

Bern, 16 September 2004

European Justice and Peace Commissions meet in Sarajevo

Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Europe on its Way

Peace and reconciliation initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their challenges for the peace and security policy of Europe are the subject of this year's Annual Assembly of the Conference of European Justice and Peace Conferences on 25 to 28 September 2004 in Sarajevo. More than 60 public figures from about 20 countries registered for the Annual Assembly and the following Study Days.

For interested journalists, there are two opportunities to get an idea of the Annual Assembly and the work of the Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions:

> **Saturday, 25 September, 14.00-15.30h, Seminary of Sarajevo: Reception**

To open the General Assembly, there will be a reception held. President Dr. Josef Bieger-Hänggi awaits high-ranking figures, amongst them *Mgr Santos Abril y Castelló, Papal Nuncio of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Michael Humphreys, Ambassador of the EU Commission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Desnica Radivojevic, Vice-President of the Bosnian-Croatian Federation and high-ranking political representatives of the Republika Srpska.* The reception offers participants the opportunity to meet and exchange.

> **Monday, 27 September, 13.30h, Seminary Sarajevo: Media Conference**

On Monday, a media conference is scheduled. Dr. Josef Bieger-Hänggi, President, and Suffragan Pero Sudar, Sarajevo, will inform about the meeting of the Justice and Peace Commissions in Sarajevo and will present the most important results of the encounter.

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To your information:

Swiss Presidency

The Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions is the council of the advisory boards of the National Bishops' Conferences on peace and justice issues. The Swiss National Commission currently holds its presidency. Therefore, it is the Swiss National Peace and Justice Commission inviting to the Annual Assembly and Study Days in Sarajevo. Representatives from about 15 countries and numerous guests of partner organisations from various countries are expected to attend.

A heritage of the II. Vatican Council

The Justice and Peace Commission were founded after the II. Vatican Council (1962-1965). They are an expression of the will of the Council and Pope Paul VI to open the Catholic Church to the issues of the world and to encourage the Christians to gather with „all people of good will“ and get engaged in the strive for justice and peace. The National Commissions are institutionally linked with the Bishop's Conference of their respective countries. They address Human Rights, development, peace and social issues. For a few years now, they've also included ecological issues. Some Commission are focussed on practical activities against injustice and strife, others concentrate on theoretical reflections. Nevertheless, their objective is the same: Peace, Justice and Preservation of Creation.

For the first time, Justice and Peace Commission met in the end of the 60ies on a European level. Out of this encounter emerged the Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions. It defines itself as a coordinating platform of the activities of the National Commissions and goes through a steady growth. At current time, the Conference counts 27 member Commissions.

For further information please contact Sonja Kaufmann, General Secretary: ++41 76 347 46 55