

Press Release

At the Annual Conference of 25 and 26 October in Geneva, Switzerland, the Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions reinforced its commitment to social justice and peace. The Conference pointed out that, nowadays, economic globalisation and the war on terror endanger the compliance of human rights on the entire world. Considering the existing conflicts, the Conference states once again that war is never the solution.

The Annual Assembly 2003 of the Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions could count on the participation of 18 Commissions, geographically spread from Albany to Portugal and from Greece to Sweden.

Under the chairmanship of the Swiss National Justice and Peace Commission, the Assembly could welcome the guest of honour, Ambassador Walter Fust, Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). According to Ambassador Fust, technical development cooperation is not possible without spiritual and religious dimensions. The Ambassador emphasised the role of the actors of the civil society, actively involved in the fight for peace and justice. He pointed out that human security doesn't depend exclusively on the competence of the States but also on the responsibility of each and every citizen.

The Annual Assembly confirmed the mandates of its various Working Groups. One of them assists the Justice and Peace Commissions in Bosnia-Herzegovina in their reporting on the local Human Rights situation. To give assistance to the efforts for peace in the African Great Lake region – Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi -, a new Working Group was established. A third Working Group contributes to the discussion of the values accompanying the elaboration of the European Constitution of the European Union. The Annual Assembly decided to get more deeply involved in the projects of the Council of Europe on social justice and social cohesion on one hand, and the inter-religious dialogue on the other.

Furthermore, the Assembly gave support to a letter to the President of Peru, Alejandro Toledo, backing the Report of the Peruvian Commission 'Truth and Reconciliation'. Referring to the Study Days, following the Assembly on 27 and 28 October in Geneva, and their theme 'Social Justice in a globalising World', the Assembly reinforced its already existing commitment to fight for economic and political decisions on national and international level to be guided by human rights and sustainable development.

The Justice and Peace Commissions are bodies of the Bishop Conferences, created as a consequence of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Their task lies in the promotion of the ideas of justice, peace and compliance of human rights. The European Conference of Justice and Peace Commissions is a network of 27 national Commissions. The Conference sees itself as an exchange and coordination platform for its members and has its activities on the entire European continent.

The next Annual Assembly will take place in Sarajevo on 24 to 28 September 2004.

Geneva, 26 October 2003

Further information:

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