

10 years | Jahre | ans

of walking together

gemeinsam unterwegs

de cheminement ensemble



a n d a n t e

europäische allianz katholischer frauenverbände
european alliance of catholic women's organisations
alliance européenne d'organisations féminines catholiques



10 years of walking together

Imprint

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a n d a n t e

european alliance of catholic women's organisations

Presentation

10 Years Andante, European Alliance of Catholic Women's Organisations



The Coordinating Committee of Andante 2013-2016
Mette Bruusgaard, Jutta Wojahn (secretary), Zsuzsa Huszka, Waltraud Deckelmann, Mary McHugh, Maria Demeterová, Vroni Peterhans, Inese Augskalne, Gisela Hoeve.

This is indeed a reason to celebrate a jubilee! More than 10 years ago, Catholic women from a number of European countries realized that a strengthened network of Catholic women's organisations would greatly improve their ability to meet the challenges posed by the changing nature of Europe. We look back in gratitude to the many efforts and hard work of preparation undertaken by the pioneers and foundresses of Andante. They made it possible that Andante was launched at the inaugural meeting in Budapest on 6 May 2006 with a spirit of strong optimism.

Over the past 10 years many women from the member organisations (23 to date) in 14 countries have supported and walked with Andante and attended its events. They all helped to shape Andante and left their mark on it, they are in fact its beating heart. This 'Festschrift' tells their story and recognizes what they have achieved by developing Andante, not only over the past ten years but also in the future. We are grateful to Marie-Louise van Wijk-van de Ven and Claire Renggli-Enderle for their commitment to the production of this document; they too have left their mark on Andante over these past years.

Andante - (as indeed its name says) – We Walk Together – and have walked together for 10 years and intend to launch a new strategy to participate with confidence in the shaping of a Europe of the future, and to commit ourselves above all to work for the concerns and interests of women in the political sphere, in society and in the Church, just as we have done during the past 10 years.

We are happy to invite you to celebrate with us....

Editorial



Claire Renggli-Enderle and
Marie-Louise van Wijk-van de Ven

As two of the 'founding mothers' of Andante we were aware, of course, that Andante would have its 10th anniversary in 2016. Yet, the request from the current Coordinating Committee of Andante (CoCoA) to compose a small 'history booklet' about these (first) ten years, came as a surprise to us. At the same time we felt honoured. We started by drawing up a rough outline and made plans on how to work. We decided to interview the women who, together with us, had taken the initiative of creating a European Alliance of Catholic women's organisations. All of them showed themselves very happy to answer; some even said that, if asked to do so, they would immediately do it all over again. We also sent a questionnaire to the members of the current CoCoA; practically all responded. We used part of all these answers as the basis for some of our texts. A bit naively we thought that the rest of the work would be 'peanuts'; however, the carrying out of our task demanded quite an effort.

Nevertheless, it was a joy to work on this booklet; it brought back memories of all the meetings and discussions we had with so many wonderful women, of all the things we had to find out and prepare, and how we were supported in this by so many different and competent people, mostly on a non-paid voluntary basis.

It is with great pleasure that we now present this small booklet. Rather than making a 'history book' in the usual sense, we chose to point out some characteristics of Andante that seemed important to us. We also describe the developments and changes in Europe that happened since the idea of creating Andante was first suggested. Europe, our Common Home seems to be very fragile. Nevertheless, let us continue to 'weave a Europe of Hope together' because our hands and our feet, our eyes and our heart, tell us to go on – *andante con brio*...

We extend a big 'thank you' to Maria Dinnendahl and Mariette Mumenthaler for their readiness and great help in translating several texts.

Introduction

This year, Andante is celebrating its tenth anniversary. A look at its origins and its commitment over these ten years shows how closely its vision, mission and ministry are intertwined with the history of Europe over the last 50 years. Europe is our common home. It embodies the vision of a continent 'united in diversity'. The common aim of the various cultures and nation states is to create together a future in peace, security and economic prosperity.

Until the beginning of the 21st century, the history of the European Union was one of success. The fall of the Wall and the expansion of the EU opened up an even wider perspective. Through exchanges and educational programmes offered by the EU, people from different countries and cultures learned to know and value each other. They believed in a common future for a Europe united in solidarity.

Today, it has become evident that social justice, economic development, the understanding of the concept and reality of democracy, and inter-religious co-existence are very different in the individual European countries. Populist movements, fear of losing high living standards and their own national identity, as well as a high degree of voter apathy, all promote national defensiveness. The defence of national sovereignty even puts into question the vision of a prosperous, diverse, but united Europe.

While Andante has been moulded by European history, it has nevertheless sought to find answers to these manifold challenges through study days, summer schools, bilateral seminars and national projects. The history of its foundation and the ongoing journey of Andante during the last ten years have borne witness to that.

There has been a wide spectrum of themes, as broad as the areas of life in which women are involved; and they have been closely related to the proclamation of the Gospel in today's world as defined by Pope Francis and the Second Vatican Council.

We trust that our common faith, the respect given to our various biographies, ways of life and religious experiences motivate and empower the women of Andante to create together a good life for all in Europe and to accept the responsibility for the well-being of all people on our common earth.

The Beginnings

Why a European women's Alliance

“ The Church does not exist to condemn people but to bring about an encounter with the visceral love of God's mercy. I often say that, in order for this to happen, it is necessary to go out: to go out from the churches, and the parishes, to go outside and look for people where they live, where they suffer, and where they hope.

Pope Francis: The name of God is Mercy. Interview with Andrea Tornelli. 2016

The last decade of the 20th century, especially the fall of the Berlin Wall, has left Europe with a new and different face. Following the World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995, women's networks sprang up not only in individual countries but also reaching beyond national frontiers.

Thus Catholic women's organisations have met bilaterally, as groups or in organisations for educational conferences and seminars to exchange information and engage in common projects. Women's organisations in various European countries invited each other to a number of events: 1998 in Schwarzenberg, Switzerland, 1999 in Vilnius, Lithuania, 2000 in Prague, Czech Republic, 2003 in London-Colney, United Kingdom, 2004 in Trnava, Slovakia.

The novelty was that committed women from Western Europe encountered women from Central and Eastern Europe. Their varied experiences and stories made a deep impression on all of them. Kfb (Movement of Catholic Women, Austria) chose 'Europe – a Women's Project', as their topic for the year 2003/4. KDFB (German Catholic Women's League) took the same Leitmotif for its 'encounter events' with the KNFE (Hungary) in 2005 and 2006.

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As the European Union expanded in 2004 with the accession of the Baltic States, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Hungary, there was great hope that Europe would grow closer together in solidarity. This impelled the women's organisations to get to know each other better and to seek opportunities to work together in society and Church.

At the conference in Trnava in 2004 the participants declared their intention actively to take part in the formation of the new Europe. To make this possible the women's organisations needed a formal structure. It was agreed to study and prepare the foundation of a European Alliance.



The following reasons were put forward:

- We, the Catholic women, are determined to use our organisations and the richness of our diversity which is nevertheless rooted in our common Christian faith to contribute to making Europe a continent whose unity is based on the coming together of a vibrant and mutually enriching diversity.
- We are convinced that our contribution is necessary to make this a reality. We will therefore search for new forms of networking and mutual support, which could serve as a model for networks of Catholic women's organisations in other continents too.
- This will enable us to enter into the decision-making processes in the political sphere, society in general and the life of the Church.
- The experience gained through our activity in our own individual countries will strengthen us in this enterprise.

A group of women from Germany, England, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland (Magdalena Bogner, Mary McHugh, Françoise Zorn, Agnès Barbosa-Manesse, Marie-Louise van Wijk-van de Ven, Margit Hautt, Claire Renggli-Enderle, with Helga Sourek as interpreter) agreed to carry this project forward and met under the leadership of Patricia Marshall, England. In June 2005, representatives of the Catholic women's organisations met in Paris to discuss the form and structure of such an alliance and to establish a committee with the task to call the inaugural meeting. This com-

mitted the women's organisations to playing an important role among the European International organisations.

On 15th February 2006 some members of the preparatory group met with the then general secretary of COMECE (the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU States) and two of his colleagues in Brussels. They encouraged us to continue with the establishment of the Alliance and promised good co-operation between COMECE and Andante.

On 26th March 2006, a delegation visited the president of the Council of Bishops' Conferences in Europe CCEE (also in non EU member states) in Chur, Switzerland, to inform him of the forthcoming foundation of Andante.

May 2006, saw the foundation of Andante – the European Alliance of Catholic Women's Organisations – in Budapest. It included at the time 17 organisations and was officially registered as a society in Düsseldorf, Germany. According to the Statutes nine members were elected to the Co-ordinating Committee (CoCoA) with Ágota Baternay, Marie Boháčová, Andrea Kett, Freda Lambert, Agnès Barbosa-Manesse, Mária Raučinová, Claire Renggli-Enderle, Inara Uzolina, Marie-Louise van Wijk-van de Ven. Marie-Louise van Wijk-van de Ven was elected Chair-Person.



Andante 2006–2016

10 years on our common journey

With the foundation of Andante a framework is established which enables the European Catholic women's organisations fully to use their skills and women's special perspectives and talents towards the building of a vibrant, fair and humane Europe.

'Andante' is a world-wide known musical term; it needs no translation in our multi-lingual Europe. 'Andante' comes from Italian and means go/march, steadily getting ahead on our way together, it is a verb and therefore active. 'Andante' reminds us of our mission as baptised women, to go our way as people of God. 'Andante' indicates the spiritual meaning of journeying together.

Andante – a meeting place

Andante becomes a forum for women to meet, and every year concentrates on a particular theme during a summer school, study days, a training seminar or the General Assembly¹. At the heart of all these events are the challenges and experiences faced by Catholic women all over the world today.

A look at the various meetings of Andante shows a red thread or a kind of 'Leitmotif'. They all take place in an atmosphere of dialogue: to discover the Other, to share experiences, to learn from each other, to experience community and to celebrate, to hand on good practices, to be women drinking together from spiritual wells. This leads to an open exchange of ideas and opinions and thus makes people look at issues from a less 'nationalistic' point of view. These meetings also offer the opportunity to develop ideas/suggestions/brainstorming about concrete common actions to be taken by the various organisations, in their own countries, and on the European level.

¹ See conferences, page 74



The themes focussed on three specific areas:

- the differences in the character of the member organisations
- democratic cooperation as women citizens of Europe
- how Christian women are to answer the current challenges facing Europe and the world.

The potential tensions caused by the differences, the variety between the women and organisations have been considered a number of times; both in order to raise awareness that a fruitful common life and action is possible through attentive listening, mutual empowerment, and careful consideration of different opinions, and also to make it possible to speak credibly with one voice or to represent the commitment of Andante visibly and audibly in the media.



Meetings with women politicians of various parties in both national and European Parliaments have contributed to a better understanding of politics. Such encounters showed how these politicians engage in the struggle for women's rights and gender equality, how women citizens can take on responsibilities in society and what ways are open to NGOs to find a hearing for their political concerns. Alliances with other NGOs of various orientations can bring about a breakthrough for common important concerns.

In its Summer Schools over the past years, Andante has taken a critical look at current issues. Those who attended these various Summer Schools studied and debated the responsibility for the care of Creation, the struggle against poverty and human trafficking, and the conflicting concerns raised with regard to human life, i.e. bio-ethics. They also developed together some action steps to be taken. It was seen as essential to look at these issues from the perspective of a deepened faith and one's own personal religious experience. The Summer School 'To recognise the signs of the times' (John XXIII) was dedicated to the spirituality and concrete action of women in Europe.

These meetings offer opportunities and are a source of strength for our contribution to the formation of Europe. They promote mutual understanding and the overcoming of boundaries. They contribute to the creation of peace.

Andante's diversity – Strength and risk

The first verse of the Andante prayer says: 'You, our Light and our Bread, our Way and our Word, we come before you, bringing different realities – yet marching to the same rhythm – *andante*. We hail from the East, we live in the West. At home in the North, we dwell in the South. Different yet united, sisters to each other, Your daughters.'

'Different yet united' – these three words are crucial for Andante. They express our wish to walk together in spite of the often very big, differences between the (currently 23) member organisations. Their ages range from barely 20 to over 115 years; their membership from less than 50 to 600.000. Some are (very) active in the political and socio-economic debate, others mainly address social and humanitarian issues, others again are more like debating clubs. All are engaged in (the work of) the Church but, here again, in very different ways. These differences do not only exist among the organisations as such, they also exist within the organisations themselves. Should this diversity be considered a strength or a risk?

The women we interviewed say unanimously 'both'. In their view, the risk posed by this great variety is the claim that one's own opinion is the only correct one, one's own way of acting the only valid one. This attitude could lead to division and damage Andante's unity. In addition, misunderstanding due to language barriers as well as exaggerated expectations may lead to disillusionment and make it difficult to reach common decisions.



They see the variety also as a strength: the many differences become apparent. This leads to the formation of (informed) opinion, horizons are widened. An Alliance means synergy, it leads to the reinforcement of common values, to common action, to a strong voice in the Church, in society

and in politics. The sharing of resources in terms of skills and experience encourages people to try new projects – possibly already successfully carried out by others but giving them one's own unique signature. In this way, our exchanges will go beyond being 'nice' meetings and become useful resources for our own work.

Some say that there are two speeds in Europe, a distinction between East and West with regard to the cultural and political life of society in general as well as a different understanding of the organisation of the Church in particular. They see that there is secularisation everywhere – including in the institutional Church. Andante could be a force in the care of Creation, the Common Good, the dignity of each human being (e.g. the refugees). In that way it could contribute to bringing the governments of some of the Nation States to more solidarity.

Andante – Catholic, in diversity

Andante is a Catholic women's network. What does this 'Catholic' say about Andante, its organisations, the members in these organisations? Here again, one can see a great diversity. Although all consider themselves as belonging to the world-wide Catholic community, it does not mean that there is just one way in which the individual members live their faith. Some are very actively engaged in their local faith community in both pastoral and practical areas; others concentrate more on purely spiritual matters; some simply follow what the church hierarchy tells them to do; others consider themselves as 'Church' in a deeper sense and, as such, want to be listened to and considered as partners in decision-making within Church structures. This diversity also extends to the kind of relationship of the various member organisations have with the church hierarchy in their country and the way they are involved in the life and activities of the Church. There are sometimes historical reasons for these differences. For instance, in countries that suffered Soviet domination for many years, people were not aware of the many developments in the life of the Church in other parts of Europe, e.g. the changes after the second Vatican Council. Even now, some 25 years after the fall of communism, the Documents of this important Council are not available in the languages of most of these countries. Whether Catholicism is a majority or minority religion in a particular country will also make a difference. Where it is in a minority, its people and organisations tend to be more engaged in ecumenical activities and movements.



Although the women of Andante may express their 'being Catholic' in many different forms and ways, they are united in a common 'Andante Prayer'. This prayer is a wonderful expression of the way in which (Board) members of the various organisations understand and live their faith, the manner in which they translate their joys and hopes, their grief and anguish into concrete action in the world and through the involvement in their organisation. The prayer can be found in eight languages at the Andante website www.andante-europa.net

Andante – networking in Europe

“ He who walks alone, will get lost; he only has two feet, two arms, two eyes. Within a community everyone has a thousand hands, a thousand feet; nobody ever walks alone.

These words of the Cameroonian poet Patrice Kayo underline the importance, and necessity, of 'walking together' (*andante...*!) if you want to achieve something. This also holds good for the members of the Andante organisations among themselves, as well as for Andante as a European Alliance. People/organisations wanting

to achieve something, need 'companions on the road', and networking is a/the way to find them.

At the pre-Andante meeting, 2005 in Paris, it was said: 'As Catholic women we want to contribute to a more humane face of Europe. Therefore, we must take part, and make our voices heard and listened to, in the debates and decision-making processes in society, in the political sphere and Church Institutions at the European level. This is necessary in order to ensure that decisions taken in these areas, will also reflect the views of women'. Beautiful words but even a far less ambitious aim cannot be achieved if you walk alone. That's why, from the very start of Andante, Co-CoA members have invested much time and energy in networking.

How to understand networking? It's not exactly the same as lobbying; it is a sharing of information, giving as well as receiving; it is not a competition but requires the willingness to help, the readiness of giving the other the benefit of something. It demands getting to know people, building up good relationships, trust in each other, knowledge of the structures: what to do, or not to do; whom to approach, know the agendas....

It is in this sense that representatives of Andante have been (net)working during these 10 years. As an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) with participatory status at the Council of Europe (CoE), Andante has many opportunities for networking with other international NGOs represented there. Even before this status was officially granted to Andante, its representatives have been cooperating with many of these INGOs - not only with those of women (in the 'equal opportunities task force') or Catholic/Christian ones (united in 'CINGO'), but also with secular ones and those of other beliefs. It is difficult to say what exactly has been the result of all the work, time and energy spent on this. However, one very concrete result of this active networking and cooperation, was the support we got from them when we applied for participatory status. The fact that Andante is known there, that people ask our opinion and cooperation, allows us to think that we were able to advance (a little) on our way to achieving the aims we set ourselves.

The situation at the European Union is different. At the EU (the European Commission, the European Parliament) NGOs cannot be accredited and a collective body comparable to the Conference of INGOs at the CoE does not exist. Contacts must be established on an individual basis. What can help is to participate in, and cooperate with, groups or organisations that are focusing their work more specifically on EU policies. That's why representatives of Andante took part in meetings and events organised by the Comece, the IXE Group (Initiative of Christians for Europe), the European Social Weeks, the European Sunday Alliance, the Robert Schuman Foundation, the European Women's Lobby etc. But also in seminars and con-



ferences organised by (one or other of) these groups in cooperation with groups/members of the European Parliament. And again: these events and meetings offered good opportunities to network with both individual MEPs and members of these organisations.

Still another form of networking that can be very fruitful is to take part in conferences and assemblies of other (both European and national) NGOs. Among those attended by representatives of Andante in these 10 years are: the European Lay Forum, Ecumenical Forum of Christian Women in Europe, Pax Christi, Pax Romana, the German Katholikentag, the French Semaines Sociales de France, the Polish Gniezno Congress, etc.. Besides all these, the meetings and events of the Andante member organisations were not forgotten. These not only offer an excellent opportunity for networking, the participation at these events also contributes to strengthening the internal Andante network.

Being Church in one's own country

Andante's organisations

What has already been said about the many different ways in which Andante members live their faith, also goes for the way they see their task and mission of being Church in their own country. Some organisations are very active in the pastoral field and in social welfare work. Others address fundamental issues regarding the place of women in the church and see themselves (more) in partnership with the church hierarchy. Others again are engaged in educational programmes for priests and pastoral workers. This paragraph shows how some of the Andante member organisations fulfil their mission of being Church.

Martin's House

St. Martin's House in Liepaja (Latvia) was founded in 1997 by the Dominicans and lay people dedicated to the care of street children. In 2004, the organisation 'Martin's House' was taken over by the Latvian Catholic Women's Union LKSA to support women and children in need financially, spiritually and morally and thus to fulfil its vocation of service as a Catholic organisation in the Church. It continues to carry out this ministry up to the present time.

Much is being done to promote the spiritual growth of the women in question while at the same time help is given with food, clothing, toiletries, and necessary items for children. Children from poor families receive support with educational items and school meals. If possible, gifted children from poor families receive special sponsorships, such as fees for music lessons or other educational expenses.

Living conditions are improved if possible (e.g. minor renovation works, household gadgets, firewood etc). Those families living in rural areas and are struggling, are not forgotten either. Situations and needs vary, but God provides for everything at the right time!

During the summer, many children have no opportunity to visit the zoo, a nature park, or to undertake an excursion. The organisation therefore arranges such activities for poor children. Every year, there are special ce-

lebrations at Easter and Christmas with special emphasis on their religious significance for Christians.

It is essential for every human being to know that someone else needs her or him, that she or he is important and of value in someone else's life. So once a month there will be a Day of Reflection for women. Here, women have the chance to gain in self-esteem, deepen their own identity, reflect on the meaning of life, and share their experiences. Sometimes the women fear change. They change slowly, develop and become sensitive. During this day, the children are looked after and enjoy each other's company. All this can bring peace into family life.

All this charitable work carried out by the organisation 'Martin's House' is only possible through the generosity of its donors. For years, the German organisations 'Bonifatiuswerk' and 'Renovabis' have been supporting 'Martin's House'. Equal heartfelt gratitude is due to the friends, both men and women, in Austria, Germany, Switzerland and many more benefactors!



Advocacy

In 2015, the French member organisation Action catholique des femmes Acf published an advocacy for 'the rightful place of women in the decision-making processes of the Church'. This advocacy had been drafted based on the 'word walls' organised by their members on 8 March 2014 in churches and public places, with the question 'What do you think of women's role in the decision-making processes of the Church?' and followed by interviews and questionnaires with priests, bishops, lay men and women engaged in the Church. In this way, approximately 4'000 testimonies had been collected.

The advocacy focuses on four themes and areas:

- Let us talk of 'alliance' corresponding to the Creation as wanted by God, in the Bible, and not of 'complementarity' because this word is always used to reduce women to an inferior role. Such an alliance would lead to a real co-responsibility.
- Education and formation, where women are often disadvantaged or less valued.
- Discrimination in the liturgy, which offers an almost exclusive masculine image of the Church. Also, in France, there has been a step-back for some years now: girls and women are not allowed to be altar servers, and cannot even give Communion.
- And lastly the ministries in the Church: we advocate that women can have access to the permanent diaconate which would be a first step forward. And we ask that the priestly ministry might be reconsidered.

Finally we ask whether the link that currently exists between the ordained priesthood and governance within the Church, cannot really be changed?

Up to now, we haven't had any reaction from the bishops, except from the one who accompanies us....

For more information: <http://actioncatholiquedesfemmes.org/plaidoyer-2/le-plaidoyer/>



The Dialogue Process

The on-going five-year dialogue initiated by the German Bishops' Conference in the spring of 2011 came to a formal closure on 11/12 September 2015 in Würzburg. The trigger for the dialogue had been the abuse scandal in the German Church.

The Catholic German Women's League KDFB and the Catholic women's community kfd were both involved from the start, ensuring that women's perspectives on the issues under consideration were seen and heard. Constant efforts had to be made to make sure that the views of the women's organisations as formulated in the position papers 'Women - the Future of the Church' (kfd/2011) and 'Being Church in Partnership' (KDFB/2011) were included in the discussions and statements. In all this, the demands for more influence of lay people in the offices, positions, and committees of the Church, as well as the admission of divorced and remarried Catholics to the sacraments, have played an important part, as did the demands that women's charismas should be recognised and play a more prominent role in the celebration and leadership of the liturgy; permission for lay people to preach during the celebration of the Eucharist was also sought. The evaluation of the whole process of this dialogue shows that, all in all, it has moved the Church forward, and that issues that have hitherto been regarded as taboo, such as marital separation, divorce, remarriage, the manifold forms of family life today, same-sex love, sexuality and our bodily reality in general, can now be talked about. The final communiqué, 'Faith in Today's World', which clearly shows the contribution of both women's organisations, is an honest and transparent report, and provides many building blocks and impulses for the still ongoing reform of the life of the Church.

The whole dialogue was indeed a mutual learning process for all participants, bishops and delegates of the various organisations, communities and dioceses, and its continuing work must not be allowed to remain fruitless. Kfd and KDFB, representing women's perspective, will continue to accompany and shape, both critically and constructively, this process as it continues into the future.

Domestic Abuse

The National Board of Catholic Women is a consultative body to the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. One of the issues it has pursued for many years is domestic abuse. We recently published a resource pack to raise awareness of domestic abuse in the Catholic Church and for those involved in pastoral care. In 2010 we were invited to send two representatives to the Bishops' Conference Working Group on domestic abuse within the Department of Christian Responsibility and Citizenship.

Since that time the group has prepared a survey of parishes to record the incidence of domestic abuse in parishes. This survey highlighted the lack of capacity within the Catholic community for meeting the needs of victims of domestic abuse. We have worked with the Head of Safeguarding services in the Catholic Church to include domestic abuse in their policies. We have also helped to develop an on-line resource for Catholics Experiencing Domestic Abuse (CEDAR).

The Catholic Education Service has recently been preparing new guidelines for Catholic Schools for relationships and sex education. We visited the service to discuss the possibility of including issues connected with domestic abuse and this was agreed. Another recent development was a Round Table Conference to initiate a dialogue between theologians and practitioners to root the work we are doing on domestic abuse in a firm theological foundation. Many issues were highlighted during this event, including the link between domestic abuse and suicides and mental health problems. It is hoped to initiate a pilot project which would train pastoral workers in deaneries/parishes to whom cases of domestic abuse could be referred. NBCW also recently represented the Cardinal at a meeting of Faith Leaders in the House of Lords. A Declaration was issued on domestic abuse. This has subsequently been agreed by the Bishops' Conference.

Recent developments

Andante's way into the future



During the ten years of Andante's existence, not only has the political landscape in Europe changed, but there have also been many changes in the life of the Church and in society as a whole. One of these changes is that people no longer commit themselves to life-long membership of organisations. This is true not only for (Catholic) women's organisations, it is a general trend in practically all European countries. Instead, people, especially younger people form networks for sharing information and/or for mutual support. If at all, they only engage in short term projects without the necessity of formal meetings etc. This development has also had a big impact on the member organisations of Andante: diminishing membership, problems in finding people willing to take on leadership positions, some organisations have even ceased to exist.

A new project, *'andante con brio'*, was started in the year after the General Assembly of 2013 in an attempt to find a solution to these problems. This project not only aims at strengthening Andante as a whole, but also to help its member organisations - those in Eastern Europe to find better structures and ways of functioning and those in Western Europe to attract younger generations. Another aim is to find means and ways to reduce the

workload of the CoCoA members, otherwise it will be difficult to find women having enough time to take on the responsibility of this task. A questionnaire was sent to all organisations; the responses collected by the coordinators in the various countries were discussed at a brainstorming meeting in 2015 involving them and members of the CoCoA. The results of this brainstorming served as the basis for a 'strategic plan' for the coming years that will be presented, discussed and submitted for approval at the General Assembly in April 2016. The future will show if this plan will indeed help Andante, and its member organisations, to continue its successful work in Europe.

Members of the current CoCoA expressed their wishes and views in the following way:

'I see the process of creating a vital network as offering the greatest opportunity not only 'to show interest in what others are doing', but also to join forces in raising awareness and implementing necessary changes both within the Church and society at large.'

'The best thing that could happen to Andante is to decide on a strategy which is benefiting most of the member organisations and their individual members and which will also attract sufficient support from sponsors. It would also be marvellous if Andante could think of ways and means of integrating migrants and put these into action. However, while it is important to make big plans it is essential that the existing activities of Andante continue and that a good and (pro-)active Coordinating Committee will be elected.'

'What makes us human, a community, and what is most important for the future of Europe is that it is built on its original foundation: - mutual help, communication, solidarity and humanity. That should be the main task which Andante should also make its own.'

'Andante intends go to into the future with a convincing strategy and therefore attract and enthuse new members, as well as find financial and personal support, because Andante will be seen to give a clear, strong and respected voice of Christian Women in Europe on political, social and religious issues.'

Konferenzen, Studientage, Sommerakademien Conferences, Study Days, Summer Schools Conférences, Journées d'étude, Universités d'été

2004 Trnava, Slowakei/Slovakia/Slovaquie
Frauensache Europa
Europe – A women's business
Europe – Affaire de femmes

2005 Paris, Frankreich/France
Eine Allianz – ja oder nein?
An Alliance – yes or no ?
Une Alliance – oui ou non?

2006 Budapest, Ungarn/Hungary/Hongrie
Interkultureller und interreligiöser Dialog
Intercultural and interreligious dialogue
Dialogue interculturel et interreligieux

2007 Vught, Niederlande / Netherlands/
Pays-Bas

Fremde oder Freundinnen? – Der interkulturelle
Dialog innerhalb Andante
Strangers or friends? – The intercultural dialogue
within Andante
De qui suis-je l'étrangère? – Le dialogue interculturel
à l'intérieur d'Andante

2008 Sion, Schweiz/Switzerland/Suisse
Wie geht Andante mit kontroversen Meinungen und
Stellungnahmen um, und wie spricht sie trotzdem mit
einer Stimme in der Öffentlichkeit?
How does Andante and deal with controversial
opinions and positions, and how does it nevertheless
manage to speak with one voice in public?
Comment Andante gère-t-elle des points de vue et
des prises de position controversées, et comment
parvient-elle néanmoins à parler en public d'une
seule voix?

2009 High Leigh, Hoddesdon, England/England/
Angleterre
Damit unsere Botschaft ankommt: Pressearbeit als
Herausforderung für katholische Frauen
Getting your message across: Media Challenge for
Catholic Women
Faites passer votre message: l'enjeu des media pour
les femmes catholiques

2010 Strasbourg, Frankreich France
Europa – Die Frau: eine Kraft für die Demokratie
Europa – Women: a strength for Democracy
Europa – Les femmes: une force pour la démocratie

2011 Reute, Deutschland/Germany/Allemagne
'Die Zeichen der Zeit erkennen' (Joh. XXIII.): Spirituali-
tät im Handeln europäischer Frauen – gestern, heute,
morgen

'Recognise the signs of the times' (John XXIII): Spiritu-
ality put into practice by European women – yester-
day, today, tomorrow
«Lire les signes des temps» (Jean XXIII): la spiritualité
dans l'agir de femmes européennes – hier, au-
jourd'hui, demain

2012 Augsburg, Deutschland/Germany/Allemagne
Wir sind Erben der Erde – Wie können wir verant-
wortlich mit ihr umgehen?
We are the inheritors of the Earth – what can we do
to live responsibly?
Nous sommes les héritières de la Terre – comment y
vivre de manière responsable?

2013 Bratislava, Slowakei/Slovakia/Slovaquie
Andante – gemeinsam ein Europa der Hoffnung
weben
Andante – weaving together a Europe of hope
Andante – tisser ensemble l'Europe de l'espoir

2014 Riga, Lettland/Latvia/Lettonie
Armut in Europa und innere Stärkung des Verbandes
Poverty in Europe and the internal strengthening of
the Association
La pauvreté en Europe et le renforcement interne de
l'association

2015 Wien, Österreich/Austria/Autriche
Warum Bioethik? – Bioethische Fragen, mit denen
Menschen heute konfrontiert werden
Why bioethics? – Bioethical issues facing people
today
Pourquoi la bioéthique? – Des questions de
bioéthique auxquelles nous sommes confrontées
aujourd'hui

2016 High Leigh, Hoddesdon, England/Angleterre
Sharing life – working together – developing strength
Partager la vie – travailler ensemble – bâtir une force
Leben teilen – zusammen arbeiten – Stärke ent-
wickeln

Members Coordinating Committee Andante
Mitglieder des Koordinationskomitees
Membres du Comité de coordination
CoCoA 2006-2016

Chair – Vorsitzende - Présidente

2006–2013: Marie-Louise van Wijk-van de Ven (Unie NKV, Netherlands)

2013–2016: Mary McHugh (NBCW, UK)

Inese Augskalne 2010–2016 (Lksa, Latvia)

Sr. Ágota Baternay 2006–2010 (KNFE, Hungary; RIP 2013)

Marie Boháčová 2006–2008 (UKZ, Czech Republic)

Bohuslava Bouckava 2008–2010 (UKZ, Czech Republic)

Mette Bruusgaard 2010-2016 (NKKF, Norway)

Waltraud Deckelmann 2013–2016 (KDFB, Germany)

Maria Demeterová 2010–2016 (KhzS, Slovakia)

Gisela Hoeve 2013–2016 (Unie NKV, Netherlands)

Zsuzsa Huszka Laczkóné 2010–2016 (KNFE, Hungary)

Andrea Kett 2006–2010 (kfd, Germany)

Freda Lambert 2006–2010 (NBCW, UK)

Lasma Latsone 2008–2010 (Lksa, Latvia)

Mary McHugh 2010–2013 (NBCW, UK)

Agnès Manesse 2006–2011 (Acf, France)

Maria Theresia Opladen 2010–2013 (kfd, Germany)

Vroni Peterhans 2013–2016 (SKF, Switzerland)

Sophie Pujalte 2011–2013 (Acf, France)

Mária Raucinová 2006–2010 (KhzS, Slovakia)

Claire Renggli-Enderle 2006–2013 (SKF, Switzerland)

Inara Uzolina 2006–2008 (Lksa, Latvia)



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