

## EUROPEAN CONGRESS ON VOCATIONS

Tirana, 28 February-3 March 2018

### CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF *IN VERBO TUO* AND PREPARING FOR THE SYNOD 2018

#### Welcomes speeches:

**H.E. Mgr Ottavio Vitale**, *Bishop of Lezhë*

Hope, to listen to each other

Albania, small and poor country but open to hope

Many martyrs, witness is the beauty of the fellowship

**H.E. Mgr Jean-Claude Hollerich**, *Archbishop of Luxembourg and President of the Youth Commission of CCEE*

Always vocations for youth leaders and youth missionaries

**Mgr Duarte da Cunha**, *General Secretary of CCEE*

**H.E. Mgr Oscar Cantoni**, *Bishop of Como and Bishop in charge of the Vocations-EVS Section of the Youth Commission of CCEE*

**Fr Emil Parafiniuk**, *Secretary of the Vocations-EVS Section of the Youth Commission of CCEE*

#### Presentation of vocational activity in own country

**Austria** Canisus

Communication, public relations

Vocations for religious communities

**Belgium**

**France**

Préparation du synode : animation, formation, réflexion de fonds sur la vocation ... pédagogie de la ***In Verbo tuo*** how to implement this text many training courses

Résultats de la consultation synodale

Vocation, mise en œuvre de *In Verbo Tuo*, capitalisation du travail de ces dernières années

**Prayer card** Image prière Synode, affiche synode

Dossier d'animation

Formations sur l'accompagnement

Ecclesia Campus sur le thème de l'engagement, Trouver sa vocation

**Clé USB**

**Years for God**

Lourdes : démarche synode et chemin vocationnel

### **Germany**

Goot in the offside Tim and Sr Karin  
Adoration for Vocations

### **Italia**

National meeting for vocations  
Seminars on vocational accompaniment  
Promoting formation of spiritual accompaniment for vocational discernment  
Partnership with Salesian university for a course on vocational ministry  
Booklets for teens and youth

### **Poland**

Meeting of vocational animators

### **Portugal, Porto**

New commission Cooperation with University pastoral care

### **Romania**

Meetings in seminaries

### **Slovakia**

Commission for seminaries  
Meetings of altars boys, meetings with Youth  
Open doors  
100 seminarists  
35 novices

### **Spain**

Chain of prayers for vocations

### **Turkey**

New delegate for the new commission for vocational ministry

### **Ukraine**

Diminution

### **Luxembourg**

90% baptized Catholics 600 000 persons  
A big trip abroad with youth pastoral, with seminarians

## **Presentation of the Albanian Church**

*Sr Rita, in charge of Youth pastoral care*

The youngest country of Europe  
A very good cohabitation between religious  
University students are attracting by other countries

### **History of Catholic Church**

3 million inhabitants 65% Muslims

Catholic Church more in the north and orthodox more in the south  
1st evangelization by St Paul

Communism: underground Church until 1991 new freedom  
Jesuits and Franciscans began schools  
Reevangelization of the Church  
Missionaries from Italy, Malta...  
Mother Teresa

### **Youth group**

Many activities, spiritual meetings, volunteer service, summer camps; oratories  
Vocation as a church gift  
Important role of catholic schools  
We want Europe with no borders, building bridges

## **In Verbo Tuo : A new analysis of vocations in Europe**

**Fr Amadeo Cencini**, EP, *Father of the Canossian Sons of Charity and lecturer at the Salesian University and at the Institute of Psychology of the Gregorian University in Rome*

canossian religious  
Doctorate in Psychology

Psychologist  
Formation  
Vocation  
*In Verbo tuo*  
Teacher in Salesianum and Gregorian University  
Consultant Dicastery for Consecrated Life  
Clergy

**Fabio Attard**, *Councillor for Youth Ministry of the Salesians of Don Bosco*  
Malta

### **Fr Cencini**

Looking at this European reality, what is the new situation?  
What kind of response we expect of this changings?

20 years past abide, new mentality, pastoral changes, surprising lack of awareness everything goes too quickly. We arrive to decisive points, it seems that this is a mega point of history. We imagine in a sort of narcissism. Today is different as 20 years ago. A crisis provoked by Vatican II. Changes and transformations, reform of Pope Francis.

Problem of vocations

***1/ the reality of vocation trends, statistics in Pontifical annuary last ten years***

Bishops: increase, growing members of faithful, change to the criteria to choose of bishops +4,2%  
Priests decrease concerns specifically in Europe, -2500 Africa and Asia++ Europe-5,8% ; Oceania -2%  
Permanent deacons: a meaningful dynamic, increase, 45 000, ++ in Europe +10,3%  
Religious non priests Decrease 20 000 this decrease especially affects Europe  
Women religious, decrease 2015: 600 700 -7% Europe -13,5%  
Seminarians majors decrease -9,7% in Europe Asia+ 65/1 million Catholics  
Lay missionaries, catechesis... a real figure, net increase of pastoral operators something important  
They choose to go in a mission land, an expression of the Church, lay organization  
Catechists an attitude of vocational responsibility... educators  
Vocations is not diminished but a deepening of the sense of vocation, an expansion... any human being is a person called  
Very interesting perspectives, very fruitful  
A certain responsibility to formation, formator of vocations  
New forms of consecrated life, not find in Annuaire, they need a special attention  
New phenomenon, not only in Europe, contradictory aspects  
Consecrated life is living a period of crisis, even if we have a canonical problem  
Tend to go to new kind of living, new forms need an important accompaniment  
The phenomenon is real, it could mean something very important in the dynamic of the proclamation of the Gospel, in terms of vocations  
Meaningful phenomena on a vocational level, important for us  
Maybe an increasing number

### **Conclusion**

The European vocational crisis may be not, decrease only for classical vocations,  
New vocations  
Theology of vocation, vocational ministry has its own theology, not only an office  
Theology with the image of God as an eternal caller. He calls because he loves.  
God is the eternal caller and man is the eternal called. This concept is extending more, identity of believers,  
Sense of fertility of the old roots  
*In Verbo tuo*, prophetic dream of the times  
In fact new vocations are coming even in Europe, maybe it is still an old Europe

We have to clarify the kind of crisis

### **2/ an analysis**

To outline the European geography of faith

4 areas diversified faith map:

- Extraculturation, faith is outside the cultural universe Daniel Hervieu-Léger: France, Belgium, Netherlands, UK... the nation with post-modern, post-Christian life, post-modern culture eliminate. Faith is out, a rift between amnesia and resistance
- Secularization of culture/mindset with permanent religious Christian traditions: Italy, Spain, Portugal, Poland identity role of religion. The process of secularization will be more and more invasive
- Faith as a private/ clandestine phenomenon no public affects: eastern countries post-communism, Ukraine persecutions, destruction of moral values. No hope, time of underground religious
- Peaceful religiosity, positive absence of religion, every religion is OK : Scandinavian countries, Czech Republic, eastern Germany 75% are non-religious. Absence of faith is felt as absolutely a non-problem. Stable areligious context.

What is the sense of this map? The usefulness for everyone to relate to the way of living faith or not?

Europe has a single root, but diverse situations

4 maps are talking to each other, we live in a cultural process we need to know

Faith has to deal with a certain cultural humus

The proclamation of the Gospel has to play on another narrative

To give an answer to this question, a direction of a more and more secularized

To retake faith to its original status, what is the most relevant identity? What kind of adjective we use?

Christians cannot maintain their faith?

Our identity is missionary

We need to have an identity which is more missionary

Missionary vocational dimension

We need to create this vocational identity

Not the only way to understand vocation

Vocation creative,

We need to give birth, to form vocations for this cultural context

A visible acceleration of secularization

Eternal social reality to recognize as our present

Faith is a daily choice, God who always calling us, eternally new

We need to be able to read the situation

Now vocations become a fact, an eternal attitude, in order to respond to this kind of need to situation

A new vocational presence to react to this kind of reality

Europe could be less diverse

An interesting challenge in vocational pastoral care → a new way of being believers

New callings, newness of response

A vary evident of secular ideology more and more global and generalized

A crisis of classic vocational expression and birth of new kind of vocations

Wider idea of vocations, new vocations are coming

Religious lay faithful increase,

Ordo virginum

Demographic

The lay vocation

Vocation is part of the fact that we are living

From the model of creation to a model of redemption

Vocation is to express the will of salvation

Conservatism a past of suffering

Deacons

Journey to new types of vocation

## **Synod 2018: European responses to the Lineamenta**

**Fr Fabio Attard, Councillor for Youth Ministry of the Salesians of Don Bosco**

## Landscape

The mountain of mindset which seems spiritual but deeply marked by a non-evangelical mindset

To realize that the Lord is sending us in this environment

We find ourselves as sent, this is not about success, about understanding the history of men and salvation

We are like Moses

Young people need to feel that we love them

Hope, with our young people as pilgrims, do we project joy?

In this context, 5 reports Italy, France, Spain, England, Germany that were made public

#synod2018 The preparatory document and Europe

### **1/ The first impression**

The synodal path interesting and creative process of participation

This synod is exactly spin of the will; it is crucial to realize this, we need to move ahead, a time of grace

This is enormous pastoral, many offerings and proposals, we are seeing an enormous variety committed in youth pastoral care, strong commitment in youth pastoral care

A creative note, space for young

Witness of freedom, a will to find to identify new itineraries

This kind of listening is deeply connected of the network of animators

The more we give attention to youth ministry, the more we have listening to young people

When structure are the consequence of a shared reflection, planning together, prayer... then fruits

We insist on pastoral government and animation, we need to have a direction

With youth we cannot improvise. Importance of pastoral government

A soul to animators, very positive experience in Europe

### **2/ What kind of young person we are talking about?**

We are interested in listening to the life of youth

EG new evangelization is a call for everyone 1/ Ordinary pastoral care 2/ Baptized people who are not practicing 3/ proclamation of the Gospel to those who don't know Jesus

The next synod concerns all young people, this is about all the young, there is goodness everywhere

In the western part of Europe, young people without faith don't expect something

Need to place non-believers at the center, a space of integral humanity not only sacramental distribution

As the Church is a mother,

2 trends inside believers modern Church, we perceive a dialectic between modernity and fidelity

How can we interpret these 2 models? Fidelity and modernity need to go together

### **3/ How do the young people see the Church?**

Authentic, close, welcoming; they want the Church as an experience of family

They insist strongly on authenticity and coherence, a mother full of mercy without judgment

They do not want an intimist Church, involved in the world, more opening, especially about the role of women of Church

The importance of an authentic, close and welcoming Church

Unconditional love

How the Church is understanding this call?

**4/ How do young people perceive themselves in the Church?**

They are not always listened to, they are not understood

Challenge of languages, non-understood language

This perception of not being listened to, is the same as their relation to the society

**5/ What are young people asking to shepherds?**

Honesty, to be welcoming people, capable of listening, they are expecting people who are prophets

They have the courage to be close to young people

They want to take part in the life of the Church, to be protagonist

Great desire to be accompanied

They insist on the great desire to live experience of parenthood

We can outline closeness and welcoming, listening and protagonism, accompaniment and discernment

They need humanity and proposals of experience

**6/ crucial points, crosslines**

- Future and insecurity: culture of connection, so much solitude, fears. Insecurity. Need hopes, how do we take care of this insecurity? Anthropological understanding. To start from the sufferings of young people
- The great search. Consistent call for accompaniment very strong appeal, need a wider approach, not only about vocations. Young people need healthy relation with educators without any ambiguity; with a mature humanity
- A need for a spiritual direction, approach of discernment, accompaniment is strong needed
- Schools and universities a privilege field for believers and non-believers, massification of knowledge. Good experience of chaplaincies, apostolic experiences
- Accompanying family's topic is crucial, in various forms, they tend to privilege professional orientation. An attention to the family is needed, as a subject of youth ministry
- The digital word, a challenge between digital natives and digital migrants
- Great events : this meetings are very important, great opportunities, WYD a synthesis of a method and a content, an opportunity to discover the Church "you are church"

**7/ the word vocation need to be clarified. Understanding in terms of special consecration.**

This is on the move, youth ministry must be vocational

Youth is a period of generativity, need to discern on the own project of life.

**8/ Proposals**

Synod of the youth on a local level, the aggregation helps to the sense of belonging, continental day for youth, need to live an experience, pilgrimages

Volunteering

**Conclusion**

The synod is a positive process

We have opportunities, we need to continue

A clear planning in government pastoral teams, a communion and community with a clear vision

EG171

The challenge of spiritual accompaniment is with us

Problem of the deficit of spiritual leadership

Challenge of spiritual accompaniment  
A cultural of accompaniment and discernment

## **In Verbo Tuo: what to emphasize and what to change**

**Fr Amadeo Cencini**

A new response from the perspective of vocation ministry

*In Verbo tuo* for today?

It begins with a certain response which has implemented, but doesn't interact with the situation today

What is the direction of vocation ministry today, in a time of crisis and fear?

Fear to the future, without judging the past, look with a critical look

We have to start from the figure we have.

Questionnaire, data last year by the congregation of the Clergy

Report of Mgr Castellani, 45% responded

In Europe following characteristics: a vocational ministry that doesn't intercept the social changes

We consider the framework of reference

Wide ecclesial brand to reinforce the faith, to announce the Gospel

The vocation is part of the first proclamation of the Gospel, part of the kerygma

The new methodology media, meetings with youth, open days in religious houses...

We suppose something more

Vocational ministry is not exclusively the service on vocation

We are no longer in a context of conservating the faith, maintaining the situation

We need to extend the concept of vocation, God eternal caller

Working in the expression of this is about the growing of the faith

Vocational proposal must not be focused only on a special vocation for institutional church, reducing vision. Risk of less concern to the quality if we are only focused on priesthood vocation

*In Verbo tuo* an invitation to shift from an uncertain and weak announce of vocation

No recruitment, no propaganda

The only aim is the service of the person, we should wonder

A vocational ministry is not any longer aimed at the maintenance of the situation for an institutional Church. The situation of faith in Europe today needs new responses

Vocational ministry is not any longer at the term for those who have a certain maturation

Vocation is part of the kerygma, vocation is what could make faith this gives you a different image of God. You didn't exist if you are not already called

Vocation ministry is about salvation and responsibility for others

Vocation has a meaning for others, not for narcissism and self-fulfillment

Vocation is at the beginning of the Christian path

Speaking about vocation could be a new way of speaking about god, He call because he loves, to make happy people

Every human being is looking for happiness

The call reveals the Caller

The Gospel of vocation is truly good news, vocation is what generates faith

To give high dignity and love, to feel everybody responsible for the salvation of the others

God has made us able to love in his way



In vocation proclamation live the essence of eternal love, vocation and the theme of vocation belong to the essential message of the Gospel  
Christianity is vocation, is God's love with the fundamental calling

5 vocational signs to be forsted for everyone  
The proclamation that your life is beautiful, is a gift, a good will that you exist within a design of God's love.  
You are responsible for the gift  
It opens you to others  
This plan is beyond any self-referential design  
You are free to be what you are, life is a gift to be given, this is the meaning of life  
We proclaim faith and vocation at the same time

From the model of creation to the model of redemption  
Today we are encouraged to take the model of redemption  
To be a Christian is to be responsible for others  
Concept of creation vocation is more stable  
Concept of redemption is more dynamic, it is a process, a progress  
Theophania, not only theologia, with the same sensitivity of the Son in love with the Father

The discernment of the action of God  
Vocation is not only a special consecration

3 categories:

- Priest, consecrated people – classic choices
- Those who choose a specific activity and identity like catechesis... Believers like artists, politicians... this is a vocation if understood as a calling coming from over, a true choice of life, this is a vocation
- The witness in life in everyday life, no choice of a specific activity but a strength of daily witness, commitment of any person. This is also a vocation.

It is a call gift, impact in people life, theopathia  
The calling coming from God  
Plurality of vocation  
In this way the beauty of faith can come in a new image

To saw a seed and discern  
The harvest cannot be identified with the number of those who enter in the seminary;

It is crucial that vocational animator understands his mission as to saw not necessarily to collect.  
Animator of the seed.

It is beautiful to communicate the image of God as the eternal Call  
Vocational animation is good news!  
We need to see the seeds, not the harvest  
Even in new and unusual places  
Animators know  
Vocational kerygma, vocational meaning of everybody life  
The interest is other person's interest

Discernment is given birth to the sensitivity of vocation

Vocation sensitivity is missing  
To search for our place in life  
Discernment comes about  
There is a new vocational journey  
It is not immediately to specific vocation  
To search for the truth  
A believer more and more careful for humans  
Spiritual and theological sensitivity, to have the desire of God  
To understand the language of God  
Ethical more sensitivity  
We don't need heroes and martyrs

Today a concept of salvation which is not well known in the secularized situation

A missionary dynamic but we need also a better care of the Church  
Dynamic of the choice, the will of God

Not only for young people  
The first vocational animators are parents and catechesis  
It is a relational art  
Formation of the person to help young people to discover what they have inside

An other journey  
Pastoral vocational animation is for the all life

## **Working groups**

### **1/**

Clarification of the term vocation

An understanding of discipleship

We need more missionary people engaged to young people

Vocation service and love

A difference between the Church in the city and in the countryside

More inspiration for activities, sharing of good practices help

We need a great degree of creativity

### **2/ *term crisis and term vocational***

To talk about of a passage

The best reading is fulfillment of the person in the fullness

The service of all vocations

Problem of being obsessed by numerical enters

Different forms of vocations, it question the old forms, new forms are more attractive

The primarily objective is discernment for priesthood

Creativity listening to the reality of the world today

Need to collaborate with other

### **3/ *the difference of the approaches***

The question that create a dialogue to the conception of the call today

The first fundamental call to faith

The state of life

New forms of consecrated life to understand more and more

Youth ministry is not unique

### **4/ *we are condemned to optimism***

We need to lose time; we need to be guided spiritually to be good spiritual guide

A crisis of faith instead of a crisis of vocation

Crisis in all kinds if institutes, lack of responsibility

We should do more charity to help young people to give themselves

The key is to go out from the crisis

We need to stress more on the community life and less on the liturgy

New communities are more open and attractive; they give responsibilities to young people so they are attractive

Youth pastoral is not about giving but about walking together

In welcoming environment, young people may be able to have the right to listen to the Holy Spirit

Young people to see one another as a gift

We do not have to be service supplier

Human dimension of joy, humanity must grow

Beauty becomes communion

Sharing of good practices

We need to promote convergences

We have saint young people

Renewal doesn't just happen trough majority, creative minority

Hope instead of optimism

## **Promoting vocations to the priesthood**

**H.E. Mgr Jorge Carlos Patron Wong**, *Secretary for the Seminaries of the Congregation for the Clergy, Vatican City*

The European congress 1997 to synod2018

1/ A specific pastoral care of vocations to the priesthood  
A diocesan center of vocations must take care of all vocations  
We grow together or nobody grow

In a second moment, the priestly vocation requires a particular care and a careful discernment  
Need for a specific discernment  
Some basics fundamental has to be lived  
This is the responsibility of all the people of God  
The main instrument for an adequate service to vocations is a true Christian life  
We have to start a new way our Christian life

Guaranteeing a complete frame of reference  
Young people are nomad

The communitarian sensibility  
Personal accompaniment but not individualistic accompaniment

Youthful spirituality and discernment

Focusing on selection of vocations to the priesthood

CCEE  
In the service of the Patrons of Europe

## **Conclusions of H.E. Mgr Oscar Cantoni**

To prepare young people to be leaders

How this new pelagianum  
To make your life a personal project  
To be more human and more spiritual  
To stress again, we are called to accompany youth  
You are not alone

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The press release is available in [English](#), [French](#), [German](#) and [Italian](#).

Other information are available [here](#).

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## **God calls everyone. Let us respond to Hope!**

**Congress of National Delegates for the Pastoral Care of Vocations**

**Tirana, Albania, 28 February - 3 March, 2018**

*God has a life project for everyone! Yesterday as today, Christ calls men and women to respond to their personal "call from God". In Tirana, about fifty delegates representing their Catholic Bishops' Conferences, coming from 17 European countries, gathered at the invitation of **H. Ex. Msgr. Ottavio Vitale**, Bishop of Lezhë and delegate for the vocational ministry of the Albanian Catholic Bishops' Conference, to talk about the beauty of the Christian vocation.*

Based on the sharing in plenary and the working groups, it was possible to see the richness of the experiences lived by various ecclesial bodies to adapt the pastoral care of vocations to the challenges of a world in constant change. In fact, alongside the "traditional" pastoral forms (prayer meetings, Eucharistic adoration, school camps, voluntary service...) there are new experiences (videos, campaigns on the web ...) aimed at witnessing the beauty of a vocation to priesthood or consecrated life.

According to **H. Ex. Msgr. Oscar Cantoni**, bishop in charge of the EVS, the "Vocations" Section of the "Youth" Commission of CCEE who organized the meeting, "we do not start from scratch in vocational ministry, because we have abundant magisterial indications, fruit of a rich shared experience matured in the field in the various countries of Europe, also in the light of a significant document, of which we celebrate the twentieth anniversary: *In Verbo tuo*."

Precisely on the basis of this Vatican document, **Fr. Amedeo Cencini**, a professor at the Salesian University and at the Institute of Psychology of the Gregorian University in Rome, proposed an analysis of the state of vocations in Europe. Figures show that it is not accurate to talk about a crisis of vocations in Europe today. In fact, if a negative vocational trend is perceived, as the result of a secular ideology that is becoming more and more global and general, this is true only for some vocations - those that we could consider the classical-traditional ones (priests, religious...). There are signs that show both the lasting fruitfulness of these vocations and the presence of new vocational experiences of consecrated life which extend the concepts of vocation, consecration, and call. Fr. Cencini recalls that the vocational proposal is basically a Kerigma, because it is a mystery of the calling God and of the caller who responds to His love.

Moreover, from the participants' reports it was possible to notice a clear tendency to connect more and more the vocational ministry with other pastoral care, particularly with the youth ministry. This was also emphasised by **Fr. Fabio Attard SBD**, Adviser for the Salesian Youth Ministry, who presented the results of a survey carried out at five Catholic Bishops' conferences in preparation of the next

Synod. Many interventions underlined the important work undertaken by the individual ecclesial bodies to prepare for the Synod of Bishops on *Youth, faith, and vocational discernment*, scheduled for next October in Rome. Witnessing this bond with the Synod, we listened to the daily experiences of faith of a group of young people from different dioceses of Albania and from Germany.

In addition, the delegates' reports have increasingly shown the awareness that the pastoral care of vocations is a responsibility of the whole Christian community. Hence the numerous activities that also involve other pastoral areas, first of all the family. This appears even more clearly when we are dealing with a vocation to ministerial priesthood, as recalled by **H. Ex. Msgr. Jorge Carlos Patron Wong**, Secretary for the Seminaries of the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy. The vocation to priesthood is a gift that God gives to the Church and to the world, therefore it cannot be treated with an individualistic approach, but it needs the support of the whole community, since "this reference to the community will work throughout the priestly life." Regarding the vocation to consecrated life, **Sr. Nathalie Becquart**, Head of the National Service for the Evangelization of Youth and Vocations of the French Catholic Bishops' Conference, insisted on the importance of a "more marked synodal" vocational ministry.

During the meeting, the delegates carried out a pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Counsel (Patron of Albania) in Scutari, where they also visited the Museum-former prison (close to the monastery of St. Claire Sisters) of the Albanian secret police ("Sigurimi") at the time of the Communist regime. The life of the 38 Albanian blessed martyrs, killed for their faith, is an image of a vocation lived in fullness and still testifies to the spiritual richness of a Church in a country that the totalitarian regime wanted to transform into an atheist nation.

During the meeting, **fr. Michele Gianola** (Italy) and **fr. Filip Hacour** (Belgium) have been elected EVS Vice-Coordinators for a one year mandate. They will guide EVS together with **fr. Emil Parafiniuk** (Poland).

Next meeting will take place during the first week of July 2019.

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*The Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) currently gathers 33 European Bishops' Conferences, represented by their Presidents, plus the Archbishops of Luxembourg, of the Principality of Monaco, the Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus and the Bishop of Chişinău (Moldova Rep.), the Eparchial Bishop of Mukachevo and the Apostolic Administrator of Estonia. The current President is Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, Archbishop of Genoa; the Vice-Presidents are Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, and Mgr Stanisław Gądecki, Archbishop of Poznań. The CCEE General Secretary is Mgr Duarte da Cunha. The Secretariat is based at St Gallen (Switzerland) [www.ccee.eu](http://www.ccee.eu)*

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