the Conference of European Churches \(CEC\).](#)

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