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## **Germany: towards the 103rd Katholikentag. 20,000 participants expected in Erfurt for the German Catholics' Days**

The official programme of the 103rd Katholikentag 2024, that will take place in Erfurt from 29 May to 2 June, has been presented. After the 2016 edition in Leipzig, the German Catholic Days return to a diocese in the former East Germany. With around 500 events, the programme is much more compact than in previous years. Democracy and diversity will be among the themes that will be discussed during the Days. Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier is expected to attend the opening ceremony in the Cathedral Square. A panel with Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz is also planned on the theme "Strengthening the community – shaping society". The organisers expect around 20,000 people to attend this great five-day event in the capital of Thuringia under the motto "The Future Belongs to the People of Peace". The Katholikentag will also be an opportunity to take a public stance on peace, said Irme Stetter-Karp, chairman of the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZDK). "Peace needs more than the absence of war. Peace needs people who commit themselves every day to ensuring that violence, exclusion, hatred and incitement have no place in the world". In Thuringia, Catholics account for only 7% of the population, and Protestants for almost 20%. The Bishop of the host diocese of Erfurt, Mgr Ulrich Neymeyr, stressed that the meeting will have a strong ecumenical character and is supported by the Protestant Church.

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