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*“God became man – and dwells among us”*

*Best wishes for a Merry Christmas  
and God’s abundant blessing for the New Year 2010  
from the secretariat of the German Commission for Justice and Peace*

**Commission reconstituted**

Bishop Dr. Stephan Ackermann, Trier, was confirmed in his office as President of the German Commission for Justice and Peace on the constitutive meeting for the new term of work 2009-2014 held in Berlin on 23 October 2009. Prof. Dr. Barbara Krause, Catholic University NRW Aachen, and Dr. Stefan Vesper, Secretary General of the Central Committee of German Catholics were re-elected vice-presidents. New elected members of the management board are Prof. Dr. Josef Sayer, managing director of Misereor and prelate Dr. Klaus Krämer, President of Missio Aachen. Other new members will be Prof. Dr. Thomas Hoppe (peace section), Prof. Dr. Heiner Bielefeldt, (human rights section), and Prof. DDr. Johannes Wallacher (development section). Working groups on “Human Rights and Human Dignity”, “Poverty orientation” and “Just Peace”, and a permanent working group “Services for Peace” were established.

**„Caritas in Veritate“ in dialogue with politics**

The importance of the globalization encyclical “Caritas in Veritate” for politics was the subject of a discussion with Elmar Brok, MEP, Dietmar Nietan MP and Hellmut Königshaus MP in Berlin on 23/24 October 2009. Dietmar Nietan said the encyclical immunizes against the force of circumstance ideology, and counters the widespread efficiency orientation with true human development and solidarity. Hellmut Königshaus was full of praise for the precise analysis of the risks of global poverty, even of the risks of relative poverty in developed countries. Elmar Brok emphasized the necessity of global rules for global markets, because the lack of rules would result in the market’s self-destruction as the crisis of the financial market showed.

The answer to conflicting particular interests lies in the reference and orientation of every human being to other people, near and far, hence in an orientation of politics towards the common good, Bishop Ackermann summarized the discussion. He encouraged the stronger players to pioneering steps in the global market, for instance by implementing a tax against poverty: “There will be no advances unless we overcome ourselves and change”.

**Justitia et Pax supports “Tax against poverty” campaign**

On the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October, the campaign “Tax against poverty: Financial Transaction Tax” sent an open letter to the coalition partners of the Federal Government, in which they demand to implement a financial transaction tax in order to promote development and to fight poverty. Among the first signatories are representatives of the Church – for example Bishop Stephan Ackermann, President of the Commission for Justice and Peace -, trade unions, associations, banks and scientists.



from right to left: Wallacher, Brok, Ackermann, Königshaus and Nietan at the JP Commission

In the run-up to the G20 Finance Ministers meeting in St. Andrews on 7 November 2009, Bishop Ackermann called on the Federal Government to support the implementation of a Financial Transaction Tax. On 12 November 2009, the Committee on Petitions of the Federal Government started an online petition on the financial transaction tax. The petition gathered more than 50,000 signatures by 4 December 2009, and so there will be a public hearing on the financial transaction tax in the Federal Government. For more information, see: [www.steuer-gegen-armut.org](http://www.steuer-gegen-armut.org).

### **Maximilian-Kolbe-Foundation**

On the proposal of Archbishop Dr. Schick, the president of the foundation's management council, Jörg Lüer was elected chairman of the foundation. He succeeds to Dieter Althaus in this office. To start its practical work, the foundation plans to hold a European workshop on dealing with a past burdened by violence at the memorial site of Auschwitz from 10 to 15 August 2010. In the workshop, church representatives active in the field of Reconciliation and Remembrance from different European contexts will have the opportunity to jointly reflect on their work, to exchange experiences and to develop new ideas.

### **Workshop in Sierra Leone**



Group photo at the end of the workshop in Freetown

In cooperation with AGEH and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sierra Leone, the Justice and Peace Commission organized an International Workshop on dealing with a past burdened by violence which was held from 31 August to 4 September 2009 in Freetown/Sierra Leone. This workshop with 44 participants coming from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America focused on the dialogue with the victims and survivors of the civil war in Sierra Leone, as well as with representatives of the government and civil society on the requirements and problems of dealing with a past burdened by violence which in the long term

aims to reach reconciliation. The local Church saw this international workshop as a preparation to the forthcoming synod for Africa in Rome in October 2009. The experiences of the workshop were recorded in a final communiqué and sent to political and church representatives in Sierra Leone. As a result of the workshop, the African JP partners consider having regular exchanges between the national commissions.

### **2009 Synod for Africa in Rome**

The second special assembly for Africa of the synod of bishops was held in Rome from 4 to 25 October 2009 on the subject "The Church in Africa in service to reconciliation, justice and peace". Two representatives of the Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions were invited as observers. The Synod emphasized the importance of a policy based on human rights and the role of women for the Church in Africa and it recommended, among others, to strengthen structures of justice and peace in Africa.

### **Domestic Workers Convention**

All over the world, domestic workers often have to live and work under unprotected and exploitative circumstances. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) wants to prepare a convention for 2011 to protect the rights of domestic workers. A broad civil society network will be necessary to support ILO's work until 2011, and then to promote the implementation of such an international convention into national law. In cooperation with international and European trade unions, Justice and Peace plans to hold a workshop in Brussels to which also KAB and the European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA) will be invited to participate. Justice and Peace put the subject on the agenda of a meeting during the women's congress of the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) on 19 October 2009 in order to raise awareness and to solicit support.

### ***Action plan „Trade, Regional Integration and Infrastructure“ of the Africa-EU strategic partnership***

As part of the Venro-project ‚African perspective - European politics‘ an international workshop on the action plan „Trade, Regional Integration and Infrastructure“ of the Africa-EU strategic partnership was held on 26 November, 2009. It was titled: Putting Rural Development First. With the East Cape Agricultural Research Program (ECARP) in Grahamstown, Republic of South Africa, Justice and Peace made a contribution to the working group ‚Decent Work and Rural Development‘. The working conditions of farm workers and small farmers are the main emphasis of ECARP. The focus of the scientific and legal work is on the right to organize oneself which is a prerequisite for improved working and living conditions. Also as far as participation and fair conditions of Agrarian Trade are concerned, ECARP with its director Lali Naidoo has proven to be a reliable dialogue partner of Justice and Peace.

### ***Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions***

The Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions was held in Seville/Spain from 18 to 22 September 2009. Subject matter of the international workshop was: „What are the limits to solidarity in Europe?“. One group visited the Spanish exclave of Ceuta on the coast of Morocco and talked to refugees and members of relief organizations. Highlight of the workshop was a service held on the beach of Algeciras by the Bishop of Cadíz and Ceuta in memory of the dead who died when trying to cross the Strait of Gibraltar. The final declaration demands, among others, refugee and migration policies displaying solidarity. During the plenary assembly it was decided to carry out a concerted action on the topic „Solidarity in times of crisis“ in 2010.



At the beach of Algeciras with the Bishop of Cadiz (right), Archbishop Defois (2nd from right) and Marie-Laure Denès OP (left)

### ***Find-book Justice and Peace***

After archiving the files of Justice and Peace dating from the foundation in 1967 to the year 2000, the find-book to the history of the German Commission for Justice and Peace has been completed. This find-book is the first from the holdings of the historical archives of the Archdiocese of Cologne to be put online on the website of the archives of North Rhine-Westphalia. It can be consulted at [www.archive.nrw.de/Kirchenarchive/](http://www.archive.nrw.de/Kirchenarchive/). A simplified system for its use by analogy with the Würzburg synod has been agreed upon. So the files of Justice and Peace can be consulted for scientific work. By this a further step has been taken to improve the conditions for scientific work on church activities in the fields of human rights, peace and development as well as on Justice and Peace.

### ***Ecumenical consultation in Freising***

The Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen (ACK) (work group of Christian churches) will hold an ecumenical consultation in Freising from 8 to 10 February 2010, being titled „Glory to God and Peace on Earth – challenges by the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation“. In conclusion of the Decade to Overcome Violence, this second Freising consultation shall deal with the subject matter of peace in detail, especially in view of the conclusion of the Decade in Jamaica in May 2011. Target groups are multipliers from Christian churches, people being entrusted with the work for peace, environment and justice, as well as networks and groups of the „Decade to Overcome Violence“.

### ***GKKE-publication on Good Governance and Democratic Budget Policies***

In conclusion of its work, the specialist group has presented two publications. The English publication „Good Governance and Democratic Budget Policies - New tasks for parliament and civil society“ (GKKE series no. 49) documents the contributions of the conference on democratic budget policies held in South Africa in September 2008 and of the workshop held in Berlin in March 2009. With reference to the present debate in Germany on budgetary assistance, the German publication „Good Governance und demokratische Haushaltspolitik - Beitrag zur Debatte um Budgethilfe“ gives a summary of the results of the specialist group’s work (GKKE series no. 50).

It primarily describes appropriate forms of budgetary assistance and additional instruments to strengthen the role of parliaments in the political systems of the recipient countries.

### **New GKKE term of work**

On 14 September 2009, the GKKE executive committee decided on the work programme for the next three years. The specialist groups "arms exports", "coherence", and "pharma dialogue" will continue their work with a slightly changed structure.

Dr. Jürgen Hambrink, for many years managing director representing the Evangelical Church, retired from his office at the end of September and was succeeded by Tim Kuschnerus on 1 October 2009.

The Evangelical members of the present executive committee are: Prelate Felmberg (chairman), Claudia Warning (EED), Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel (Brot für die Welt), Jürgen Deile (EED), Bishop Martin Schindehütte. The Catholic members are: Prelate Karl Jüsten (chairman), Bishop Stephan Ackermann, Prof. Josef Sayer, Ulrich Pöner, and Michael Steeb.

### **GKKE arms export report 2009**

On 14 December 2009, the GKKE presidents Dr. Karl Jüsten and Dr. Bernhard Felmberg, and the president of the specialist group "arms exports", Dr. Bernhard Moltmann, presented the arms export report 2009 at the Federal Press Conference in Berlin. The GKKE report criticizes that with regard to the arms export policy, the coalition agreement gives priority to foreign trade and industrial aspects and ignores political dimensions of peace and development. In 2008, the volume of export licences granted by the Federal Government for arms transfers increased by 36.5% to 5.78 billion Euro compared to 2007 (3.67 billion Euro).

GKKE urges the new Federal Government to strengthen the arms export control regime. It among others calls for more participation of the German Parliament in political decisions on arms exports and for a fight against corruption. Again, GKKE demands an earlier publication of the arms export report, which the Federal Government should submit to the Parliament and the public by 30 June of the following year. Also at the end of 2009, the Government's report on arms export licences granted in 2008 has not been published yet.

For more information, see [www.gkke.org](http://www.gkke.org).

### **Personalia**

**Cardinal Peter Turkson** (Cape Coast, Ghana) was appointed president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at the end of October. As General Relator of the Synod for Africa in Rome in October 2009, he became known to a broad public in the universal Church. Bishop Ackermann congratulated him on his appointment.

Auxiliary bishop **Dr. Franz-Josef Overbeck**, member of the German Commission for Justice and Peace, was appointed **Bishop of Essen** on 28 October 2009.

### **Imprint**

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editor: Gertrud Casel



Dr. Moltmann showing a photo with combatants in Pakistan armed with G3 guns



GKKE Presidents Jüsten and Felmberg at the Federal Press Conference

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*German Commission for Justice and Peace – A joint institution of the German Bishops' and the Central Committee of German Catholics for promoting development, human rights and peace*