

What is the Group IXE?

During the Nineties, the Semaines Sociales de France recognised that from now on the problems of society should be studied and solved only by locating them in the international context and, initially, in the European context. The exchanges made at the end of 1999 between the Social Weeks of France and the Central Committee of German Catholics, ZdK, showed that the two organizations shared the same concerns. Thus in May 2000 their two presidents signed the Manifesto for a European Conscience, which was the starting point of an original process.

This process allowed the progressive establishment of a network of "social Christians" from the west, center and east of Europe, an informal network whose prime objective is to make it possible for its members "to know each other better and to understand each other better" in spite of the diversity of their experience, their histories and their cultures.

The second aim of this network is to establish a place of critical observation of the evolution of the European structure, a place of reflexion in reference to the principles of the social thought of the Church in order to be able, whenever possible, to be expressed and to make proposals.

Finally, this network should mobilize itself "to contribute to the success of great demonstrations of a European dimension". This was the case in September 2004 for the session of the centennial anniversary of the Social Weeks of France where the network ensured the presence of 1000 participants coming from European countries. This was also the case for Katholikentag of Saarbrücken in May 2006, within the framework of the sector of themes devoted to the place of justice in the new Europe. This is currently the case through a partnership with the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE) for the preparation of a Congress commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, in Rome in March 2007.

Since June 2002, this network has been animated by a Working Group, made up of representatives of twelve European countries and the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE). This Group is in close contact with the persons in charge of the Social Weeks of Spain and Italy.

At a meeting in Luxembourg in March 2006, the group took the name "Initiatives of Christians for Europe", with the acronym IXE.