

Press release 02/07/2016

## Reconciliation opens up the Future

“No one can separate these Christians any more, they belong together”, Cardinal Reinhard Marx was not the only one moved by the atmosphere among the five thousand participants present at the Outdoor Rally that concluded the event of “Together for Europe” in Munich (Germany). At the Outdoor Rally which followed two days of intensive programme in Circus Krone, Christians of different denominations from 32 countries and belonging to 200 Communities and Movements offered a public sign of reconciliation and togetherness. “Your togetherness is a force for cohesion and has a clear goal - to apply the fundamental values of Christianity through practical answers to the challenges of a continent in crisis”, Pope Francis said in a video message.

“There has perhaps never been a greater need to be united and act in solidarity”, Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople added also in a video message. “This applies both to Europe and its adjacent regions, as well as on a global level. Christians are called upon to testify to the fundamental principle of the Church - communion.”

Upon seeing his audience, Lutheran Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm commented: “I don’t have to give a message of unity when I see that unity there before me.”

Metropolitan Serafim Joanta, Cardinal Kurt Koch and Lutheran Bishop Frank Otfried July spoke of their joys, sufferings and hopes in working for ecumenism. In a prayer which they read out together, they asked for forgiveness and for new ways of achieving communion. They embraced one another in a sign of reconciliation.

However, “Together for Europe” not only wants to bring Christians closer to one another, we also want to make an active contribution together in society as a whole. Maria Voce, President of the Focolare Movement, asked, “Is unity a dream, a utopia? No, it is our experience. God’s love unites us. It has opened our eyes and hearts to embrace the fears, the tears and hopes of this continent.” Marco Impagliazzo, President of the Community of Sant’Egidio, called for a commitment, so that Europe does not remain “a Europe of the Fathers, but also becomes a Europe for our children.” The prayers in Arabic sung by Wajd Asmar, a seventeen-year-old Christian girl from Syria, touched all hearts and reminded everyone of Europe’s worldwide responsibility.

The events take place under the auspices of:



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CHRISTLICHE BEWEGUNGEN UND GEMEINSCHAFTEN **MITEINANDER FÜR EUROPA**  
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After each contribution, a plank blocking a large “Gate into the Future” on the stage was gradually removed, until the gate could be fully opened with the “Key of Reconciliation”. At the end, each participant was given a symbolic key to take home. Sergej Altuchov from Russia, whose testimony about the reconciliation between Russians and Germans impressed everyone, said at the end that he would take this key of reconciliation to President, Vladimir Putin.

In the joint concluding message the event organisers invited those present to strengthen their commitment as Christians in Europe. They called for “a culture of respect and appreciation of others, including strangers”, and also encouraged “those in positions of responsibility within the Churches to overcome separation”.

Finally the celebration in the Stachus Square continued with a variety of interventions and music well into the night.

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Εσπoνεϊκiη νoπiαμeντ Πaρλαμeντo Eυρoπeο Eυρoπiκiη πaρλαμeντ Eυρoπa-Πaρλαμeντeт Eυρoπiσχιcηc Πaρλαμeντ Eυρoπoα Πaρλαμeντ Eυρoπaϊкiкo Kοινοβoυλιo Eυρoпean Πaρλαμeντ Παρλαμeνт eυρoπeиn Παρλαμeνт na η Eυρoπa Eυρoπiкi πaρλαμeντ Παρλαμeνтo eυρoпeο Eιρoπac Πaρλαμeνтac Eιρoπoс Παρλαμeνтac Eυρoπai Πaρλαμeνт Παρλαμeνт Eυρoпew Eυρoпeac Παρλαμeнт Παρλαμeнтo Eυρoпeйcкi Πaρλαμeнтo Eυρoпeу Παρλαμeнтul Eυρoпean Eυрoпeйcкi πaρλαμeнт Eυрoпiкi πaρλαμeнт Eυрoпoan πaρλαμeнтi Eυрoпaπaρλαμeнтeт

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