Vision document
on the EU and Europe

2018

The Purpose of this Vision Document

As the ECPM is enjoying robust growth in size and depth, it has become more important to broaden and clarify where our movement stands on a range of key issues.

Europe is going through very turbulent times. New challenges are surfacing and, at the same time, there is a deepening rift between eastern and western member states.

In many European countries, our member parties face a continuing push by activist NGOs of a radical left-liberal agenda that aims to fundamentally change the core concepts of humanity. On the other hand, there is a continuing strong presence of radical right-wing parties that espouse a view of humanity and society that is totally at odds with human dignity.

At the same time, we are seeing significant economic growth in the EU, which is in principle good news for many families as unemployment is slowly but steadily being reduced. However, it is a challenge to reconcile this economic growth with the need for sustainable use of resources. Furthermore, an underlying economic inequality remains, as economic growth and employment do not elevate all Europeans and EU member states to the same degree. A mountain of debt still looms over Europe's economies.

With all these developments, the ECPM wants to be clear about its core values, to continue to contribute to human prosperity and to provide solutions to these challenges.

What this document does not do is:

- necessarily reflect the position of every Member Party or Member on every issue that is dealt with. It reflects the position of the ECPM as a whole in these fields of policy.
- exclusively deal with EU-level policies. The ECPM is not only focused on what is happening at the EU level. One major purpose of the ECPM is to encourage cooperation between like-minded parties and stakeholders, who often face similar challenges at the national level. Issues relating to family and life ethics are crucial for society and therefore for our members. As the ECPM offers a platform for like-minded parties, it is important to clarify where our movement stands on these issues.

The ECPM has a constructive but critical approach to the current shape of the EU. In many cases, there is a need to reduce the level of involvement of EU institutions. For this reason, the ECPM recommends strictly respecting the principle of subsidiarity and clear reforms outlining where EU institutions are still needed and EU regulation is required. We are a forward-looking party and we realise that we live in a world that is in many aspects so interconnected that the EU is simply necessary. Furthermore, we acknowledge that the EU has contributed to the stability of Europe.

This leads to an approach in which both national and EU-level issues will be included in this vision document. This distinction will be clarified per chapter and within chapters. The distinction will be made clear using the following categories:

Issues on the EU level: as described above, in this vision document the ECPM will outline its ideas on how key EU policies will need to be developed.

Issues on the national level: There are issues that are important for the ECPM as a political movement that are in question on the national level. Moreover, the ECPM will clarify that these issues should not be dealt with at the EU level. In addition, it will be made clear that some issues need to be taken from the EU level and handed back to the national level.

Issues needing EU cooperation while maintaining national competence: one way to reform the EU is to accept that not all issues can be properly defined at the EU level, as there is simply insufficient convergence of opinion between the member states. At the same time, it should also be accepted that some form of cooperation at the EU level is still necessary, as these issues cross all borders. In these cases, we suggest that the European Council should be a facilitator of coordination between member states without taking a view and/or making policies on these issues. The role of the European Commission and European Parliament in these issues should be scaled back, or they should not be involved with the policy in question.

As ECPM members, we find core issues on which we agree with each other. This is our strength: we share fundamental values and goals and can work together regardless of differences on single issues. Together we hope for and feel the responsibility to work towards a Europe in which life is valued and society is fruitful so that it might be blessed with peace and stability for the generations to come.

Economy

The ECPM believes that the economy is about life. Therefore, the purpose of all economic activities is to support life and relationships and to advance the wellbeing of all. The economy is meant to provide sufficient means for all people, to support families and life from conception to natural death, to let people flourish with their creative talents and to find solutions for the problems we face.

Situation:

The long trek towards political unification has been championed by large numbers of usually wealthier Europeans who have gained the most from globalisation and the single market. However, the prolonged economic depression after 2008, caused by many nations' unsustainable debt positions at the national and consumer level, was one of the factors that has revealed and given voice to a groundswell of discontent. Today, electorates in many major European nations are split down the middle, and not always based on mainstream party lines. Due to the lack of a swift and decisive reaction from the traditional parties, extreme voices from both left and right have started to gain unprecedented support within the population, despite offering only populist solutions. Moreover, voters are becoming more self-centred in their understanding of contributions to public society, expecting immediate solutions.

This rise of hard anti-EU right-wing parties and hard left-wing parties across the EU indicates that a growing number of people feel left behind in the process of globalisation. Those who are threatened by globalisation do not feel that they benefit from the single market and the EU. Regional economic disparities are growing. Increased economic prosperity in certain regions of a country does not automatically improve the situation in other regions of the same country. We face the same situation of economic and developmental differences between cities and rural areas. In addition to an extended period of financial weakness and political responsibility, Europe is facing an existential crisis (exacerbated by the threat of Islamic terrorism and even more so by migration streams). Economic growth may have increased recently, but the feeling of alienation has not disappeared.

Political ideology and the road to more integration
It could be argued that the recent economic troubles were just bad luck and that the best way forward is to intensify the unification process – including political and fiscal centralisation, without which it is difficult to maintain a single currency covering even part of the EU. But this suggestion is too convenient and too simple. The refrain of "ever-closer union", first introduced by those who drafted the Treaty of Rome, imagines a willing convergence between peoples, not a mere welding together of the political and financial structures they live within. These two things are not the same. It might be said that the first may legitimise the second, but it is unlikely that the second will achieve the first, especially as this convergence of economic and financial structures does not necessarily correspond to an experience of increased wellbeing or prosperity. Nostalgia for a better past is promoted by anti-EU forces as the recipe for the future. So far, the EU has not found an answer that bridges the gap between the past reality experienced by many voters and the growth in GDP, which many governments mistakenly use as the most significant variable for economic growth. The severe living conditions of retired and unemployed people, the lack of a level playing field in the internal market, the uncertainty of the labour market

(short-term contracts) and the aforementioned migration crisis all play their roles in the gap felt between macro-growth and personal wellbeing.

In fact, some of the mechanisms by which the EU has attempted to unify its peoples have themselves been counterproductive. Within the euro's fixed internal exchange rates, the failure of the Greek economy, for example, has ended Greece's ability to form its own economic and monetary policies (this is also a consequence of the inadequate choices of Greece's political class). More widely within the EU, a reliance on debt finance at the individual, corporate and national levels has created a densely-interwoven network of those struggling to repay loans and those who could be ruined by default. We now see a financial landscape in which financial capital gravitates to the strongest growth points and drags labour in its wake, sometimes with severe repercussions for the sending and receiving populations. Recent studies have shown that this flow of capital to the wealthiest is an ongoing trend[1]. We can see the same thing in the EU's implementation of cohesion policies, as regional disparities are still large.

The point is that financial and political systems generate – and set the terms of – relationships between whole classes of people across the EU. Some of these systems, like the euro, have been designed. Others (including debt finance, the operation of capital markets and a short-term democratic cycle) already existed in the western political economy and were used or adapted by the EU. But ironically, considering the stated goals of European cooperation, the relational structure and impact of these systems (which includes the relationship between Europe's present and future citizens) are not often subjected to serious scrutiny. It is, however, at that very crossroads between new Europe-wide political-economic systems and the existing or emerging national political-economic realities where the political challenges of the EU develop.

The end of the status quo and the road ahead
So far, the large mainstream parties have continued to maintain the status quo in both an economic and a political sense. The word 'reform' still means that workers will have less security and stability for their families and that economic growth does not translate into more long-term financial security for many people. With this status quo approach, multinationals, shareholders and capital markets are still the first and major beneficiaries of any economic growth and are hardly ever touched by reforms. The status quo approach mostly does not affect powerful vested interests. This disparity fuels left and right-wing populism and translates into political instability.

Real reform, however, should lead to change for all stakeholders in the economy, including financial markets, shareholders and multinationals. In recent years, a very slow start has been made in ending the practice of tax avoidance by capital-holding stakeholders in the economy. Ending tax avoidance is a positive development, but its scale and origins are signs that the word 'reform' can no longer be applied

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[1] https://www.credit-suisse.com/corporate/en/articles/news-and-expertise/global-wealth-report-2017-201711.html

only to employees and to those with less power and access to capital. EU policies that encourage further concentration of capital and power therefore need to be rejected.

There is a need for a broader and more inclusive stakeholder-based way of thinking about the economy in which future reforms can be embedded. In this regard, the environment must be understood as the bedrock on which all stakeholders depend. Therefore, improving and maintaining our environment is a part of this understanding of a stakeholder economy.

The ECPM therefore has a relational view of our economy and a mutualistic approach to economic policies. Mutuality is the creation of shared value for all stakeholders through a form of capitalism and responsible behaviour and actions by the government and businesses. The goal of a mutual EU is to see wellbeing in much broader terms than just profits for shareholders. It means doing well financially by doing good. The economy should be much more about finding sustainable responses and solutions to demands and challenges. The EU has to support the knowledge-based economy much more strongly. The basic EU economic policy should be not about scarcity but about mutuality, to promote the life of creation.

We strive for economic policies that consider the impact of policy on relationships between peoples, between institutions, between stakeholder groups and between individuals. A principal test for policies would therefore not just include their economic, social or environmental effects but also whether they can be expected to produce greater interaction and mutual understanding, sufficient fairness to all included parties and a convergence of purpose and values.

A number of key goals for EU-level and national economic policy can be derived from this approach to the economy. Economic policy should strive for an economy that:

- is people-centred and not financially centred
- applies the potential of technology by respecting human dignity
- insists on transparency
- cultivates long-term approaches
- is as inclusive as possible and does not cave in to pressure from vested interests at the expense of other stakeholders.

Recommendations for reforming European economies
The principles outlined above are all core issues for any economic development. It is impossible to maintain a sustainable economy without interaction, mutual understanding and sufficient fairness. Based on these principles, a number of policy recommendations can be put forward, both on the EU and the member state level.

On the EU level:

- To redirect cohesion policies in such a way that regional-based companies and inclusive business models can receive preferential treatment in economic stimulation programmes and tendering[2]. This is in order to end the current practice in which large companies and multinationals are automatically the greatest beneficiaries of EU economic support policies (both in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and in cohesion policies).

- Shift the burden of proof in EU Merger Control to require not only a clear absence of negative outcomes but a demonstration of positive social benefits.

- Include the younger generations in decisions.

- End the objective of achieving a single currency area for the whole of the EU and, meanwhile, re-enable a flexible exchange rate regime for the rapid correction of disequilibria in the balance of payments.

- Use the Human Development Index as measurement of economic progress at the EU level.

- End the EU drive for privatisation of public services and leave this to the member states.

- Increase support for and the spread of 'green technologies'.

- Make integrated reporting the European standard for corporations and introduce metrics that directly measure relationship quality between stakeholders.

On the member state level:

- Restore the trust between governments and electorates by requiring intergenerational fiscal transparency.

- Address national debt, as a matter of urgency.

- Remove tax advantages for debt finance in the corporate sector.

- Charge banks adequately for the liquidity and solvency insurance they receive from the government and the ECB.

- Develop new financial institutions to finance house purchasing through shared equity arrangements and remove any remaining tax breaks for mortgage debt.

- Incentivise lender care by banks, retailers and other lenders by removing tax allowances for defaults on their consumer loans.

- Reduce the impact of international indebtedness by converting conventional debt into GDP-linked securities.

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[2] Inclusive business models are for example (non-exhaustive): co-operatives, social enterprises, Family SME's and forms of shared ownership by the people on the work floor.

- Strengthen shareholder oversight of corporate management by requiring transparency of share ownership, by deferring aspects of director remuneration and by incentivising investors to be involved in the long term.
- Rebalance risk between stakeholders by requiring stronger representation of stakeholder interests on company boards and, in liquidation proceedings, prioritising small creditors, customers, suppliers and employees over secured creditors.

Family & Society

The family, being the most important social and relational entity where life starts, precedes the state and any other community or group. The family is a micro-society where elementary skills and experiences are conveyed. Healthy families lead to a healthy society, while fragmented families fail to do so. Therefore, values that are essential for a healthy family – love, solidarity, willingness to sacrifice for other people, faithfulness – should be promoted in the public sphere, especially via educational policies. Many people find it hard to enter into committed family relationships. This is why the ECPM promotes policies that will increase the ability of individuals to create and live in lifelong devoted relationships – in marriage and family. We are aware that we do not live in a perfect world. Today, more and more families are in crisis. We value counselling and are standing firm for the rights of children when relationships end. The ECPM respects the sovereignty of the family, based on marriage between one man and one woman, and recognises its inherent rights that are inalienable. The family is not a mere collection of individuals and therefore legislation based solely on the individual will eventually collide with the rights of the family. Because of that, the ECPM recognises the importance of national policymaking that focuses on the family.

EU level

The ECPM believes that family policy is foremost a matter of national policy. Based on the principles of subsidiarity, the European institutions should not interfere in family policies. However, many topics where the EU does have the power to make legislation are related to family policy, such as labour laws. The ECPM believes that the European Union should be very careful with these topics, respecting the opinions of the member states. We also believe that the EU should stay away from making any initiatives in this field or proposing legislation that goes against or over the national legislation of member states or pushes for alternative family forms.

We believe that the EU should mainstream its policies on its effects on families. The ECPM believes that the European institutions should value the family more, instead of merely the individual. We believe that societies that are rooted in strong families are more relational, compassionate and sustainable.

National level

The ECPM promotes policies supporting parenthood and creating conditions that are conducive to child-raising. Recognition of the family within all policies is the most basic step forward to working on the improvement of the quality of family life and the cornerstone for the wellbeing of our societies. We declare that this recognition must grow within national, regional and local political bodies.
Therefore, a legal framework that supports an active, family-friendly work environment is of crucial relevance and should be pursued on the national political level within Europe.

At the ECPM, we firmly believe that policies fostering reconciliation between qualifications, labour market participation and family life positively affect economic growth in the long run.

Men and women should have a choice of childcare services and should be able to freely choose to work fewer hours to take care of their children, especially if this concerns children with disabilities. Flexible forms of employment are a must here. This applies to maternity care as well. The ECPM has a positive view of any member state endeavours to reconcile work and private life.

Parents' reconciliation of work with other family obligations is strongly influenced by the characteristics of childcare provision. While some form of child care services is indispensable, we stress the importance of care in a family context, especially for young families, since parental care during childhood is essential for child development.

The right conditions are especially important for single parents, who have less income and cannot share time for childcare and household tasks. Thus, flexibility and space for part-time jobs, sufficient maternity or parental leave and childcare opportunities within companies, job sharing, annual working time, working life and sabbatical leaves are proven examples of successful family policies.

The ECPM believes that there should be equal pay between men and women. Nowadays, many women or men who choose to stay at home with their children are seen as less beneficial to society as they do not work. The ECPM recommends a shift in mentality and perception here, as raising children is one of the most beneficial things someone can do for society. We recommend that member states value the choice of fathers and mothers to be stay-at-home parents, promote it and make it beneficial, for example through tax exemptions. This applies especially for single parents, as they often do not even have the choice to go to work.

Tax exemptions for housing solutions for young families are also recommended, since not having a place to live is a problem for many families in some European countries.

The ECPM strongly supports counselling and educational programmes that will increase the ability of individuals to create and live in lifelong devoted relationships – in marriage and family. The ECPM also supports programmes that will decrease addictions and violence among youth and all other factors that prevent them from having stable and happy family lives.

Cooperation level

As the family is the cornerstone of society, the ECPM suggests that legislative acts on all levels should be checked for their impact on families. European countries should hold each other accountable on these issues and should try to cooperate with and learn from each other. At the same time, we should not forget those who are single or (un)married without children. We all belong to a (wider) family and should be recognised as such.

The last but nonetheless very important part of this chapter is the question of the future of lower-educated workers in Europe. The tendency is that jobs for people with lower education are increasingly being replaced by computerisation and automatisation of production or business processes based on artificial intelligence. Even though tourism as a sector is increasing throughout Europe in terms of both turnover and number of jobs and is a prime sector offering jobs for people with lower education, it cannot be denied that there is a threat of increasing long-term unemployment, especially in this vulnerable part of the population. Long-term sustainable solutions for this unemployment problem are difficult to imagine and implement and require careful thought, as well as planning for opportunities. Based on its Christian principles, the ECPM strongly advocates policies for an inclusive Europe, which

should offer support to member states and individual regions on policies to prevent large groups of people as well as certain minorities from losing contact with available job opportunities. All people are able to make a valuable contribution to society, and European, national and regional policies should all aim for this. The ECPM does not believe in "lost causes" and would strive, as far as possible, to prevent migration due to poverty or necessity from central/eastern Europe to western Europe, which has a large and negative impact on the family members who are left behind. Building a more innovative economy is the best way forward to prevent this from happening.

Conclusion

The ECPM promotes a family-friendly, relational Europe. As family policy is a national competence, all improvements need to be made at the national level. The EU should review its policies based on the notion of the 'autonomous' individual. If we want to have a demographically sustainable Europe, then we need more healthy families.

Human Dignity and Human Rights

Human dignity expresses the intrinsic value of every human being. We believe that this universal principle rests on the human being as a creation in the image and likeness of God. The Christian understanding of God is Trinitarian and therefore relational, so this is reflected in human existence. Politically, this means that human dignity is not merely about the value and rights of the individual. Human dignity is not fully realised if the value of committed relationships is not appreciated and cherished. Human dignity includes valuing relationships and striving towards right and just relationships in life ethics, society and the economy. Human dignity is the basis of human rights.

The intrinsic value of the human being includes every stage of human existence. Excluding the beginning or the end of human life from treatment as human fundamentally undermines the intrinsic value of the human being and is therefore a violation of human dignity. We cannot exclude any stage of human life from human dignity. Thus, there is a particular need to protect vulnerable, handicapped or unborn members of the human family. The ECPM believes that both European institutions and member states should always uphold the principle of human dignity, from conception until natural death (although this is not the task of the European institutions, but rather the responsibility of the member states).

European level

The rights of the child are set out in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (Article 24/2) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (UN 1989) (Article 3). The ECPM supports the principle that 'the best interests of the child' should be the primary consideration in all action related to children taken by public authorities at both the European and the national level. In large part, the legal instruments take the form of general obligations in directives, which must be transposed into EU law and implemented by member states in full respect of fundamental rights, including the rights of the child.

The rights of children already start at conception. Unborn children should be included in the right to live. Everyone has the right to be born, to live. We therefore support all kinds of coaching and support for expecting mothers.

Children are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion, violence and abuse. The ECPM has witnessed international commitments to improving the lives of children, such as the Millennium Development Goals. However, it highlights the urgent need for EU member states to pay special attention to the most vulnerable and socially-excluded children. Improving the living conditions of children and providing them with opportunities to live a fulfilling life is an essential element of development.

However, the ECPM stresses that sustainable policies in favour of the family are the most effective way to improve children's living conditions and opportunities. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the family is the primary institution promoting the rights of children. Parents have a natural interest in protecting the rights of their children. EU law and national legislation must guarantee balanced rights for both.

National level

Freedom of education

The circumstances of parenting and guiding children have become more difficult where parents or guardians experience multiple challenges. The ECPM observes that the EU has interfered extensively with school programmes by indicating a specific form of education that does not conform to the cultural principles of each member state and does not respect the principle of subsidiarity. We are convinced that parents need and should have the freedom to choose how they want to raise their children and which values and beliefs they want to pass on to them. More concretely, the considerable gaps in a child's broader education, including sex education, should be filled by parents, charities and churches as well as other civil society groups. In fact, the ECPM does not support any EU legislation to encourage sex and relationship education in schools[3]. In other words, the EU should not interfere in the curricula or any other aspect of education. This is not their competence.

Education is very important for children to have a good future. The ECPM therefore supports education that strives to get the best out of all our children, focusing on all the gifts and talents they have. In general, it is best for children to go to school and meet other children there. This helps them to develop social skills as well. However, in certain circumstances home schooling can be a good alternative, especially in rural areas, where we see a brain drain to more urban areas. We call upon governments to take care of community schools, to invest in and support them so that children can go to school close to their homes.

Ageing

More and more people are getting old. Thanks to better healthcare, our society is ageing. Many elderly people face difficulties with that, especially loneliness. The ECPM sees these problems and wants to address them. We stand for ageing in dignity. Our elderly people should be treated with respect and gratitude for all the work they did in their lives. Our societies should cherish them and care for them. Therefore, we believe that stopping loneliness is one of the best initiatives that can be taken.

Taking care of the elderly generation also means investing in care. The ECPM believes that intergenerational solidarity is very important. Young people should be able to take care of elderly people. We therefore believe that informal and customised care should be prioritised. In particular, people who are taking care of others should receive financial support for that. Furthermore, we believe that coaching by special 'life coaches' could help people to age with dignity.

When the end of life is near, the ECPM believes that palliative care should be supported. Ending life when it is 'not worth living' is not an option for us, as life is given and created by God. We believe that

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[3] https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/sex-and-relationships-education-be-compulsory-all-schools

with a social network, customised care, life coaches for mental health and palliative care, life can be dignified till the end.

Disabilities

The ECPM believes that life is worth living. Every life matters, even if it is not perfect. People with disabilities should be a full part of our societies, no matter whether these disabilities are physical or mental. We urge countries to support people with disabilities, both financially and through legislation.

Cooperation level

Child sexual exploitation online

The ECPM is concerned about child sexual exploitation online, which constitutes a serious violation of fundamental rights, particularly the rights of children, protection and care as envisaged by the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the two Optional Protocols of 2002 and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

This phenomenon requires a comprehensive approach including the prosecution of offenders, prevention and protection of victims. Thus, the ECPM calls on the EU to complement the actions of the member states in order to improve international cooperation and increase the level of protection for children. The ECPM believes that the EU has an important role to play in finding answers to this important challenge of our time. Additionally, one of the main roles of the EU member states is to protect and ensure a safe environment for children and their development based on the subsidiarity criterion.

The definition of child sexual abuse materials should be clarified in international contexts. Children need to be informed in an easy and child-friendly way of the risks and consequences of using their personal data online. Their online personal data must be duly protected. For all these purposes, child protection officers, paediatricians and youth and children's organisations must play an active role in raising awareness on this issue.

Refugee children

We firmly believe that EU member states should cooperate on supporting child protection systems where the child's best interests should be considered, regardless of their status. The care that refugee minors receive in the reception centres is a key factor for their long-term adjustment and should be regulated at the national level.

The ECPM suggests that action at the European level should be complementary to member states' measures, which should ensure that any child needing protection receives it and that, regardless of their immigration status, citizenship or background, all children are treated as children first and foremost. In our view, the officials who come into direct contact with children should be adequately trained and qualified to identify at-risk children; inform them and respond to their needs; enhance coordination at the European level on police operations aimed at combating the trafficking of children; enhance the capacity of existing networks with expertise and experience in the protection of refugee minors; and enhance and ensure that refugee children use the hotlines created to respond to their disappearances.

Recognition of faith communities

The ECPM welcomes the Judeo-Christian tradition that is present in Europe. Christian organisations are growing in importance in the provision of social services in European welfare states through the voluntary sector. They are known for their wide range of volunteers working in the community by filling in the gap between supply of and demand for welfare provisions. Briefly, their significance is not simply reduced to beliefs.

Thus, the ECPM believes that their role in various expressions of exclusion and social distress and in combating poverty in cities across Europe should be assessed. In fact, there is a need to exchange good practices between state-funded faith-based schools and to raise awareness at the EU level about the transnational dimension and approaches to faith activities of Judeo-Christian organisations.

The ECPM promotes the freedom and identity of Judeo-Christian organisations. In the Christian-social view, people build a society by becoming involved in communities.

In this regard, the ECPM sees in faith-based organisations an opportunity for a change in today's approach to developing the relational view of the human being by building a society, developing mutual relationships and becoming involved in communities.

Freedom of Religion or Belief

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion is the right to hold religious beliefs, to change them or abandon them freely, to promote and express them openly and to expect the state to protect individuals as they exercise their rights. It is among the most fundamental civil rights.[4] For the ECPM, these are basic rights of the highest importance. The protection of freedom of religion or belief for all should be a priority for Christians, since we see all human beings as created in the image of God, sharing the same fundamental rights.

Freedom of religion is a right that covers many distinct, yet interrelated rights. For example, it entails the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief in teaching worship and observance. It is also connected with the rights of parents to ensure the religion and moral education of their children but also with the right to establish and maintain institutions that operate on a distinct ethos.[5] Freedom of religion is a fundamental right, enshrined not only in Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5)[6] and Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[7], but also in many national, international and European instruments.

Additionally, freedom of speech is protected under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union[8] and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Finally, the right to freedom of conscience is protected by Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights[9], Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 10 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Freedom of religion around the world today
Today, Christianity is the most persecuted religion in the world.[10] According to the latest report by Open Doors International, one in every twelve Christians experiences serious persecution. Moreover, 30 of the 50 countries on the World Watch List have an increasing amount of persecution. Of the 393 million Christians in Asia, one in four is being persecuted[11]. These latest findings confirm a sad trend that has developed in the past few years. In 2016, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

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[4] http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/RapporteursDigestFreedomReligionBelief.pdf

[5] See footnote 8

[6] http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf

[7] http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/

[8] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf

[9] http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx

[10] https://www.huffingtonpost.com/kelly-james-clark/christianity-most-persecuted-religion_b_2402644.htm

[11] https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/

issued a report condemning the actions of ISIS in the Middle East as genocide. The resolution[12] reminded member states that they have an obligation under international law to prevent genocide as well as to prevent their own nationals from taking part in such acts. A Resolution of the European Parliament on *"the systematic mass murder of religious minorities by the so-called "ISIS/Daesh""* also characterised the actions of ISIS against Christians and Yazidis as genocide.[13] Moreover, 2015 was remembered as the most violent year for Christians in modern history[14]. Over 7000 Christians were killed for faith-related reasons. Additionally, around 2400 churches were attacked or damaged.

Of course, Christians are not the only ones being persecuted. According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Buddhists are persecuted in China and Vietnam and Muslims are persecuted in several countries, especially in Eritrea, Sri Lanka and India[15]. The ECPM believes that we should promote freedom of religion or belief as a right for everyone, regardless of their religious beliefs. This applies to believers of all religions, provided that they in turn also respect religious plurality and the right of all individuals to choose a religious belief or no religion at all. For example, Muslims and believers of other religions should enjoy full protection of their right to worship. However, at the same time, each religious community should embrace the same principles towards others and refrain from imposing regulations that are not compatible with democratic principles, like Sharia law. In 2003, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that "the rules of Sharia are incompatible with a democratic regime"[16].

According to the Global Charter of Conscience, which is a declaration supporting freedom of religion, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion includes a duty as well as a right. A right for one person is automatically a right for another and the responsibility of both.[17] We therefore feel that each person has the right to manifest his/her beliefs, but we also have a duty to protect this right for everyone.

Freedom of religion in Europe
At the same time, there are many challenges to freedom of religion or belief and freedom of conscience within Europe. The PACE report on "*Tackling Intolerance and Discrimination in Europe with a special focus on Christians"[18]* noted that intolerance and discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief affect minority religious groups in Europe, as well as people belonging to majority religious groups.

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[12] Resolution 2091: http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=22482&lang=en

[13] Resolution P8_TA(2016)0051 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2016-0051+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN

[14] http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/17/world/christian-persecution-2015/index.html

[15] Information per country can be found in this section of the Christian Solidarity Worldwide website: http://www.csw.org.uk/latest.htm

[16] https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"itemid":["001-60936"]}

[17] http://charterofconscience.org/

[18] Resolution 2036 http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/xref/xref-xml2html-en.asp?fileid=21549&lang=en

Moreover, many acts of hostility, violence and vandalism against Christians and their places of worship have been recorded in recent years, but these acts are often overlooked by the national authorities. The report added that *"the expression of faith is sometimes unduly limited by national legislation and policies which do not allow the accommodation of religious beliefs and practices"*. Additionally, Christians in some member states are harassed when publicly promoting and defending religious values, including traditional marriage. Moreover, some Christians have been investigated, suspended or dismissed from work for wearing religious symbols in the workplace, in violation of their right to manifest their religion in public. On other occasions, registrars were dismissed from employment for refusing to officiate in same-sex marriages. Finally, the report referred to limitations put in place in some European countries on the right of parents to opt their child out of individual classes or an entire course that the parents deem contrary to their religious, moral and ethical beliefs. In some European countries, private schools with a special faith-based ethos find it difficult to maintain a certain level of autonomy as regards pedagogical content and the choice of teachers.

On other occasions, Christian doctors who do not want to perform abortions are refused their right to conscientiously object and not perform it. However, the state has an obligation to respect the right of freedom of conscience, as it is a right enshrined in international and European human rights legislation[19]. The conscientious objection of medical staff was protected in the PACE report on *"The right to conscientious objection in lawful medical care".*[20] There are also challenges to freedom of education, especially to the right of parents to raise their children according to their philosophical convictions. This is a right enshrined in Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights[21] as well as in Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.[22] A 2017 report by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on "*The protection of the rights of parents and children belonging to religious minorities"*[23] made special reference to many instances when this right was not respected among Council of Europe member states. It also highlighted the effect of several cases across Europe where children belonging to religious minorities have been taken into custody by child protection agencies.

All of the above-mentioned PACE reports highlight the importance of the concept of conscientious objection and reasonable accommodation as a tool to ensure the enjoyment of freedom of religion and expression by all citizens so that they can live in peace and harmony and in acceptance of their diversity. Reasonable accommodation is defined as an adjustment made in a system to accommodate or make an individual exception based on a proven need. As a concept, it was first mentioned in relation to the rights of people with disabilities. The purpose was to help them participate equally in the workplace. This concept has also been applied to protect freedom of conscience as well as freedom of religion or

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[19] See footnotes 10 and 11

[20] Resolution 1763 http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/FeaturesManager-View-EN.asp?ID=950

[21] See footnote 12

[22] See footnote 9

[23] Resolution 2163 http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=23719&lang=en

belief. The aim is to ensure that people are not discriminated against if they do not want to act against their conscience.

The 2000 Council Directive on equal treatment in employment[24] established the role of reasonable accommodation in the area of the equal treatment of individuals. Moreover, a European Parliament resolution on the implementation of the 2000 Employment Directive[25] recognised that *"a duty of reasonable accommodation for all grounds of discrimination – including, therefore, religion and belief – should be laid down in EU and national law, provided that this does not impose a disproportionate burden on employers or service providers".* It also called on member states to *"recognise the fundamental right of freedom of conscience".* The ECPM follows the recommendations on reasonable accommodation and freedom of conscience as outlined in the European Parliament resolution.

Dangerous developments for freedom of religion or belief in Europe
In the last few years, the EU has attempted to widen the scope of the so-called "anti-discrimination" legislation with a proposal for a Council Directive on *"implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation"[26]* that was finally not adopted. Had this problematic piece of legislation come into force, it would have infringed on the principle of subsidiarity by depriving member states of the power to regulate the business sector and would have limited both the freedom of contract (which represents the basis of civil law) and personal autonomy. It would also have imposed an undue bureaucratic burden on businesses. Finally, it would have had negative implications for freedom of religion or belief in Europe. It would not have allowed citizens to refuse to provide goods and services when doing so would be a direct violation of their reasonably held religious beliefs. Therefore, this Directive would have created irresolvable moral conflicts for religious believers, by forcing them to choose between their business and their belief.

EU level
The European institutions have recently accepted – at least in words – the need for the EU to protect freedom of religion or belief around the world. Following pressure from the European Parliament and civil society, in 2013 the Council of the EU adopted several guidelines *"on the promotion and protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief"*. In these guidelines[27], the Council of the EU recognised that the protection of freedom of religion or belief contributes to *"democracy, rule of law, development, peace and stability"*. It also indicated that religious violence or obstacles to freedom of religion were often an early indicator of potential conflict.

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[24] 2000/78/EC http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0078:en:HTML

[25] Resolution P8 TA(2016)0360 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2016-0360+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN

[26] SEC(2008) 2180 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52008PC0426

[27] https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/137585.pdf

Although these guidelines were a positive step, they need to be followed by concrete actions to implement them and to increase the visibility of freedom of religion or belief in the EU's external relations. The European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance pointed out in their last Annual Interim Report[28] that they are still waiting for a "full report" on the implementation of the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief. They also emphasised that hardly any of the 2016 recommendations to the European External Action Service were implemented, adding that there is also a lack of transparency between the Intergroup, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the Council and the Commission. EU institutions should therefore actively address these shortcomings and embed freedom of religion or belief in their policies. The appointment of Jan Figel in 2016 as Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU[29] is a positive first step in this direction. However, we believe that he should be promoted to "High Representative for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU", preferably within the framework of the EEAS. This will enhance the visibility and effectiveness of his role.

On the domestic front, the EU should therefore refrain from pursuing legislative initiatives that do not respect the principle of subsidiarity. It should also specifically recognise the role of faith-based organisations, give them more freedom and allow them to operate according to their founding principles. In this respect, the example of the Netherlands is very useful. Two types of school exist in the Netherlands: state schools and "special" schools, which include denominational schools and neutral or general schools (e.g. Montessori schools). Special schools represent two-thirds of schools in the Netherlands. They are all state-funded and enjoy a high level of autonomy in choosing their pedagogical content and teachers. Religious schools are also allowed to recruit teachers according to their religious beliefs[30].

National level

Finding the fine lines between professional obligations and ethical principles remains a challenge. However, the ECPM believes that no parent, physician or faith-based institution can be discriminated against for acting according to their deeply held beliefs. Moreover, the inclusion of ethno-religious minorities in all spheres of public life should be a priority. Therefore, EU member states should be encouraged to enable their citizens to fully manifest their religion or belief in private or in public, making use of the concept of reasonable accommodation[31].

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[28] http://www.religiousfreedom.eu/2017/06/20/annual-interim-report-2017/

[29] https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/special-envoy-jan-figel_en

[30] Information contained in the accompanying report of PACE Resolution 2036
http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/xref/xref-xml2html-en.asp?fileid=21549&lang=en

[31] See footnote 24

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking and modern slavery

Around 40.3 million people around the world were victims of forced labour in 2016, according to the global estimates of the International Labour Organisation. Of these 40.3 million victims, 25 million were in forced labour. It is fair to say that we have all have eaten food or own clothes that were produced by these labourers. Most of the victims are women (28.7 million). According to the International Labour Organisation, women and girls constitute 99% of victims of forced labour in the sex industry.[32]

Another category of exploited workers is those who travel from eastern European countries to the richer countries of northern Europe to work and are exploited. A recent report with the title *"The employment rights of domestic workers, especially women in Europe"* [33]brought to light the bad conditions domestic workers find themselves in. It was emphasised that they usually have precarious employment status, often being underpaid or undeclared and not covered by labour legislation. The report estimated that there are around 2.2 million migrant domestic workers living in Europe, although the true figure is likely to be higher. According to this report, in many cases employers take advantage of the vulnerable positions of the people seeking employment. On the other hand, because these workers need work, they are ready to make serious compromises for the chance to improve their living conditions and those of their families left at home.

Their problematic condition is exacerbated by differences in the legislation of member states and the absence of any European regulation on the matter. As a result, they must often work long hours for low wages and sometimes have to live in very bad conditions. Those that come from countries outside the EU are in a more precarious condition because of restrictive immigration-sponsorship policies that link their visas to their employers. As a result, employers control a worker's immigration status and ability to change jobs, and sometimes whether the worker can return home.

The record number of refugees because of the turmoil in the Middle East (an issue outlined in detail in a different chapter of this vision document) has provided traffickers with a new opportunity for exploitation. In particular, one must consider the fact that at least 300,000 unaccompanied and separated children were recorded in 80 countries in 2015-16, a rise of almost 500% on the 66,000 documented in 2010-2011, according to a Unicef report published in May 2017.[34]

Policy suggestions on forced labour

The ECPM believes that efforts to prevent and combat forced labour should be aimed at all parts of the supply chain, especially in those sectors that have a high risk of exploitation (for example, the textile, agriculture and tourism sectors). All companies, regardless of whether they operate in one European

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[32] http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm

[33] Resolution 2167: http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=23682&lang=e

[34] https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/may/17/traffickers-smugglers-exploit-record-rise-unaccompanied-child-refugees-migrants-unicef-report

country or as transnational companies, should be held accountable for any human rights abuses in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.[35] It does not matter if the abuses take place in Europe or in other parts of the world.

EU level

In cooperation with the member states, the EU must compile a list of companies that do not comply with member state legislation against forced labour. If their non-compliance is systematic, then they could face an EU-wide ban in the trading of their goods.

National level

In May 2017, a bill was adopted in the Dutch Parliament obliging companies to take measures to prevent child labour. It requires companies selling goods and services to Dutch end-users to determine whether child labour occurs in their supply chains. If so, companies must set out a plan of action on how to combat it and issue a declaration on their investigation and plan of action. If they do not comply, they risk a fine of up to a maximum of 820,000 euros or, alternatively, 10% of their annual turnover.[36] Other member states could introduce similar legislation.

Additionally, mechanisms should be developed in each member state for the enforcement of anti-forced labour legislation and the discouragement of harassment and exploitation of vulnerable employees. Finally, member states should be encouraged to partner with business communities so that common action is taken against forced labour, as well as employee harassment and intimidation. On the issue of domestic workers from eastern European countries, EU member states should work towards developing affordable and easily accessible complaint mechanisms, taking into consideration the needs of the domestic workers. Moreover, incentives and simplified procedures must be put in place for households that will enable them to formalise the employment of domestic workers. One example could be the employment cheques that have already been introduced in some member states.

Cooperation level

On the issue of domestic workers from eastern European countries, the ECPM believes that the EU should set up a platform for international exchange and cooperation based on ILO and Council of Europe expertise, with a view to sharing best practices to ensure decent work for domestic workers. Moreover, the EU can play a coordinating role in the sharing of best practices between member states.

As far as the protection of unaccompanied children in Europe is concerned, we firmly believe that EU member states should cooperate on supporting child protection systems where the child's best interests should be considered, regardless of their status. The care that refugee minors receive in the refugee reception centres is a key factor for their long-term adjustment and should be regulated at the national

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[35] http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf

[36] https://www.stibbe.com/en/news/2017/may/bill-adopted-by-dutch-parliament-introducing-a-duty-of-care-to-prevent-child-labour

level. The ECPM suggests that action at the European level should be complementary to member states' measures, which should ensure that any child needing protection receives it and that, regardless of their immigration status, citizenship or background, all children are treated as children first and foremost.

Trafficking and sexual exploitation

According to the first report on the implementation of the 2011 Anti-Trafficking Directive, 15,846 victims of human trafficking have been recorded in the EU between 2013 and 2014, 76% of whom were women and children. Two-thirds of the registered victims were trafficked for sexual exploitation.[37] The profits from sex trafficking are enormous. According to the estimates of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, $28 billion out of the $32 billion profit from trafficking comes from sex trafficking.[38] It is therefore easy to deduce that there can be no effective response to human trafficking without addressing the problem of prostitution.

There are different approaches to prostitution across Europe[39]. In some European countries, prostitution is legal and prostitutes are recognised as workers. These countries are Austria, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia and the Netherlands. In other countries, it is illegal to purchase sexual services but there are protection mechanisms in place for those who sell sexual services. This approach is widely known as the Nordic model, because it originated in the Nordic countries. This model is now in place in France, Northern Ireland, Norway, the Republic of Ireland and Sweden. In other countries, prostitution is not legal but certain activities are (for example pimping and the running of brothels). This legal framework is in place in Belgium, Cyprus, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland and Turkey. Finally, prostitution is illegal in Russia, Romania and Albania.

The countries that have criminalised prostitution have witnessed many negative implications for the safety and wellbeing of women, as well as a high chance of an increase in human trafficking. The Netherlands was the first European country to legalise prostitution. The declared aim of the legalisation of prostitution was the protection and safety of those involved, especially women. However, under legalisation, trafficking increased and women continued to be abused and degraded[40]. Additionally, only a small minority of municipalities (6%) offered an exit programme to prostitutes. The Dutch House of Representatives voted for a bill that criminalises clients of prostitutes if they are known victims of human trafficking.[41] It is currently under discussion in the senate.

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[37] https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-policy/first-report-progress-made-fight-against-trafficking-human-beings-2016_en

[38] http://www.unodc.org/res/cld/bibliography/the-globalization-of-crime-a-transnational-organized-crime-threat-assessment_html/TOCTA_Report_2010_low_res.pdf

[39] http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2014/493040/IPOL-FEMM_ET(2014)493040_EN.pdf

[40] http://www.spectator.co.uk/2013/02/flesh-for-sale/

[41] http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2016/05/mps-back-change-in-law-to-criminalise/

Following the example of the Netherlands, the German government passed a law in 2002 that decriminalised prostitution. This law led to a spike in the number of prostitutes in the country. A German government report on this law concluded that it did not make the sex industry safer for women[42]. Another report by the London School of Economics and Political Science indicates that not only did the German law not improve the living conditions of people working in prostitution, but it also triggered an increase in sex trafficking.[43] After these disappointing results, the German government passed a new law in 2016 that calls for those who pay for sex with victims of forced prostitution to be imprisoned for up to 5 years.[44]

On the other hand, countries that follow the Nordic model have witnessed many positive results. A report by the Swedish Ministry of Justice on the effects of the 1999 Swedish law on prostitution in that country showed that between 1998 and 2008, the levels of street prostitution in Sweden fell by half. At the same time, other forms of prostitution (e.g. prostitution through the internet) did not increase. This means that the implementation of the law led to a genuine decrease in prostitution. Moreover, according to the Swedish police, this law acts as a barrier to human traffickers who plan to establish themselves in Sweden. Demand for prostitution has decreased, mainly because of a fear of penalties[45].

Other European countries have also followed this model. In January 2015, A new "Human Trafficking and Exploitation Bill" was introduced to the Northern Ireland Assembly in June 2013 and became a law in January 2015[46]. This law makes it a criminal offence to purchase sexual services in Northern Ireland while decriminalising those who provide them. In April 2016, the French National Assembly criminalised the purchase of sex in France. Under this law, prostituted people will be decriminalised and men who are caught buying sex will be subject to fines. It will also allow prostitution victims to act as witnesses themselves without being charged with an offence. Moreover, the bill promises that around 5 million dollars per year will go into prevention, as well as exit and support services[47]. Likewise, in February 2017, a new law was passed in the Republic of Ireland that criminalises the purchaser of sexual services rather than the seller. There were also provisions that make it easier for the victims of sexual offences to come forward and testify[48]. The Nordic model has also been introduced in non-European countries. In

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[42] https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/federal_government_report_of_the_impact_of_the_act_regulating_the_legal_situation_of_prostitutes_2007_en_1.pdf

[43] https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/45198/1/Neumayer_Legalized_Prostitution_Increase_2012.pdf

[44] http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-prostitution-law-condoms-sex-workers-bundesrat-vote-approved-date-comes-in-brothels-illegal-a7326056.htm

[45] https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/the_ban_against_the_purchase_of_sexual_services._an_evaluation_1999-2008_1.pdf

[46] http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-30404275

[47] http://www.feministcurrent.com/2016/04/06/france-adopts-the-nordic-model

[48] http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/sexual-offences-bill-criminalising-purchase-of-sex-passed-in-d%C3%A1il-1.2968097

Israel, both the Ministerial Committee and Knesset (Israeli Parliament) unanimously adopted, in its first reading, a legislative proposal to criminalise those who purchase sexual services and a project to reintegrate prostitutes into society. The legislation will only enter into effect after two more readings[49].

A report issued in 2014 by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe with the title "*Prostitution, trafficking and modern slavery in Europe*"[50] calls for a ban on the advertising of sexual services, including disguised forms of advertising. Moreover, a report issued by the European Parliament in February 2014 with the title *"Sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality"*[51] calls for the criminalisation of clients, seeing it as the only prostitution policy that successfully combats human trafficking. It is also argued that decriminalisation of prostitution puts women in danger of a higher level of violence and calls on member states to examine the criminalisation of purchasing sexual services and its effect on reducing prostitution. The same view was expressed in the 2014 Council of Europe report that referred to the prohibition of purchasing sexual services as the "*most effective tool for preventing and combating trafficking in human beings".[52]*

On the EU level, the 2011/36/EU Directive on trafficking of human beings[53] calls for victim protection as well as for the prevention of human trafficking in parallel with its criminalisation. In fact, article 26 of the Anti-Trafficking Directive requires member states to criminalise the use of sexual services with the knowledge that the person is a victim of human trafficking.

ECPM proposals

The ECPM believes that discouraging demand by making the client liable, in line with reports by the European Parliament and the PACE as well as the 2011 EU Directive, is the best way to combat human trafficking. We therefore should completely criminalise the purchase of sexual services across Europe, following the examples of Sweden, France, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

EU level
The ECPM believes that that a ban on advertising sexual services is feasible on the EU level. Moreover, EU institutions should actively oversee the implementation of the 2011 Directive.

National level
On a member state level, the 2011 Directive needs to be implemented in the different member states as a minimal way to discourage the demand for sexual services. However, to effectively combat human

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[49] http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Hiring-prostitutes-in-Israel-heads-toward-criminal-offense-499862

[50] Resolution 1983: http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=20716

[51] Resolution 2013/2103(INI) http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2014-0162&language=EN&ring=A7-2014-0071

[52] See footnote 54

[53] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32011L0036

trafficking, demand should be completely criminalised. Additionally, we urge member states to implement awareness programmes through the media and school education that will raise awareness of the link between prostitution and human trafficking. Finally, training programmes for law enforcement officials, the judiciary, social workers and public health professionals can play an important role in raising awareness.

Finally, we believe that specialised police forces for the enforcement of prostitution and human trafficking regulations should be established in all member states. These forces will be responsible for the strict monitoring of brothels and other similar establishments in countries where prostitution is still legal. They should also be trained in the identification of trafficking victims and in the implementation of exit programmes, which should always accompany any prohibition of the purchase of sexual services. The criminalisation of clients must go hand in hand with the establishment of exit programmes for prostitutes. Otherwise, there is a danger that these prostitutes will start working illegally. They should therefore be offered a chance to leave prostitution and reintegrate into society. For example, the new French law on prostitution that was introduced in 2016 allows prostitutes to benefit from protection and assistance through a state-funded exit programme.[54]

Cooperation level

The EU can foster cooperation among member states as part of the follow up actions to *"EU Strategy on the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings"*.[55] Funds from this programme should be used to provide the police and the agencies responsible for exit programmes in each member state with adequate resources. The sharing of best practices on prevention and exit programmes between member states should be enhanced, regardless of the position of each member state on the issue of the criminalisation of prostitution.

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[54] https://www.thelocal.fr/20160406/all-you-need-to-know-about-frances-new-law-on-prostitution

[55] https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/documents/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/trafficking-in-human-beings/docs/20171204_communication_reporting_on_follow-up_to_the_eu_strategy_towards_the_eradication_of_trafficking_in_human_beings.pdf

Reforming the EU

The ECPM sees the EU as an instrument of peace. Through cooperation, we secure peace for our citizens, stability, economic growth and cultural exchange. Together, in all our diversity, we are stronger and more able to help others and our climate. Together, we can be strong partners for other regions in the world. Together, we can make a difference.

The roots of the European Union can best be read in the preamble of the European Coal and Steel Agreement (ECSA), which formed one of the bases of the current European Union. The ECSA was motivated to "help, by expanding their basic production, to raise the standard of living and further the works of peace" and to "substitute for age-old rivalries the merging of their essential interests; to create, by establishing an economic community, the basis for a broader and deeper community among peoples long divided by bloody conflicts". Robert Schuman, who first proposed the European Coal and Steel Community, was convinced that Europe was "deeply rooted in Christian values".

The phrase of an "ever-closer union" was introduced by the writers of the Treaty of Rome. Based on the ECSA, the writers imagined a willing convergence between the peoples of Europe, not a fusion of their political and financial structures within the European Union. Brexit, the ongoing financial problems regarding the euro and the deplorable situation of Greece show that political and financial structures can create a bigger divide instead of an ever-closer union.

The ECPM believes we need to reform or return to the roots of the EU, to focus on its core tasks and to reform the EU to make it function differently and better. We call on the European Union to go back to its spiritual, cultural and civilisational roots and core motivation and not to focus on more Europe, but on a better Europe. Less regulation and legislation are needed, while core values and principles should be strengthened. Principles such as subsidiarity, solidarity and diversity should be at the forefront, together with values like freedom, stewardship, responsibility and human dignity.

Since the treaty of Maastricht of 1993, which reformed the European Economic Community into the European Community, more and more competences have shifted from member states to the EU. A group of European leaders started to believe in 'a more united Europe' without taking their citizens along with them. In recent years, citizens have increasingly shown their frustration with this process. Most Europeans agree that it is very important to cooperate. At the same time, they do not feel European, as the cultural differences between member states and regions are too big. Brexit and the rise of populism are good examples of these feelings.

Reset: more control and involvement by national parliaments

The ECPM believes that the EU needs to go back to its roots to be able to move forward. The goal should be a constructive community of peoples fostering safety, stability and constructive cooperation. If the European institutions can facilitate this, support for the EU might grow. If they act like an 'alien entity' forcing political and financial rules and legislation upon member states, opposition will grow. More control and mandatory responsibility by national parliaments could decrease the uneasiness that many citizens feel when thinking about Brussels and could encourage national assemblies to act with a common European conscience. However, more control will also lead to more responsibility for national

parliaments to make European cooperation work. Blaming Brussels is not a real option anymore once you have real influence over its business.

Focusing on a European Community instead of a Union means withdrawing the right of initiative of the European Commission (EC). The EC should only keep this right of initiative in those areas where the EU has full competence:

- international trade,
- fair competition within the EU,
- monetary issues related to the eurozone and
- the customs union.

Apart from these areas, the EC should have a directing and coordinating function for the initiatives of member states. The European Council and the Council of the European Union should review and check the work of the EC. This limiting of competences would also allow a reduction in the budget of the European administration.

The role of national parliaments needs to be reinvigorated. Any decision that would strip member states of their sovereignty should require acceptance by at least a two-thirds majority of national parliaments. The 'red card' procedure negotiated by David Cameron should be slightly altered to really become an effective check on national parliaments. If 50% of national parliaments disagree with EU legislation, then this legislation should be revoked automatically. This will encourage national parliaments to safeguard the basic principles of the EU, its competences and the subsidiarity principle.

Reform: from one size fits all to one size facilitating national needs

A one-size-fits-all approach might make sense when you start a project with six countries, but it does not when you have twenty-eight countries (after Brexit, twenty-seven). *The Economist* put it very clearly when it stated in its March 2017 edition that "the EU must embrace greater differentiation or face potential disintegration."[56] A publication by the ECPM foundation *Sallux,* together with *Relational Research,* opts for a "confederal Europe (that) proposes neither a withdrawal from the European project nor a headlong and premature rush towards full political integration."[57]

A sustainable future for European cooperation is not helped by a one-speed or two-speed Europe. Currently, the twenty-eight members are all part of the single market, twenty-one are also in Schengen, twenty-six in the banking union and nineteen in the eurozone. Instead of pushing for all countries to join all entities, a realistic and constructive view needs to be taken. The eurozone has proven not to be beneficial for all its members and is currently coping with serious flaws, one of which is the diversity of economies that it represents. Furthermore, countries like Romania and Bulgaria are not part of the

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[56] The Economist, "Special Report. The future of the European Union", 25 March 2017. http://cdn.static-economist.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/20170325_SR_Mailout.pdf

[57] "Confederal Europe; Strong nations, strong union.", 2017, Sallux

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Schengen zone because of serious doubts by the other members about their ability to protect and secure the outer border of the EU.

So, diversity is already a reality. Instead of institutionally combating it (regardless of the consequences), it is better to facilitate it in a way that improves relations between countries and the de facto creation of a closer union of peoples within Europe. A confederal structure for the EU would make room for a looser but better European Union. Besides this, different does not have to mean worse. Member states can act more effectively together on issues of economic divergence if their economies are more similar and their preferences are not opposed.

- Regional initiatives with cultural, historical or economic common ground should be welcomed. Smaller groups of states can make important contributions to shaping the future of the EU, such as V4, Benelux or the Baltic countries. They can also provide a partial answer as a plan B in case the EU project fails.

Another reform that needs to take place is the removal of European entities or agencies that have no added value, as they operate outside the EU's competences and within national competences. For example, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions can be removed, and there also needs to be a critical review of the many European agencies that pop up everywhere in Europe without a clear goal or use. The criteria for European agencies should be subsidiarity, economics and pan-European cooperation.

EU accession + EU neighbourhood policy

It would be best for the European Union to provide more possibilities for partnerships with non-EU countries without directly pursuing membership. This would create more European cooperation and cohesion as it expands the options: the EU would not be limited to just a yes or a no to a country that wants to join the EU. It is clear that in the current situation, expansion of the European Union is inadvisable. Therefore, the ECPM applauds options such as association agreements to provide privileges without actual membership. Political deals on the schedule for full membership cannot be made anymore; only countries that fully comply with the Copenhagen criteria can become a member. One country that should never become part of the EU is Turkey, as it meets fewer and fewer criteria regarding the rule of law, democracy and human rights. Any form of partnership can be discussed, but only when Turkey starts respecting fundamental freedoms such as freedom of the press, freedom of religion and freedom and protection for minorities.

However, the EU has a special relationship with its direct neighbours in eastern Europe and the Balkans, which belong to the EU neighbourhood policy. The EU should be a good neighbour and help these countries, as many of them are moving towards possible membership in the long term. The special focus on this is helping to further the development of democracy, rule of law and cross-border cooperation. However, by doing so the EU should respect the values and integrity of the neighbouring countries.

Facilitate and orchestrate cooperation

An effective and decisive European Union is much needed, especially on issues like energy safety and security. On these matters, cooperation is vital and member states need to accept the role of the EU as a facilitator and orchestrator of better border protection, as a dynamic force for sustainable energy and

as the coordinator of European security. Especially with these interconnected and transnational issues, member states need to express solidarity and a constructive attitude.

The European Union also needs to play a role in creating clear rules regarding tax havens and the taxation of multinationals, not allowing them to play one European country against another. Transparent and fair rules need to be put in place, and the European institutions will be key in facilitating and monitoring this. When the European Parliament and European Commission manage to really act like an objective arbiter in these matters, without the agenda of pushing for more political integration, it will have the added value that it was meant for.

It is important to note that in this matter, the EU should not view itself as the solution to each problem and therefore advocate more EU every time a problem arises. The problems in Europe (inside and outside the EU) can only be solved by sovereign states. However, the EU can be a key instrument in facilitating and achieving real sustainable solutions.

Review legislation and improve relations

To keep the EU flexible, diverse and effective, it is important to monitor the effectiveness and necessity of all EU treaties, directives and guidelines. The ECPM suggests periodically reviewing EU treaties and guidelines to decide whether they need to be continued, amended or removed. Every ten years, the European Council and European Parliament should 'dust off' all existing legislation.

The inept response of both the EU and its members states in response to the sudden increase of immigration to the EU shows a need to update legislation and downgrade ambitions when needed. EU directives that do not really solve or address a "European" problem should be withdrawn. A concrete example of this is the controversial Equal Treatment Directive, which creates more problems and ambiguities than it solves, as it mixes real problems and ideological issues.

The funding of ideological lobbies by the EU should also be reviewed. Abortion and embryonic research are not EU competences, yet the European institutions openly fund and favour these initiatives, often against the explicit will of EU citizens, as was made clear by the European Commission's handling of the 'One of Us' initiative. In general, the ECPM wants more transparency on how EU budgets are spent on projects in member states, since gross misspending too often comes to light.

A more compact EU will lead to a more valued and accepted EU. A person who condemns you and tells you what to do will never become a real friend, but a person who offers his assistance will. This is the attitude that the European institutions should have. If the quality of relationships between countries improves, the EU improves. When the relationship between the European Parliament and national parliaments improves, the EU improves. Improving these relationships will be the key to an effective strategy against the deconstructive ideology of far-left- and far-right-wing parties.

Finally, a realistic view on the EU means having a plan B or at least a strategy in case plan A fails. The Brexit vote of 2016 made it clear that neither the United Kingdom nor the European Union really had a strategy for what to do if the British people voted for Brexit. Too often, EU officials and pro-European leaders simply counter questions about worst case scenarios with "that will not happen." Brexit has made it clear that this argument is not valid anymore. We need to plan for worst case scenarios and exit criteria for the EU, for Schengen and for the eurozone.

Conclusion

A European Union that is ready for the future is a European Union that goes back to the roots of the ECSA and that can be of added value under any circumstances. A European Union that aims to support and assist its members will improve relationships and cooperation. A modest European Union will have the sympathy of national parliaments and the peoples of Europe. An ideologically motivated European Union that tries to dominate sovereign nations will do the opposite. The ECPM believes in European cooperation and believes that the European Union can have a beneficial impact on European countries and its citizens. To achieve this, we need to depart from the ideologically-driven idea of ever-increasing political integration and move towards a realistic approach that will make the EU more flexible and diverse and increase solidarity between the peoples of Europe.

Sustainability, Industry and Agriculture

Introduction

A single market means that there needs to be a level playing field and a set of rules that is acceptable to all stakeholders. On the subject of sustainability, the industry and agriculture of EU member states are clearly interdependent. Climate change is a phenomenon that we must deal with together. Food safety requires solid rules on agriculture and fisheries and monitoring of these rules. Some member states are more dependent on agriculture, while others have a more industrial economy. Balanced and fair rules are needed and, so far, the EU has made a positive contribution on these aspects.

Sustainability

The ECPM believes that wise stewardship is a Biblical duty. In the last few decades, it has become clear that human actions have a great influence on our planet and climate. The ECPM has no doubt that we need to improve our ability to face climate change. If we want the next generation to have a better future, we need to act now. Although member states have responsibilities of their own, the ECPM believes that the EU can be a driving force for a sustainable Europe.

The EU can decide on goals for CO_2 reduction, energy saving and renewable energy. The market for clean energy needs to reflect the current technological possibilities as well as respecting the principles of fair market competition. The EU should help member states to meet these standards and invest in economies that are currently less innovative, to make it possible for them to make their economy more sustainable. Aviation and seafaring in Europe need to have objective and ambitious emission reduction goals. Reasonable subsidies for innovative methods and cleaner energy, industry and agriculture are needed to speed up our progress towards reduced pollution, while discouraging the use of more polluting methods and energy sources that would sustain a polluting economy. Innovative and green technologies should be supported and sustainable agriculture needs to be rewarded.

Agriculture and fishery

Agriculture is one of the biggest financial expenses of the European Union. The budget for agricultural subsidies through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for 2015-2020 is over 250 billion euros. However, the CAP needs to be reformed to meet key objectives and face key challenges. The ECPM wants these reforms to aim at goals and not to focus on specific methods. There needs to be freedom for member states to decide how to reform their agricultural sectors. This, however, does not mean that the EU should discontinue any support for European farmers to enable them to deliver quality products at competitive prices. The ECPM is in favour of such support but believes that it should not come with conditions that would direct reforms in a specific direction chosen by the EU. The farmer is vital in any effort to make agriculture more sustainable and innovative. Food safety is seen by the ECPM as one of the primary goals. Circumstances for European farmers are very different in every region: the methods and tools used by farmers in eastern Europe sometimes differ from those used in western Europe for financial or cultural reasons. This sometimes causes a discrepancy in product quality and quantity. EU agricultural subsidies can also be used to level the playing field, making fair competition possible.

Regarding fishery, the ECPM believes that it should be a priority for EU institutions to deliver on the promise of regionalisation. Fishery policies are currently too centralised. This urge for unification has led

to many practical problems in the field. The 2013 reform of the Common Fisheries Policy proposed a more regional approach with only a basic framework from Brussels. The ECPM supports the idea behind this reform and believes that the power base should shift from Brussels to the regions. One measure that should be withdrawn immediately is the discard ban, which is not benefiting fishermen in the North Sea nor benefiting sustainable fishery in any way.

The ECPM also wants a simplification of the current rules related to fishery. In some circumstances, around 90 different pieces of legislation apply. Too many rules increase the gap between legislators in Brussels and the fishermen and, moreover, make it difficult for fishermen to do their work. Once again, the ECPM believes that clear principles with a basic legislation framework are more effective than an overload of rules and regulations. EU bureaucracy also hinders innovation, as in the case of the pulse technique, which is still not allowed after 10 years of research.

As international waters often border several countries, it is very important that those countries (whether they are EU member states or not) make agreements in line with the main EU rules and principles. Regionalisation is not nationalisation, it means including all major stakeholders in the discussion. New agreements with the United Kingdom are needed, as around 50% of all the fish that is caught in the North Sea is caught in British waters.

Industry & transport

Industry is an important component of the economy, and industrial production is a key factor when reviewing a country's economy. The ECPM believes that the EU has a role to play in relation to industry: we want the European institutions to advocate green sustainable industries, to advocate a leading role for innovation and to make sure that the polluter pays. Apart from those criteria, the role of the EU should be minor. As pollution does not stop at the border, the main role for the EU is to make sure that all EU members are encouraged to foster clean and green industries.

Transport, however, is an area in which the role of the EU is important, and it is clearly beneficial for trade within the EU. Since current policies are working, the ECPM does not believe in major reforms in this area. However, some minor improvements are necessary to create a properly functioning European transport area. First, smooth and high quality options for transport across Europe are beneficial for all EU members and citizens. This means that the EU could help to clear cross-border bottlenecks or provide clear legal frameworks that would make it easier for personnel or modalities to operate across Europe. Secondly, fair working conditions are important, and the current legislation needs to be better enforced. Not all legislation is equally enforced across Europe, particularly in relation to road transport. A third factor is the issue of unfair competition. It can be the case that state aid is given to certain players, that huge tax deductions are given or that certain secondary costs are paid for by governments. This is especially the case in aviation, where European carriers must deal with heavily subsidised Middle Eastern carriers that flood the European market. The EU should act to counter this. Europe is a free market, even for players outside the continent, but above all it must be a fair market.

Finally, the ECPM wants the European Parliament and national parliaments to critically review European rules and oversight. Not all centralisation and uniformisation is good or really solves a problem. The ECPM is against forming new European agencies to deal with a "new" problem. Subsidiarity still applies, even to transport. EU member states should have their own policies for which mode of transport they

favour or what infrastructure they build. Member states should be able to create policy frameworks for their main ports. They should refrain, however, from illegally subsidising their main ports, because this is unfair competition.

Protection of the environment

The ECPM considers protection of the environment to be a very important policy issue for the EU. Ever since the beginning of the EU, this policy was recognised and its importance has only grown. We play the greatest role in negative effects on the environment, and therefore we play a crucial role in protecting and preserving it. Nature can grow even without us, but we cannot live without nature. We have the responsibility to protect the environment, not only for the sake of nature but for the sake of our current and future generations. This responsibility must be fulfilled by each person individually, but the state is a driving force in creating the right circumstances and providing the right tools for this to happen.

The EU, in collaboration with the member states, should continually look for ways to protect the environment in a manner that does not hamper technological innovation. It is not an either/or situation; the ECPM believes that technological innovation can be used to protect the environment, minimise the negative effects we cause and also provide us with the energy and resources we need to live. In this respect, all European and other countries should strive towards CO_2 reduction in order to limit global warming.

The Paris Convention aimed at protecting the environment is a very good initiative, but it is not enough. Even though the convention has not been signed by every state in the world, every state is obligated to respect the directives of this convention, because the health and existence of present and future generations is at stake. The environment can only be protected if everybody works together at the national, local and individual level.

Conclusion

The role that the EU plays in sustainability, agriculture, fishery, transport and industry is a positive one. The ECPM believes that with some reforms, in combination with simpler legislation and better enforcement of the rules, the EU will continue to fuel innovation and cooperation throughout the continent. However, this success does not mean that the EU should automatically expand its scope. The EU should focus on improving what it is doing now instead of finding new areas to legislate on.

Innovation: Research & Development

Introduction

"The world is changing faster than ever before" is a remark that can be heard very frequently and in different contexts, usually followed by "and we have to change as well, otherwise we will become obsolete!" This chapter deals with questions related to innovation and the role that the ECPM believes the government should play in facilitating technical and economic development.

Research and development is not something that only became important in the last few decades. The ECPM believes that God himself has given mankind the order to develop and take care of His Creation (Genesis 2:15). Throughout history, we can observe the ongoing development of humanity, both in good and evil. For example, good developments could include our ever-higher life expectancy based on improvements in medicine and a better understanding of hygiene, while we also see evil developments such as the ever more destructive power of weapons of mass destruction.

Innovation is therefore not a neutral subject, and it requires careful and ethical discussions about the desirable directions for moving forward and which directions we should stay away from. Besides being attractive because of new developments that usually make life easier or simpler, innovation is also a powerful disruptive force for the status quo. To name just one example, taxi drivers fear for their future, not just because of new types of taxi services like Uber, but because of the development of self-driving vehicles, which means their jobs are no longer relevant.

It can therefore be understood that innovation is sometimes not a very pleasant process for citizens and established companies, as it distorts the market and prevents them from "doing business as usual". Not surprisingly, many such companies or large organisations will try to lobby governments in order to block the markets from such disruptive innovations. Even though the ECPM values freedom of opinion and expression, it is wary of lobbyists trying to prove that innovations will lead to job losses and mass unemployment. History has shown that new jobs (and usually more interesting ones) will appear after jobs in old, obsolete industries disappear, as long as there is investment in promising new technologies and support for people who are enterprising and decide to start their own business.

Why governments should invest in innovation

The question of why governments should invest in fundamental research and development of new technology and not leave this completely to the free market of supply and demand is a question that was already being raised in the period of the World Wars. Visionaries like Joseph Schumpeter described the processes discussed in the previous paragraph and concluded that, as he saw it, because of the power of large corporations and the accumulation of capital, fewer and fewer entrepreneurs would have the opportunity to build companies based on new ideas. Just after the Second World War, Vannevar Bush came up with a solution for this problem in his influential essay "Science: the endless frontier". In this essay, he describes the need for governments to invest in research and development, because as he notes: "without scientific progress, no amount of achievement in other directions can insure our health, prosperity, and security as a nation in the modern world."

One of his other famous expressions, which formed the basis of the innovation policies of many governments throughout the USA and Europe, was that the government should help to create the proper environment for innovative companies and start-ups to flourish: "Give these people money, let them play, and they will come up with something!"

The ECPM believes Europe can further strengthen its global position as a technology hub by investing more in research and development. For decades now, the average spending on R&D by EU member states has been below the OECD average, and this is not a very reassuring statistic for the long term. Of course, governments are not the only actors here: large corporations and higher education institutes (whether public or private) are also important to keep in mind. This means that governments need to remove barriers (mainly bureaucratic procedures and/or taxation) in order to create more effective innovation communities. Scientists report spending up to 30% of their work hours on acquiring funding, and they see low acceptance percentages for their proposals. This is an enormous waste of energy and resources. Tax measures for money invested in research and development in companies may help the private sector to designate more funds for product and service development.

Government funding can help with developing the technologies needed to facilitate sustainable development. Leaving this research completely to the market may not be the best idea, as large corporations may have a strong conflict of interest when doing research. For example, large oil and mining companies would by definition have a conflict of interest when investing in energy-saving technology or in the transition towards sustainable energy. They may provide lip service and some minor programmes to "support energy transition", but in the end it is profit maximisation and expected shareholder value that have the decisive votes in the decision-making process. Pharmaceutical organisations are another example of this type of businesses: with the current strict interpretation of patents on medicine, these companies operate with very large gross profit margins. Because of the current intellectual property laws and protection provided, government rules and regulations hinder innovation in the sector rather than stimulating it.

Which kinds of R&D should governments invest in?

The previous section shows that in some cases, because of the disruptive force of innovations, a conflict of interest can arise within established businesses leading to the abandonment or blocking of the development of (especially) capital-intensive innovations. However, in Europe (as well as other countries outside of it, of course), there are many creative and enterprising people who would like to start their own companies and try to bring new inventions to the market. Offering these entrepreneurs support in terms of coaching and facilities is crucial to help them to survive and grow and to help the market to adopt their innovations, breaking through the conservative powers in the market of large established businesses. Disruptive start-ups like Tesla have thoroughly changed the automobile industry worldwide and have led to a large increase in research into electric cars. Companies like Uber and Google have made the existing automobile industry consider investing in cars with self-driving capabilities as well. Established companies that fail to understand the destructive power of innovation lose ground or simply disappear. Examples of such companies are well known, such as Nokia and Polaroid, to name just two.

Considering this, the ECPM supports investment by the EU in facilitating "innovative entrepreneurship", as this will strengthen Europe as an innovative continent. Besides the potential benefits for the economy, from the point of view of the budget, it is much less costly to invest in entrepreneurship than to create special economic zones to attract large multinationals with all kind of tax breaks, leading to a so-called "race to the bottom" and undesired competition between European countries and/or regions.

As well as supporting innovative start-ups with breakthrough technologies, national and/or regional governments are the ideal social actors to define a number of key technology areas in which they would like to invest. Different approaches for identifying these key technology areas can be and are already

being used in several regions of Europe. One of these is the "cluster approach", where existing strong business clusters are helped to become even more innovative and globally competitive through government investments in R&D. The role of the EU is to help national and regional governments by suggesting complementary technology areas across different national borders. It is also evident that national borders (and sometimes European ones as well) have no meaning for high-tech start-ups. Their market is worldwide from the beginning.

Even though innovation has its basis in creativity, which means that there are only limited possibilities for steering it in a certain direction, the ECPM still suggests that the EU should establish a "desired direction" for innovation. Several global organisations have issued such desired direction policies (for example, the Millennium Goals of the UN or the desire for a substantial decrease in CO_2 emissions by 2050) and are funding initiatives that fit in with these ideas. Based on the Biblical principles of developing and taking care of Creation, the ECPM believes there is certainly room for a "desired direction approach", as well as the aforementioned "innovative entrepreneurship support approach" and "cluster approach". This would mean a substantial increase in funding for different research and development initiatives related to sustainable energy, building and production technologies, in order to make the economy greener. Of course, innovation is done on the micro-level of individual companies in their own regions, but the EU can play a major role in harmonising rules and regulations for innovative technologies between member states. It can also fund certain targeted green initiatives and support member states in the formulation of their own technology policies to complement those of other member states.

How to make innovation work in Europe?

When looking at more educated people in Europe, more and more international mobility of talent can be seen. The ECPM considers this to be a good process, as mobility of talent throughout Europe will create more diversity within companies and this will lead to higher creativity and increased innovation. The EU plays an important role in stimulating this international talent mobility by supporting member states with policies to make diplomas more internationally exchangeable and promoting student mobility between different member states.

The same applies to international research programmes. Purely national fundamental research programmes are rare nowadays; it is more common for different universities within Europe to offer highly specialised complementary competences for research projects. The EU is already supporting these types of international research collaboration and the ECPM supports these policies as well, provided that something can be done to limit the current excessive bureaucracy (as indicated by most academic staff throughout Europe) related to the acquisition of research funding.

The ECPM supports the EU's efforts to support the member states with policies to raise the average education level of European citizens, as higher education and innovation go hand in hand. It is, for European economies, the only sustainable way out of economic crises and it could substantially improve the economies of southern Europe in particular, where the economy is in many cases still dependent on commodity goods. Being non-innovative and only focusing on improving economic efficiency is not an option for European countries, as the limited size of the population and relatively high wages will severely limit the possibilities for creating economies of scale in traditional industrial production.

Another aspect of building an innovative society has to do with the quality of the government. It can be observed in many countries that a highly bureaucratic or corrupt government can severely hinder the

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work of innovative entrepreneurs. Fortunately, most of the national governments of European member states have a good track record in terms of governmental accountability. In cases where this is not so, the ECPM supports any strong EU policies to crack down on corrupt behaviour, especially regarding existing patron-client relationships, bribery and nepotism, which are very detrimental to the general competitiveness of regions and countries in the long run.

Foreign Affairs and Security

Foreign affairs

In this interconnected world, the topic of foreign affairs is no longer merely about relationships between states. Foreign affairs have direct implications for the lives of citizens. When in 2016 one million refugees from Syria walked through Europe, it became clear that developments beyond the EU can impact people anywhere in the EU member states.

Our approach

The ECPM approach to foreign affairs is based on the Christian understanding of human dignity. This means that every human being is equally valuable, regardless of ethnicity or gender. Fundamental freedoms such as freedom of religion and belief, freedom of expression and political freedoms are the safeguard and practical expression of this understanding of human dignity. Human dignity is indivisible and equal for every person, and therefore these fundamental freedoms apply for every person. It is our firm conviction that the spread of fundamental freedoms is key to the development of a more secure and stable world. In this regard, it is important that our policies apply the same principles at home and abroad. Fundamental freedoms cannot be separated from each other, as each freedom supports the others and together they form a culture in which all fundamental freedoms are self-evident.

The aftermath of the refugee crisis that started in 2016 has opened up some fundamental debates and political developments in the EU member states. However, in many policy fields there is still an artificial 'wall' between foreign affairs and internal challenges. For example, in the aftermath of terrorist attacks by ISIS, there was a lot of attention on internal security cooperation and little attention to the war against ISIS in its strongholds and coordination centres in Syria. In integration policy, there is a lot of attention on the integration of minority communities within Europe but not on how the cultural mentality of these communities is shaped by the continuing influence from outside Europe. However, this influence from outside on the mentality of communities within Europe is a major factor for their integration. If countries in the Middle East, north Africa (MENA) and central Asia were to implement fundamental freedoms and if these freedoms found root in their societies, it would not only lead to development but also greatly diminish the challenges of integration within Europe. It is the most straightforward way to deal with Islamic fundamentalism, by supporting a culture that would no longer be a breeding ground for terrorism.

It is not possible in any way to enforce a practical application of fundamental freedoms in other societies. However, the 'way of Europe' is that of cooperation. It is very unlikely that these regimes will actively cooperate in supporting a culture that would spread the notion of universal access to fundamental freedoms and reduce the need for immigration. It is clear that the EU needs to maintain diplomatic relations and try all approaches for improving these situations, but this cannot be left to formal state actors alone. It is important for the EU member states to engage much more strongly with all political and social actors in MENA and central Asia that support and implement fundamental freedoms such as freedom of religion, equality of women, freedom of expression and democratic multi-ethnic governance. Every region and nation in MENA and central Asia that implements these freedoms in a substantial way should receive preferential treatment from the EU member states.

Furthermore, the notions of human dignity and fundamental freedoms should determine our relations with other areas of the world, as well as our trade agreements. This would not be an idealistic approach but a long-term approach that will provide long-term and more lasting results.

Finally, this approach rests on the common work of EU member states who can only decide together where there is a need for common effort in foreign affairs.

EU level

- Foreign affairs continue to be a competence of the member states. The EEAS should not develop an EU Foreign Affairs policy but should reduce its role to primarily supporting the spread of human dignity and fundamental freedoms abroad. It can do so by engaging with state and non-state actors and implementing programmes with that goal.

- The EEAS Commissioner should no longer represent the EU in foreign affairs in third countries. This should be done, insofar as it is relevant at that moment, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the EU member state holding the Presidency of the EU.

- The EEAS can furthermore support policies that are determined by a joint decision of the member states when the EU member states determine that a common approach is needed to face a common challenge.

- Supporting Israel is important, to clarify to MENA and central Asian countries that the EU member states are serious in their commitment to fundamental rights and freedoms. The ECPM underscores the need to support the security of Israel and be clear on its right to exist.

- Similarly, the EU member states should cooperate in not allowing foreign states or entities to be or to become a threat to the fundamental freedoms of citizens or residents of EU member states.

- EU member states should cooperate in actively supporting states or regions that implement fundamental freedoms and should give them preferential treatment.

- EU-level trade agreements must be based on human dignity and support the development of a free society.

- Russia and China should understand that the EU member states do not support foreign aggression and expansionism and that a good relationship with the EU can only be achieved if they cease their aggressive ambitions.

National level

- A Europe-wide understanding is necessary to see the link between integration and security challenges (Islamic terrorism) and foreign affairs. Furthermore, it is important to understand that these challenges are in many ways related to the dominant cultural features in MENA and central Asia.

- Integration policies should be designed with a great understanding of those cultural features and developments in MENA and central Asia that create obstacles to integration. These policies should deal with those obstacles in a way that secures and promotes universal human dignity and fundamental freedoms. Clarity on this in the EU member states will also influence 'homeland cultures' via the many family ties.

- Refugees coming to any EU member state first and foremost need education on our understanding of human dignity, fundamental freedoms and the equality of men and women. These values should be presented as non-negotiable and as a condition for acceptance in the EU member state. Revocation of refugee status should be considered in case of gross violations.
- Forced marriage is a serious threat for many young girls in Europe and often has strong ties with the homeland of a community in which forced marriage is present at a higher than average level. Forced marriage should be treated and penalised as human trafficking and, in doing so, should support the integration of the whole community.
- Sharia law and other practices that violate human dignity should not be allowed in any EU member state and, where needed, the states of origin should be informed that EU member states do not allow their citizens to be treated elsewhere in a way that violates their fundamental rights and freedoms.
- Entities supported by third countries that support a message of hate and/or a message that runs counter to fundamental and constitutional equalities and freedoms need to be discouraged from maintaining or developing a presence in EU member states

Security

European cooperation between member states in the field of security should centre on four areas:

1. Military cooperation
2. Cyber security
3. Border security
4. Anti-terrorism

Military cooperation

The ECPM strongly believes that all European military cooperation can best be conducted within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). For many years now, Europe has leaned on the USA for security and defence. However, the (public) impression that the USA merely does this in "our" (best) interest is wrong. The last decade has shown that the interests of the USA are not always the same as those of the European nations. EU member states have also shown different interests in matters of industry, foreign affairs and security[58], but there is one thing that European nations share with each other that we do not share with other NATO members/partners: the continent of Europe and its security and stability.

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[58] Macron nationalizes shipyard to prevent Italian acquisition; French president's intervention to defend 'strategic interests' earns Rome rebuke. https://www.ft.com/content/303f7ac2-72d9-11e7-aca6-c6bd07df1a3c

This very important shared European interest does not mean that we believe the EU should have authority over European or even integrated armed forces[59]. The EU has the principle of subsidiarity in place and all measures, agreements and working plans should be seen from this perspective. In this sense, defence matters fall under the ultimate political authority of the sovereign states. Only states can have a standing army, so the issue of all European defence matters immediately touches on the very nature of EU member states and the EU itself, as *Sallux* clearly shows in its publication: *What future for European Defence: One size fits all?*[60]. Subsidiarity in relation to defence and security matters is best explained by one of the founding fathers of the EU, Robert Schuman[61]:

> *"A common de-nationalised army would, and could, no longer owe obedience to a national authority, either as a whole nor in respect of the units of which it is composed. It would have sworn loyalty to the Community. The Community alone would have power over it. If any of its units were to follow the orders of a national Government, they would be regarded as deserters or rebels. If, therefore, such an army is set up, the only valid orders will have to come from an authority recognised by all the participating states."*

The EU institutions must accept that the political priorities of member states are connected with democratic election results and will unavoidably lead to different approaches between member states over time. Cooperation should therefore be focused on defensive measures that are in the interests of all. The aim of defence cooperation between member states should be to create more affordability and make technical cooperation possible; however, the current proposals for PESCO and the single defence market will probably have three consequences:

- The sovereignty of smaller member states will decline, and they will lose control over their own defence industries and thus the capabilities of their armed forces.
- Additionally, the largest European (and American) global military industries will dominate the single European defence market, resulting in less competition (less choice, higher cost).
- Finally, nations will lose sovereign control over their defence manufacturing capabilities. Although the EC has stated that there will be positive effects for small and medium sized enterprises in Europe, we have reason to believe that those companies are suppliers of parts and not the original equipment manufacturers we are talking about, which have been shown to be able to develop, produce and sustain high quality military hardware at lower cost, both in acquisition and maintenance. These EC proposals and the current decisions on PESCO seem to be mainly in the interest of big industrial defence groups and do not serve the security of the peoples of Europe.

Therefore, we propose:

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[59] Except for the potentially useful EU battlegroups which can be organised to project "power" on short notice where there is a need. A capability which can be useful if instructions and rules of engagement are clear.

[60] What future for European Defence: One size fits all? (Sallux publication 2017)

[61] During his speech at the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 10 December 1951) meeting.

- European nations could create a more modular and flexible defence capability not by focusing on joint acquisition of platforms but rather by equipping these "national" or "binational" platforms with common and modular parts, fuel, sensors and weapon systems (missiles, guns and ammunition) so that these are interchangeable and create a more streamlined logistics and interchangeable support capability. In this way, every country can maintain its own defence industry.

- Another form of cooperation that can be made more effective is the European Union Battlegroup (EUBG)[62] framework, but on a voluntary basis only. These structures should not be permanent but modular and should follow NATO standards, procedures and training, which is an easy thing to do since the NATO standard is the normal standard for western countries. The main purpose is to defend the fundamental freedoms and values of Europe.

- Creating modular structures within national armed forces so the deployment of EUBG and NATO response forces will be much smoother and easier. The ways in which countries organise their units (battalions, companies, platoons) is currently often based on historical compositions, and a more scientific approach should be taken. This measure will enable more efficient, robust and flexible cooperation between EUBG and NATO response forces.

It would be wise to spend European funds on the development of these Europe-wide standardised unit compositions, future technologies, etc., but not on investing in the development of new Europe-wide military equipment like tanks, fighter aircraft and so on.

Border security

The Schengen agreement is a part of European cooperation that has very positive and visible effects on the citizens of European countries: travelling, working and trading freely within the union. This removal of internal borders also has its consequences, however. The terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels have shown that people can enter Europe under the cover of refugee streams (both through the Italian and Greek routes) and that the lack of internal border control created a blind spot.

Other member countries are, in a way, responsible for these borders and have lower border control requirements because these have been taken care of by other countries. The obvious thing to do is to increase support from other EU member states for those countries with external borders, either by financial means or with resources/personnel. Since the control of external borders is of great importance for all countries involved, it should not be the sole responsibility of the "border" countries alone. It is rather strange that for many years now, Greece and Cyprus have suffered constant deliberate incursions of their respective exclusive economic zones (which are based on international law) and airspace by ships (coast guard and navy) and aircraft (Turkish Air Force). This could be resolved by forming an EU Mediterranean naval patrol force that other EU member countries could also contribute to. EU member states could also form flexible employable border guard/military police units that could

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[62] An EU Battlegroup (EUBG) is a military unit adhering to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the European Union (EU)

respond to (short-term) increased needs if required. This situation, together with the regulated influx of refugees into Europe, demonstrates the importance of a joint and unified European position. Not only does Turkey violate Greek airspace and waters, they do the same to the EU, which means to all of us. A firm and honest position would be that doing this should have consequences for Turkey, which the EU could and should impose. The same should of course be true for other border areas like Spain (Morocco, Tunisia), Malta and Italy (Libya), the Baltic states and so on.

Therefore, we propose that:

- EU external borders are also a responsibility of the EC/EEAS, which means that if external borders are breached by third countries (like Turkey) then a firm response should be given in order to protect our European interests.
- EU member states should provide more support for those countries with EU external borders, both financially and materially.

Cybersecurity

Europe in the 21st century is completely dependent on data and communications networks. Attacks on government, financial and (civil) electronic infrastructure can have severe consequences for our societies. These are all possible targets, making the border between cybercrime (police) and cyberwarfare (military) unclear, and actors as ISIS/Daesh are also active in the cyber domain.

We have to realise the fact that all European countries depend on each other: all financial, cyber and data networks are (completely) integrated. If each country only tries to protect and secure its own networks, this will create a situation in which even the best protected countries can be infiltrated through the networks of less well protected countries within the broader EU network. Cyber threats against our societies and infrastructure could come from both state- and non-state actors, which makes it difficult to address the threat as a military or (civilian) security operation. Also, the creation of national and EU cyberwarfare units need to be controlled and subjected to international law. Uncontrolled cyberattacks lead to crisis situations. The basic rule should be that international law should also be valid in cyberspace.

Political decision-making still needs to be applied. However, about 50% of staff working in cybersecurity are civilians or external staff, which means that they are not really under government control. We should be asking ourselves whether these external companies have or hold the same values and ethical 'rules of engagement' as military/government personnel are obliged to consider. One best practice example that could be introduced in other countries and on the EU level is that of Estonia[63], where they have a large group of cyber specialists who are employed by, for example, (private/commercial) financial institutions to protect those companies and networks. However, in addition to this part-time job, they also hold a position as an operational reservist, which means they fall under military rules of engagement. The ECPM believes that all EU member states need their own cyber units, which should be

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[63] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/estonia/11564163/Estonia-recruits-volunteer-army-of-cyber-warriors.html

interconnected. If strong nations work together to create a strong union in the field of cybersecurity as well, then that will benefit us all.

The ECPM proposes that:

- All member states need to have a common base level where cybersecurity is concerned. The whole chain is as strong as the weakest link.

- There should be rules for cyberwarfare and unmanned (autonomous) systems created on the UN level, because the creation of rules is falling behind the ever-changing technology.

- Both on the EU and the national level, it would be worthwhile to consider the idea of operational reservist cyber units, as the example of Estonia shows that this works well.

- This EU cooperation should be based on common values.

Anti-terrorism

The ECPM has been very consistent in expressing that terrorism can only be dealt with effectively if it is dealt with at its roots. For example, the ECPM has been calling for support for the Federation of Northern Syria to defeat ISIS not just militarily but also in terms of its mentality. Ultimately, any form of terrorism starts with an extremist ideology that encourages violence as a means to achieve political goals. This ideology thrives in an environment that is permissive towards this type of extremism. In the 1970s and 1980s, this permissive attitude was present in leftist circles. Today we see that same permissive attitude in sections of the Islamic environment. This demonstrates the need to promote, both at home and abroad, a culture that respects human dignity and fundamental freedoms. The fight against terrorism in Europe cannot be disconnected from foreign policy and the need to set new priorities there as well.

There are, however, several steps that can be taken within the EU, in cooperation between member states and within the member states.

EU-level measures
- There is an urgent need to reassess all aid programmes and other support given to entities outside the EU and third countries in order to ensure that no funding ends up in the hands of extremists.
- All existing EU-level structures that deal with terrorism should receive funding and support to enable them to cooperate more effectively with member states where needed. Special attention should be given to cooperation with member states in the field of visa applications if there is any reason for concern that European security might be implicated.
- Effective cross-border training can be increased for civil servants and officers in police and justice departments.

Cooperation between EU Member States
- An effective exchange between EU member states of data regarding terrorism suspects or those connected to them, as well as extremist preachers, is a clear priority.
- Member states with a large presence of communities from the MENA region could consider developing similar guidelines with regard to imams who are strongly connected to third countries.

- Effective monitoring of refugee streams and developing strategies inside asylum centres is most effective when done in cooperation with those member states that are most affected.

Member State level
- Promoting equal human dignity and fundamental freedoms and their acceptance in all forms of integration policies is key to ending any form of permissive attitude towards terrorism.
- It is crucial that communities from MENA and central Asia clearly understand that these freedoms are conditions for their acceptance and that these fundamental freedoms overrule cultural norms from their own background.
- The presence via 'front organisations' of entities that support extremist Islamist groups needs to be countered and ended.
- Cooperation with moderate Islamic scholars is necessary to demonstrate that extremism is a wrong and harmful interpretation of Islam.