



Patriarch Kirill sends a message of greetings to the Conference of the Identity of Values for Europe

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia sent the following message of greetings to the Conference on the Identity of Values for Europe held on November 19-10, 2009, in Venice. This forum was initiated by the European People's Party.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I am glad to greet you, representatives of Christianity, Islam and Judaism and prominent political and public leaders, as you have gathered in Venice on the initiative of the European People's Party. This event, continuing the good tradition of dialogue between the EPP and Orthodox Churches, has acquired a new, broader format to become a major platform for developing cooperation between traditional religious communities and intellectual circles in Europe.

The further existence and fruitful development of the European project depends on a clear answer to the question of the European identity. It is necessary to understand what exactly constitutes the backbone and uniting principle for the numerous peoples living in the continent. Only in this way it is possible to overcome their cultural differences and to inspire them for building a common space of mutual trust and aid.

Christianity has formed Europe's values basis and idea. Outside the Christian tradition it is impossible to become aware of the inner contents and driving mechanism of the development of this region and the cultural code of the ethnoses inhabiting it. Therefore, in future, too, every stage in the building of our common home cannot be reached without reliance on the Christian witness. Europe's Christian identity is an immutable given which cannot be destroyed without destroying the European world itself.

Throughout centuries, the Church has been a guardian of the priceless spiritual heritage. The values of faith, responsibility and love of neighbour it preaches can and must remain the soul of the European. Conforming their life to these intransient ideals, Europeans will always be open to peace and mutually

respectful neighbourliness not only with their brothers and sisters in faith but also with other religions and nationalities.

It is important to augment Christian principles, putting them in the foundation of all the socially significant projects. This will contribute to the preservation of the identity and integrity of European nations and give a key for conducting a thorough dialogue with different cultures and civilizations. The realization of how important a full-fledged presence of the spiritual dimension is in the system of public relations in Europe will promote the Churches' participation in creating an atmosphere of interreligious and intercultural harmony and social solidarity in the continent.

I wish the participants in the Conference interesting and fruitful work. I hope that this meeting will make it possible to underscore once again the importance of the spiritual basis in the development of European society.

+ Kirill

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

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