

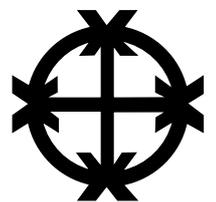


**WORLD
CONFERENCE
ON YOUTH**

JULY 2014



ECUMENISM



fimcap

eDitorial

Dear FIMCAP friends,

Greetings from Bratislava, greetings from the land of FIMCAP's latest General Assembly. This Easter was a very special time for me. Just a few days before Easter, my fiancé Maria and I announced our engagement to our families. I had been reflecting on the beauties of human love, and then I saw a quote of St. Augustine comparing Christ's gift of self on the cross to the total gift of self of a man and a woman in marriage. During the Easter vigil, I again saw more clearly all the people in the church magnetised by the cross.



Who is this Jesus on the cross? The Groom.

And who is the bride? The Church.

As St. John of the Cross puts it in his poem *The Dark Night of the Soul*: «Oh night that has united / the Lover with his beloved / transforming the beloved in her Lover.»

Then I recalled the video Fr. Reuben had used to introducing the session on ecumenism at the last General Assembly in Modra. A woman in the underground of London heard the recorded voice of her late husband: «Mind the gap.»

Christ is calling his Church to be one. He is the Sun, and Christians from many historical backgrounds acknowledging the gap are walking together into the centre of the Sun, although the paths are different, just as there are many rays of the sun, but all of them lead to the centre. I wish FIMCAP to continue walking together in fellowship towards the centre, moved by the magnet of the cross, which is the shining glory of the Father's Son.

Juraj Kralik, Vice President of FIMCAP Europe



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LINK
JULY 2014



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FIMCAP Activities

EuroCamp	AGLT	Romania	8-15 August 2014
International Peace Day		everywhere	21 September 2014
EuroConference	Jubla	Switzerland	22-26 October 2014
AfroConference	CYO Ghana	Ghana	26 Oct – 2 Nov 2014
FIMCAP Day	FIMCAP	everywhere	20 November 2014
Bureau Meeting FIMCAP Europe	KJG	Germany	February 2015
EuroCourse	eRko	Slovakia	Easter 2015
WorldCamp	Xaveri	Rwanda	July 2015
EuroCamp	Chiro	Belgium	31 July – 7 August 2015

Member organisations' and partners' activities (open to international guests)

National Summer Camp Kaleidio	Katholische Jungschar	Austria	6-12 July 2014
Chiro Railways	Chiro Flanders	Europe	18 – 28 August 2014
Jubla Open Air Concert	Jubla	Switzerland	30 – 31 August 2014
Euroquest	Boysbrigade UK	Glasgow	10 – 12 October 2014
Chipadag	Chiro Flanders & Patro	Belgium	15 Nov 2014
Ranftreffen	Jubla	Switzerland	20 – 21 December 2014
Eastercourse	European Fellowship	Malta	29 Mar – 5 Apr 2015
National Camp	FDF	Denmark	July 2016

LINK: Editions 2014

(Send articles and photos to link@fimcap.org. Maximum length: 4000 characters)

Edition	Deadline for articles	Send out
03/2014	15 Sept 2014	November 2014
01/2015	15 Dec 2014	January 2015

Intercontinental

FIMCAP NEWSLETTER

Do you want to stay updated on the news and activities of FIMCAP? Sign up for the FIMCAP newsletter!

The newsletter appears every two months and the gives you the latest news of what is

happening in the FIMCAP family. Send an e-mail to info@fimcap.org with the message «Newsletter» and we will add your name to the list.



WORLD CAMP IN RWANDA

Every three years FIMCAP organizes its World Camp. In 2012 more than 60 youth leaders from all over the world met for three weeks in Paraguay. In 2015 the World

Camp will take place in Rwanda! The World Camp will be hosted by our friends of Xaveri Rwanda. The exact dates still need to be confirmed, but it will take place around the

end of July – beginning of August 2015.
All practical information is to be expected in September.

THE STORY OF SAINT PETER AND SAINT PAUL - AND FIMCAP

At our last General Assembly in Modra last November, we had very intense and interesting discussions about Ecumenism and how open FIMCAP wants to be towards other organizations. These discussions are always a bit tricky because they are about our self-conception as organization, as FIMCAP family - but they are not at all new.

About 20 years after the crucifixion of Jesus the Apostles met to discuss if gentile converts to Christianity were obliged to obey the Laws of Moses, especially the rules of male circumcision.

I am not a theologian, but as far as I understand, the main question behind one of the first major discussions of the young church was the following: **How open do we want to be, while being faithful to Jesus and the mission of the Church?**

The discussion was led by Saint Peter, whom Jesus had called «the rock of my church», and Saint Paul, the apostle who was the first missionary to teach the gospel of Christ to people a long way away from the places where Jesus had taught. Before Paul went on his first journey, he went to Jerusalem to meet Simon Peter. Convinced of his divine mission to bring the Gospel to the gentiles, he wanted the affirmation by the leader of the early Christian Church. Simon Peter's concern was to strengthen the Christian Community and their faith in Jerusalem and its surroundings.

During the Council of Jerusalem or Apostolic Conference, the Apostles struggled to find a solution for these approaches, which at first glance seemed to be conflicting. But in the end, they found a compromise. «The Holy Spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things, to abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication. If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper» (Acts 15:27-28).

Paul and Barnabas were sent to the gentiles to spread the Gospel into the wide world. Simon Peter, James and John stayed in Jerusalem to preach to the Christian Community and to the Jews to deepen their faith. That decision, that both kinds of being missionary are necessary to build up the church, has lead us until today. A church that simply turns around itself and its community might not be missionary; and a church that is only on the way to all places in the world and accepts everything might lose its focus on the mission Jesus entrusted to her.

Still, it constantly remains an issue that should and must be discussed, but not in a way where one is against the other. The challenge is to find a good balance to keep in touch with the outside world and the inner mission at the same time. Saint Peter and Saint Paul have their common holiday, so we celebrate this decision being missionary in both ways, the deepness of faith and the wide openness towards the world every year on 29 June.

In FIMCAP, we are at a starting point to a good way of finding out how we balance between being open to other organizations and strengthening our mission and vision as the FIMCAP family. The presidium is looking forward to being on this way with you all, to discuss, to struggle and to hopefully follow the example of the Apostles to find a wise compromise in the end, guided by the Holy Ghost!

Annette Wahle, FIMCAP President

FIMCAP AFRICA CHAPLAIN ABOUT ECUMENISM

Ecumenism, aimed at promoting the unity of religions, particularly the fostering of cooperation, better understanding and collaboration between different Christian religious denominations, continues to be a crucial activity, and even more urgent in our world today. The reason for this is not far-fetched. Repeatedly, Christians have demonstrated that they are drifting apart. Christians are clearly divided in word and deed. There seem to be many more causes for this division than those that existed in the days of the Corinthian Christians, which led to St. Paul's question: «Is Christ divided...?» (1Cor. 1:13)

Causes of Division

Many Christian leaders are appearing with titles such as bishop, prophet, apostle, evangelist, deacon, elder and pastor. Many of these titles and positions are self-imposed or invented. All of these people have their own followers. The names of these groups are as diverse as the people who started them, and they are equally diverse in outlook and mode of operation. There also seems to be a scramble for or a competition as to what title to have. Who knows if new titles are not being evolved?

Messages and utterances of some of these people and their followers can sometimes be so controversial and seriously worrisome and anti-Christian that one begins to wonder if they actually know Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the world's Saviour, who is co-substantial with the Father and is adored and glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

How to achieve Ecumenism

Ecumenism requires us to help bring all these people and their followers, their messages and operations together, physically and/or spiritually, according to the will of Christ. The priestly prayer of Jesus Christ to God the Almighty Father is for this oneness and togetherness. «Holy Father, keep those you have given me in your name, so that they may be one, as we also are one» (John 17:11b).

Therefore, employing the concept of ecumenism is appropriate and timely. It is handy as a positive response to, and a way of dealing with, the present divisions and any tendencies towards further divisions within Christianity. It is an enormous task.

The need for unity and oneness of purpose and vision among Christians should be a priority. There is the need to bring together rather than pull apart. There is every reason to focus on what binds rather than what scatters. There is a need for what aligns rather than what alienates. There is the need for what fosters inclusion than what perpetrates exclusion. This is the credible testimony Christians can give to the world.

Following the adage, «Think globally, act locally», it is high time we drew attention to ourselves as youth movements in various parts of the world. Are we able to show the world through our various activities that we have no borders? Are there barriers between us and those outside of our circle? How have we dealt with those inhibitions that we either wilfully created or delightfully inherited? Is that other Catholic youth group in my country or town even aware of what our group is about, FIMCAP and its activities, what our thoughts and plans are etc.? This is where the whole business of ecumenism starts. If in our various places we are just confined to our circle and do not open our doors to our neighbours, our efforts at ecumenism are not only in vain but hypocritical and antichristian.

What can FIMCAP do to promote Ecumenism?

Therefore, taking up ecumenism in the next period is not just useful but divinely inspired. FIMCAP needs to explore all the means possible to foster a greater collaboration between Catholic youth groups and movements. Current FIMCAP members should urgently become deeply interested in the issues affecting their neighbouring Catholic youth groups or movements and create solidarity as a revival tool, regardless

of their predicament. There is no doubt that this situation will vary from place to place. What matters is action for the sake of someone like me.

The amendments intended to open up FIMCAP to other non-Catholic youth movements as part of the move towards ecumenism may be something worthy. It is possible that this would be largely expected in the various countries. Indeed, Pope Francis has given, in my view, ecumenism a very simple but deep dimension. In his homily during Mass on May 12, 2014, he drew attention to the fact that the Holy Spirit makes «possible what is unthinkable», pointing to the fact that we Christians need to open our doors to people drawn by the Spirit to accept Christ. What then happens to other Catholic groups of international status in countries such as Ghana? They seem locked behind the door of FIMCAP. One would immediately think that attention focuses on them: call it domestic ecumenism. «Charity begins at home», says the old adage.

Moving on and considering what the experience is within my environment, individuals or cliques in the youth movements portray certain stances and / or tendencies of a divisive nature. I would like to call attention to a situation of extreme polarity. First, there is the traditional conservation tendency of «do it as it has always been done». Then there is the contemporary progressive tendency of «let's change it because it is too old.» Just as each position may have its merits, the faults must not be swept under the carpet. When one position fails to prevail on an issue, total withdrawal is the result. This slows down progress, or even impedes it altogether. This has brought some groups to the terminal state in which they are close to death. While it is true that «if we keep doing things the way we always have, we will stay the same», thus not grow nor progress, it is also an undeniable fact that not all new things are better than the old ones.

This intra-group division raises some implications. Anyone following their position without considering the common good

reveals a lack of concern for the group's welfare. Their own selfishness and status will take precedence in all dealings under the disguise of group interest. Before long, we will begin to be the focus of attention instead of the issues at stake. There and then we begin to get popular (sometimes notorious) and attract sympathy or support of others. «I am for Paul ... I am for Apollo ... I am for Peter...» In a situation of this kind,

the particular individuals suffer from an interior distraction and division, and it will affect their thoughts, their work and their words.

Conclusion

It is my fervent hope that we will seriously embrace ecumenism. Therefore, we need to reconcile ourselves from within. We must reconcile the various positions we have. We

have to agree on some compromises from within ourselves: a decision for Christ and for Christ's sake. We must start the whole process of ecumenism from the heart, the mind and then the whole person.

*Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Acheampong,
Chaplain of FIMCAP Africa*

OUR AND YOUR MISSION TOWARDS A GREATER UNITY

God wills the Church because he wants to redeem us, not individually, but together. He wants to make all humankind His people. No one gets to heaven by the anti-social route. Anyone who thinks only about himself or herself and the salvation of their own soul is anti-social, and that is impossible both in heaven and on earth.

God himself is not a solitary, self-sufficient being. God as Trinity is a communion, an eternal exchange of love. Since the human person is created in the image and likeness of God, we have the capacity to develop relationships, exchanges, sharing, and love and therefore responsible for one another.

Throughout the two thousand years of Church history, Christians strived to live this communion, which Jesus desires for humanity. Nonetheless, history was also full of misunderstandings and clashes based on cultural and religious reasons, which resulted in grave wounds in the body of Christ. These divisions does not destroy the inner trust of a deeper unity within the Church since it is inherent to its very nature to be the efficacious sign and instrument of the reconciling grace of Christ, drawing men and women into a unity of faith, hope and love, across all the barriers of sin and human division.

In his apostolic exhortation, called the «Joy of the Gospel» - *Evangelli Gaudium* (EG), Pope Francis reminds us that the commitment to ecumenism responds to the prayer of the Lord Jesus that «they may all be one» (Jn 17,21). The credibility of the Christian message would be much greater if Christi-

ans could overcome their divisions, and if the Church could realize «the fullness of catholicity proper to her in those of her children who, though joined to her by baptism, are yet separated from full communion with her» (*Unitatis Redintegratio* 4). «We must never forget that we are pilgrims journeying alongside one another» (EG 244).

One of the greatest developments within the Catholic Church and the ecumenical movement was the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) that presented us with a renewed understanding of the Church: one that approaches the ecumenical problems in a new light. Its vision is no longer limited to the firmly established Catholic Church to which all must return, but it starts from the divine plan for the human race and the common Christian calling. It is God's will that the Christian life be led in a visible community that is one and comprehensive: a community that prefigures the final communion to which all nations are invited at the end of time. This mystery of unity is sacramentally present in the Catholic Church, but is also expressed in various degrees in other Christian communities; they too may contain ecclesial elements by virtue of which they may be called Churches. Vatican II no longer views these communities only

with their deficiencies but sees the positive values of their lives and traditions. Thus, the solution to the problem of Christian unity is no longer sought by merely inviting other Christians to join the Catholic Church, but by integrating into the one Church willed by Christ, regardless of which Christian values are found also in those Christian Churches and those ecclesial communities separated from the Catholic Church. The aim must be the fullness of the Christian life, comprising all traditions. In the main Vatican II decree about Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio* (UR), we read that «whatever is truly Christian is never opposed to the genuine values of the faith; indeed it can always help to a better realisation of the mystery of Christ and the Church» (UR 4).

Ecumenism emerges as a primary concern in many documents and other conciliar statements. The Second Vatican Council supported the ecumenical movement, exhorts the Catholic faithful to recognise the signs of the times, and participates in this renewal, which is identified to be a complicated commitment.

The restoration of full visible communion among all Christians is the will of Christ and essential to the life of the Catholic Church. It is the task of all, of lay people as well as ordained. «All the faithful are called upon to make a personal commitment towards promoting increasing communion with other Christians» (UR 4). «The commitment

to ecumenism [is] a duty of the Christian conscience enlightened by faith and guided by love» (UR 5). This requires from everyone interior conversion and participation in renewal in the Church. Consequently, formation in ecumenism is crucial to enable each person to be prepared to make his or her own contribution to the work of unity. The «objective of ecumenical formation is that all Christians be animated by the ecumenical spirit, whatever their particular mission and task in the world and society» (UR 6). Therefore, there must necessarily be a renewal of attitudes and flexibility of method which will help form this ecumenical spirit. This implies:

- ✦ A commitment to avoid all kinds of judgement, all kinds of unfairness towards the separated brethren.
- ✦ A commitment of dialogue, especially at expert level for example by theologians. A deeper appreciation of each other's doctrine with the objective of gaining a truer knowledge of one another.
- ✦ Co-operation in common prayer, renewal and reform, thus to engage in a common action for the common good.

How can we engage with these three principles in our organisations and in FIMCAP?

1. A COMMITMENT TO AVOID ALL KINDS OF JUDGEMENT, ALL KINDS OF UNFAIRNESS TOWARDS THE SEPARATED BRETHREN.

Various aspects of judgement and unfairness can be expressed through language. Gone are the severe condemnations and harsh assertions of authority. These are replaced by fraternal expressions and sympathy for human weakness. This is not to say that the content of teaching has changed or been softened, though sometimes this appearance can be given, but rather the pastoral approach has changed, treating democratic person with the dignity one expects, and engaging people of other beliefs on equal terms. This respectfulness is not grounded in a supposed equality between truth and error, but in the dignity of human persons as such.

2. A COMMITMENT OF DIALOGUE, ESPECIALLY AT EXPERT LEVEL. A DEEPER APPRECIATION OF EACH OTHER'S DOCTRINE WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF GAINING A TRUER KNOWLEDGE OF ONE ANOTHER.

Ecumenical dialogue among experts is less public and it only involves relatively few members of the Churches or communities involved. It is essential that this be a dialogue, where both parties respectfully hear each other instead of merely asserting what they believe. The purpose of such dialogue is to gain a greater appreciation of the other's perspective, so the obstacles to unity are more accurately perceived. In this way, genuine disagreements can be distinguished from misunderstandings, and each side may explain the reasons for their position, in a fraternal and non-polemical tone. The immediate purpose of such dialogue is not to convert the other party, but at least to persuade them of one's reasonableness and good will, as well as to highlight shared values, in order to facilitate working for common goals.

However, although the experts are responsible for trying to understand and solve the deep and complicated theological arguments, we can also contribute to the ecumenical spirit and engage in this dialogue. Nonetheless, we cannot rely on what we hear about our Church, other Churches and ecclesial communities or on what we have known from when we were adolescents. We need to grow in true ecumenical formation whose aim is to educate the hearts and minds of young people in the necessary human and religious dispositions that will favour the search for Christian unity. **The ecumenical spirit can grow if it is rooted in Truth.** Some of the ways that can be done is by hearing and studying the Word of



God, preaching, catechesis, liturgy and the spiritual life.

The formation about the teaching of the Church about ecumenism ought to take into account the context in which it is given. Special attention should therefore be given to the particular ecumenical conditions and pastoral concerns of the country or region concerned. The situation in Ghana is very different in Denmark.

In this context we should **acknowledge those elements which Christians hold in common.** Attention should be drawn to the real communion already existing among Christians, seen in their reverence for the living Word of God and their common profession of faith in God as Trinity and in Jesus, the Son of God made man who is the saviour of humanity. It finds expression in the various Creeds Christians share; it is embraced in the one sacrament of baptism, which constitutes the fundamental bond between them; it directs them all to full visible unity and a common destiny in the one Kingdom of God. Against this background, it is possible to distinguish clearly, where real rather than apparent points of disagreement still exist.

3. CO-OPERATION IN COMMON PRAYER, RENEWAL AND REFORM. THUS TO ENGAGE IN A COMMON ACTION FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

This leads to the third point, where Churches and communions in ecumenical dialogue act cooperatively for the common good, and may even pray in common. Joint prayer and Bible study, attendance at a major event of another denomination and working together for justice and peace are the components of what is called «spiritual ecumenism».

The German Cardinal Walter Kasper stated in his book about Spiritual Ecumenism that Prayer and worship are «the soul of the entire ecumenical movement.» The conversion of our hearts towards unity, which is at the heart of Christian unity, needs to be filled with love and courage from the Holy Spirit and this can be achieved through



prayer. Prayer should be the Christians' first response.'

One of the popular yearly events which started in 1908, is the Church Unity Octave, eight days of prayer for the religious unity of all Christians, which is celebrated each year from January 17 to 25. During these days, all over the World there is a greater sensibility towards ecumenism and many Christians organise together ecumenical services and prayers.

During the last decades Christian monastic or prayer communities started to grow and gain popularity, especially the young people. The community of Bose in Italy and that of Taizé in France, attract thousands of people every year so that in this oasis of prayer, peace and unity, people continue to receive God's grace on their journey towards love. **The community in Taizé**, founded by Frère Roger in 1940s is a concrete way of unity since men from different denominations are united in prayer, work and in living together to show that God is love and love alone. Frère Roger states that: «Gradually the conviction took shape in me that it was essential to create a community with men determined to give their whole life and who would always try to understand one another and be reconciled, a community where kindness of heart and simplicity would be at the centre of everything.»

In this community the emphasis is on the

elements which unite us together while acknowledging the reality of divisions. This is also shown during the Eucharistic celebrations celebrated in Taizé where all Christians participate in the Eucharistic celebration. Nonetheless although Christians who are not Catholic or do not believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist do not receive communion, will then participate in the sharing of the blessed bread with everyone. This is not consecrated bread, and is distributed during the singing of the final hymn. This provides a symbol of our spiritual communion together within our diversity, our respect for one another's spiritual journey, and our mutual desire for God.

Even attending another's Eucharistic celebration and feeling the sorrow of not being able to share the sacrament of Eucharist, can contribute to ecumenism. During that moment of prayer, we acknowledge the painful wound of division in our hearts, in our minds and commit ourselves in the way toward reconciliation and communion.

Common prayer will bring forward also common action. Working together to lighten the suffering of the poor and the sick and to build peace and justice also is part of spiritual ecumenism. Cooperation is especially important in situations where the good works of different denominations may appear to be in competition with each other or where they uselessly duplicate each other's efforts. I would suggest some examples

which can help us understand more this type of ecumenism:

- ✦ Ecumenical cooperation in designing Bible study programs
- ✦ An annual commemoration of Christians from different denominations who have been martyred for their faith or their commitment to promoting Gospel values.
- ✦ Joint prayer services on Thanksgiving and on holidays honouring those who died in the service of their country.
- ✦ An ecumenical affirmation or renewal of baptismal promises during the Easter season or around the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.
- ✦ Organizing an ecumenical Nativity play for children before Christmas.
- ✦ Frequent meetings between bishops and other ministers of different Christian communities for prayer and for keeping each other informed about major events and projects.

During the last fifty years were full of ecumenical gestures on parish level, diocesan and international level. There are ecumenical initiatives all over the world and these initiatives are contributing for the making Christians more disposed to receive the gift of unity.

Inter-religious dialogue

The dynamism for unity in the Church is very ambitious. It is not satisfied with the unity it seeks within the confines of Christianity but it goes beyond its drawn boundaries towards other religions like Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and many other religions around the World. This type of dialogue is different from ecumenism. In this case, we do not have an original unity to be restored. The Church joins into a common effort towards some kind of unity, which has its origin in the unity of humanity since we are all created in the image, and likeness of God. Even believers from other religions help the Church's ecumenical dynamism by making herself ask about her attitude towards other religions.



In the documents of the Second Vatican Council about the Church, and the relationship with other religions, one reads that the inter-religious dialogue expresses itself in three basic commitments:

- ✦ To esteem the dignity of the religions which are not Christian.
- ✦ It expresses itself in a commitment to appreciate what is positive in their religious cultures
- ✦ To co-operate with them in certain areas.

Catholic Christians state that other Christians can receive God's grace and could in fact be moved with God's grace. They are in real and actual contact with Divine

grace and assume they have the possibility of salvation. (Nostra Aetate 1-3, Lumen Gentium 16).

Religions that are not Christian are enriched by values such as those of truth, holiness and goodness, which are human values not religious. The Church feels the dynamism to appreciate the values of these religions and to use it for the unity of humankind. One can mention many occasions of collaboration on the level of prayer and action as for example when Pope John Paul II and later Pope Benedict met the leaders of different religions to pray together for peace.

Pope Francis writes in *Evangelii Gaudium* paragraph 251, that «true openness involves remaining steadfast in one's deepest convictions, clear and joyful in one's own identity, while at the same time being open to understanding those of the other party» and «knowing that dialogue can enrich each side» (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 304). What is not helpful is a diplomatic openness that says «yes» to everything in order to avoid problems, for this would be a way of deceiving others and denying them the good that we have been given to share generously with others. Evangelization and interreligious dialogue, far from being opposed, mutually support and nourish one another.

Conclusion

We are all on this journey in this story of love between God and each one of us and between each other. May we as human beings who acknowledge the great love of God continue to grow in love and unity in our communities, in society and in the Church by not only acknowledging the gaps and differences between us but where these gaps became very wide, we should mend them so that peace between us will grow. I would like to conclude with another text from Pope Francis' *Joy of the Gospel*. He invites all Christians to renew their personal encounter with Jesus Christ or at least an openness to letting him encounter them. «I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since «no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord». The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms» (EG 3).

*Fr Reuben Gauci,
Chaplain of FIMCAP Europe*

AFRICA-EU YOUTH LEADERS' SUMMIT

The summit, which was organized by the support mechanism of the Africa-EU partnership, was held within the framework of the Africa-EU Heads of State Summit focusing on people, prosperity and peace. The Youth Leaders' Summit was held in Brussels from March 31 to April 1, 2014. FIMCAP was represented by Augustine Job and Evy Hoeben.

The summit brought together more than 100 youth leaders from Africa and Europe, including African Diaspora Youth Leaders. The representatives came from National Youth Councils and International Youth Organisations that are affiliated with or member of the Pan-African Youth Union (PYU), European Youth Forum (YFJ), Network of International Youth Organisations in Africa (NIYOA), African Diaspora Youth Network in Europe (ADYNE) and the Advisory Council on Youth in Council of Europe (AC-COE).

During the two day event, the youth leaders focused on **youth leadership, youth entrepreneurship/employment and peace in Africa and Europe**. This was in line with what the AU-EU Heads of State were focusing on: people, prosperity and peace.

The summit started with an opening ceremony, and the welcome address emphasized on the need for respect between the two continents and among participants. The presentation of the summit objectives followed, as well as the summit paper and working sessions. The Africa-EU youth initiative was launched with keynote speakers as Mr. Herman Van Rompuy (President of the European Council) and Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma (Chairperson of the AU). Participants had the opportunity to ask questions.

The afternoon session was spent in discussion groups. The participants were grouped into three working groups on youth leadership, entrepreneurship/employment and peace. This discussion took more than two hours. FIMCAP participated in the groups of youth leadership and youth entrepreneurship. After the group discussion, there was an inter-generational debate on the Africa-EU Summit response to youth problems.

The second day of the summit began with

an introduction of the Africa-EU youth facility, followed by a session to continue discussing the topics of the summit. Many participants joined in, and a final resolution draft was reached to be presented to the Heads of State Summit.

The main outcomes of the summit are...

...on youth leadership:

- + education
- + mobility to acquire competencies and understanding
- + promotion of co-management at the national levels in both continents
- + mentorship and best practices on leadership development
- + African diaspora viewed as an integral resource

...on youth entrepreneurship:

- + education in general and on entrepreneurship in particular
- + start-up financing for young entrepreneurs
- + networking and information access
- + reciprocal market accessibility and mutual understanding of the markets

...on youth for peace

- + respect for human rights, natural resources (ownership and management)
- + youth organisations to be included in existing peace facility
- + exchange of young people
- + visa and funding seen as enabling factors



The day's session was concluded with remarks from Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso (President, EU).

Awards were given to the Scouts, the Portuguese Speaking Nations and the Africa-Europe Chamber of Commerce for their distinguished projects implemented in the Africa-Europe Youth Cooperation framework.

Augustine Job, FIMCAP Africa



WORLD CONFERENCE ON YOUTH 2014

From 5–10 May 2014, the largest youth conference in the world that brought together young people from over 150 countries took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, the World Conference on Youth (WCY). The theme of this conference was 'Mainstreaming Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda' and served as one of the principal methods of hearing young people's voices in the next development agenda moving beyond Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This conference led to the Colombo Declaration and Annex. Ravi Rounak, president of FIMCAP Asia and FIMCAP president Liese Vandenheede were present. Liese reports.

This conference was my first representation for FIMCAP, so I was very curious about what would follow. It did not start badly at all. Sri Lanka gave us participants a warm welcome, although there were some logistical and organizational difficulties. One day before the conference started, we received a very short training about the MDGs, their history and what will come next, also we got a very quick training in negotiating. This training was followed by a TV show about Sri Lankan culture and dances in which we were the audience.

On 5 May, the conference opened with a big (expensive) opening ceremony and show. We could experience some of Sri Lanka's beauty. Many drummers and dancers welcomed us in Sri Lanka. The president of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaksa, the President of the United Nations General Assembly John Ash and UN Secretary General's Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi, were all in charge of the official opening. During the next days we would hear many speakers (some were young, some were not), some more inspiring than others, but most importantly was

that after the speeches, we, the youth, could give our opinions during roundtables on key foundations and thematic areas.

I participated in the foundation of Youth Rights in the morning and the theme of Ensuring Inclusive Recreation, Sports and Cultures in the afternoon (all foundations and themes can be found on the WCY website). Before the discussions started in these roundtables some experts spoke about the specific topic. On the 7th we discussed the problems, what went wrong, what needed to be done better. In this field, on the 8th, we thought about possible solutions to those problems and on the 9th, we were supposed to discuss about the ways to follow to come to the solutions. Due to the limited time on the 9th, we just thought about important matters that needed to be in the annex (as most of the Declaration was already discussed on). Every day a rapporteur briefed the youth negotiators about our discussion and what we thought was important (you can read about these results on the website).

Alongside our discussions, negotiations

between states (only 28 states were present; almost no European countries, nor USA, China, or Russia) and youth went on. They negotiated the Colombo Declaration, where the wishes of the youth would be represented (which we were still discussing in the roundtables). But, as negotiations go they needed to find a consensus, so many issues and topics went missing and the negotiators chose the safe road. This is why the annex is also important. This part of the declaration that was not negotiated; it is simply the outcome of our roundtables and discussions. Equally important: a precedent was set, because for the first time ever the youth was represented during the negotiations as well, two young people were there in the name of the youth. They were treated equally to the states, and were listened to!

The process of influencing the negotiators of the Colombo Declaration was not so clear, which left many of the delegates disillusioned and confused. Some delegates decided to visit the countryside instead of participating in the conference. The fact that governments beset the youth ideas with their own agendas slowed down the process incredibly and made the atmosphere sometimes a bit tense.

After the second day of discussion, we feared they would never reach an agreement, but they did. Now it is only the question of what will happen next, will it be just another document lying there, or will it

be used. That is also up to us. We need to ask our governments to take this Declaration (and also the Annex), to read it, to push it through, so that it becomes introduced into the summary of the UN Secretary General. Then our input can be used for the post-2015 UN agenda and the whole world.

Besides agreeing on the post-2015 development agenda there were also many other events. There were sights to see and parallel events on side topics to this development agenda. There was an exhibition hall, music, dancing. Every delegate could find something for his/her choice.

This conference brought together so many countries, cultures, people which led to very interesting conversations in and outside of discussion time, so many opinions, ideas, ... But with was one thing everything had in common: we, the youth, could speak and were heard. We, the youth as agents of today and tomorrow, were taken seriously. That conference was also a perfect place for networking and meeting other youth organizations, so FIMCAP could strengthen and widen her network.

After a very nice closing event, a real festival (with famous Sri Lanka musicians) on Friday evening, the conference was officially closed on Saturday. Most people went to enjoy the sun, but for Ravi and me, there was still some business to do, an ICMYO meeting and a (very) quick visit of Pubuduwa. I can conclude that this conference was interesting and fruitful for FIMCAP, we are glad we were able to be part of the world's largest youth gathering.

Liese Vandenheede, FIMCAP President

**More information: <http://wcy2014.com>
(you can find the declaration and the annex there)**



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LINK
JULY 2014

INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON WORLD YOUTH DAY IN ROME

On the Palm Sunday weekend the Pontifical Council of the Laity invited representatives of the national youth ministries of the Episcopal Conferences, congregations and youth organizations to evaluate the World Youth Day 2013 in Rio de Janeiro and to receive information about the first plans of the upcoming World Youth Day (WYD) in Krakow.

The evaluation of WYD Rio ended with the premiere of „Bota fé» (<http://www.aleteia.org/en/botafe>), a social movie about the World Youth Days, with sequences filmed by the participants, statements of the Cariocas and of course Pope Francis celebrating with the young people but also visiting the Favelas. For those who were lucky to participate it is a wonderful goose-bumps-creating memory, for those who stayed at home it is a wonderful impression of the energy and the atmosphere Rio created in during those days. However, if you watch it you will find out that something is wrong: there is no FIMCAP flag...

This has to change at the World Youth Day 2016 in Krakow! At the General Assembly in Modra we decided to mark FIMCAP presence there and to have a meeting point for our members. The planning committee of the Polish Episcopal Conference presented their ideas and the status of the preparations. One evening young people from all over Poland invited us to a cultural celebration with traditional dances and invited us for the Missionary Week into their different dioceses.

Fortunately, other youth organizations were present too and we underlined in plenary as well as to the Pontifical Council of the Laity that it is necessary that international youth organizations can meet, have multilingual catechesis together and present themselves to the participants. We created a network to keep in touch, to inform each other about our planning and to lobby for our needs. The meeting ended with the celebration of the Palm Sunday Mass with Pope Francis on Saint Peter's Square.

It was amazing to join a conference with people from more than 90 countries all over the world, to enjoy interesting encounters and discussions with them and to share the

faith. Now it is up to our working group to develop some nice FIMCAP activities for the World Youth Day in Krakow. I hope to see many of you there!

Annette Wahle, FIMCAP President



ATEITIS FOR AFRICA: COOKIES CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

At the turn of the year Ateitis high school students' union's committee launched a charity called «Future for Africa». Fourteen Ateitis local groups baked ginger cookies, sold them and thus collected funds for a primary school in St. Alphonse's parish in Kananga, Democratic Republic of Congo, a congregation of 25,000.

It was not by accident that the Democratic Republic of Congo was chosen. The country has long been suffering from the consequences of civil war which has so far had 5.4 million casualties. According to the International Red Cross, 1,250 people die every day due to war-related consequences such as starvation and diseases. UNICEF reports that half of the 66 million population still has no access to clean water, and one out of five children under age 5 suffers from chronic diarrhea. A plethora of children are orphans and are obliged to live on the street. Education is another serious issue in the region. Over 7 million children, 25% of all Congolese children, do not attend primary schools.

«Our organization responds to Pope Francis' call to fight poverty in the world. Moreover, intelligence is one of our values. Therefore, we believe that by helping African kids to get education, we are not only following our principles, but also contribute to assuring political stability in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Besides, participants and benefactors were able to realize how little efforts we need to allocate in order to make positive changes around us. We are proud of the outcomes of this project and we hope to it into an annual event,» claimed Laurynas Grušas, the Project Coordinator.

5 238,52Lt or €1517 – This amount of money has recently reached the Salesians of Don Bosco in Kananga, who take care of the construction of St. Alphonse's primary school. This money, collected by students of the Lithuanian organization Ateitis, will be spent on school benches for two primary school classes. At the moment St. Alphonse's primary school contains 18 classrooms, as many teachers and more than 1,600 pupils. In fact, the number of students at every class averages from 60 to 80. Ateitis is the oldest Lithuanian organization. Ateitis' members

foster patriotic and catholic youth who are ready to join religious, social, intellectual and civic activities. The aim of the organization today is the integral development of young people, enabling them to be effective apostles of Christ and creative persons capable of changing society according to Christian values. The values of Catholicism, patriotism, family, intellectual growth and civic and social responsibility are at the core of our activities.

Ateitis Federation, Lithuania





4000 FDF LEADERS GET INSPIRED TO DO MORE

FDF has devoted the year 2014 to leadership education. The goal is to have 4000 members participating in one or more of the many offers that FDF organizes, both locally and nationally, throughout the year.

So far, 2667 young members and leaders have taken part and developed their skills within a large number of disciplines. Education has always been a focal point in FDF. It is a means to give aspiring leaders a thorough understanding for the organization. This prepares them for their future roles and responsibilities in the local groups - you can participate in courses from the age of 14.

For the adults, participation in leadership courses is a way to acquire management tools, to get inspiration for new activities, to see new perspectives and to meet like-minded people. Most importantly, FDF's leadership training is a way to challenge and develop our members to become even

better at the impressive work, which they already carry out on a day-to-day basis. Thus securing future innovation and creativity. This will help develop a strong organization in the years to come.

The tagline for the educational year can be translated to 'Move a little' indicating that it is never too late to learn, and that we should always strive to improve the quality of our work. More so, a leader with many skills is able to make a wide range of exiting activities.

At the weekend from 9 -11 May, around 400 leaders took part in FDF's largest educational offer for adult leaders. It takes place each

year at Sletten in Jutland, home of the national camp. There were more than 20 groups and courses to choose from, e.g. canoeing, teamwork, PR and branding, hiking instructor, cooking on a campfire and pedagogies. There was also an international group with participants from all over Europe.

Next year, the focus will be on experiences, and the International Committee has already begun to encourage local groups to go abroad and meet up with other FIMCAP member organizations next summer. The idea is to arrange a number of exchanges so that foreign groups in turn can visit FDF's national camp in 2016.

*Julie Egholm Holt,
member of FDF's International Committee
Photo: Asbjørn Laurberg*

EASTER COURSE 2014 'CREATED BY YOU'

The theme of Easter course 2014 was 'Created by you'. This activity was held in Birmingham during the Easter holidays by the European Fellowship of Christian Youth. Six ZAK members participated in this activity.

Each country was asked to prepare different material to share with all the participating countries and give everyone a sneak peak of what happens during the meetings of different organizations. This was an important aspect of the course, because the leaders as well as participants had to be actively involved to create the training course together. We also had time to talk about our organization and learn more about other organizations; this was especially true in the session 'Organizations in Focus', which I thought was one of the best. We discussed challenges in our organizations and possible solutions. It helped us all because we learned that the problems in our organizations are just obstacles we can overcome, rather than something that brings everyone to a halt.

We had interesting sessions on intercultural

learning, which were very informative and helped us to appreciate the diversity of different cultures. Each country had to prepare a dance act or song or drama for the 'Easter vision' and all national groups were given ample time to practice and prepare for this event during the week. Every day we had afternoon tea, for which every country was asked to bring snacks or tea time treats from home so that we all could sample different foods. This was very interesting and truly enjoyable! Throughout the week we had various workshops dealing with leadership, communication and 'Food for Thought'. These were also very interesting; their aim was to get you thinking about yourself, your values and how to relate to others. Every day there were national feedback meetings in which we discussed what we enjoyed or disliked, any queries or complaints. This made us feel welcome and well cared for.

We had 'Let's Talk' sessions where we discussed our thoughts, feelings and our relationship with God. This was one of the things I enjoyed the most as I believe it is appropriate especially during Easter time to give some thought to our Creator. The Stations of the Cross were prepared for us on Good Friday and a day of silence helped us reflect on the death of Our Savior.

Overall, I am extremely thankful for all the hard work the planning team as well as the participants took to ensure a wonderful experience for all of us.

Rachel Vella, ZAK Malta

ŽAK MEMBERS JOIN TO DONATE BLOOD

On the occasion of World Youth Day which the Catholic Church celebrates on Palm Sunday, members of Žgħażaġġ Azzjoni Kattolika (ŽAK) joined forces to donate blood. On Sunday the 13th of April ten ŽAK members met at 9.30 a.m. at the Blood Donation Unit in G'Mangia.

World Youth Day (WYD) has been celebrated since 1984. Back then, over 300,000 young people from around the world responded to the invitation of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for an International Jubilee of youth in St. Peter's square. The WYD is a celebration of Catholic faith dedicated especially to young people, to encourage and inspire them throughout their journey as disciples of Jesus.

In order to carry out such a mission, ŽAK's public relations team felt the need to organize a Blood Donation Drive. It is well-known that people today have a busy lifestyle and may not find the time or even be motivated to donate blood. However, these young people decided to find time to donate blood for the benefit of those in need.

ŽAK is a branch of the Maltese Catholic Action and its fundamental purpose is to provide programs of spiritual, social and personal development. The aim of this process is to affirm an individual in his or her own identity and involve him or her in relationship with God and others. More information can be found on www.zakmalta.org.

Deborah Bonnici, ZAK Malta

