Meeting of the JP Commission in Berlin

“How to deal with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?” This question was the main topic of the Commission’s autumn meeting held on 26 and 27 October 2012 in Berlin. Yariv Lapid, historian and director of the Education department of the Mauthausen Memorial, exposed the long history of Jewish disappointment at the pogroms and the extermination following the considerable contributions of Jews to the cultural history of Europe and of the resulting distrust, and he explained the thinking which is based on experience and concern that, in the end, Israel can only rely on itself. This history and the concrete behaviour of Europeans, he added, is of importance for the mental dispositions of the Israeli society, a fact which is largely underestimated in Europe.

On Friday afternoon, the Commission visited the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe murdered under the National Socialist Regime which was opened a few days before. Subsequent to this visit, the Commission agreed to deal with the situation of the 8 to 12 million Roma and Sinti living in Europe during one of its next meetings.

The Commission confirmed the critical questions concerning the acquisition and the use of armed drones addressed by the Commission’s President Bishop Dr Stephan Ackermann in a declaration published on 17 Sept. 2012. Especially the questions formulated under the topic “targeted killing, extra-legal executions” touch on the ethical and legal fundamental principles of the Federal Republic.

In the end, Msgr Spiegel, Director General of Misereor, was unanimously elected to the Board of the German Commission for Justice and Peace.

International meeting of bishops in Bethlehem, Gaza and Amman

Bishop Dr Stephan Ackermann headed the German delegation to the 13th meeting of the Coordination of Episcopal Conferences in Support of the Church of the Holy Land which took place from 5 to 10 January 2013. The meetings and talks focussed on the dramatic developments experienced by the Middle East last year and on the situation of Christians which has become more difficult. Bishop Ackermann could also visit the Gaza Strip and he got an idea of the destruction of public buildings during the latest conflicts. He was impressed by the determination of the small Catholic community in the Gaza Strip to cope with everyday life even in adverse conditions.

This year’s meeting also concentrated on the continuing Israeli settlement constructions in the occupied territories. Bishop Ackermann stated: “It would be dramatic for both peoples, Israelis and Palestinians, if a two-state solution – which was also recommended by Pope Benedict in his recent address to the Diplomatic Corps – was made impossible.”
International Workshop with general staff officers in Auschwitz

From 21 to 25 November 2012, an International Workshop on dealing with the history of Auschwitz burdened by violence took place at the Centre for Dialogue and Prayer in Oswiecim/Auschwitz with German and Polish general staff officers. The workshop was organized by the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation and the Centre for ethics education in the armed forces. New ground was entered by organizing a workshop in this combination. Against the background of the history of Auschwitz the participants of the workshop discussed about the issues of dealing with the experience of violence and with individual and social traumatization.

Because of their deployments in Afghanistan the majority of the participants had made their own experiences with violence and this gave the discussions during the workshop a special mark and an existential seriousness. The fact that at this location German and Polish officers together were looking for ways to appropriately deal with violence and violence experience, considerably contributed to the political-symbolic discourse on these issues. The workshop will be repeated next year and it is planned to invite French and Italian general staff officers as well.

50 years Pacem in Terris

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the publication of the encyclical “Pacem in Terris” Justice and Peace and the Catholic Military Chaplaincy (KMBA) will organize an event at the Katholische Akademie Berlin (Catholic Academy Berlin) on 9/10 April 2013 to acknowledge this document and to talk about the current challenges for church peace activities. In the afternoon Cardinal Marx and Joschka Fischer will discuss about the topic “To learn from the Church? Church peace activities between vision and illusion”.

ExCo of JP Europe in Berlin

On 12/13 December 2012, the Executive Committee of the Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions held a meeting in Berlin. Deliberations in the meeting focussed on the establishment of a Permanent Secretariat in Brussels as well as on the planned Concerted Action 2013, on the forthcoming meeting of the General Secretaries from 8 to 10 March 2013 in Rome, as well as on the International Workshop and the General Assembly which will take place in Berlin.

Talks with GEPA

On 30 October 2012, members of the Task Force Tropical Fruit (TFTF) met GEPA representatives in Wuppertal to talk about the experiences made during an EDP in the Philippines where partners in Fair Trade had been visited. On the one hand there is a trend in Fair Trade to cooperate with manufacturers who also process products from conventional trade but who comply with high environmental, hygienic and social standards, and on the other hand the development of decentralized value chains is a matter of concern for GEPA partners, which requires increased financial and logistic efforts. Both developments call for a structural change in the local agricultural landscape which has to be assisted right from the start. GEPA also observes that conventional trade and Fair Trade are approaching each other – not least because of the decades of information efforts and campaigns of the “Fair Trade Movement”.

Commemoration at the Wall of Death at Auschwitz I
Participants in the work-shop

**“Regionalfenster” – an initiative of the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV)**

The Federal minister of food, agriculture and consumer production, Ilse Aigner, had launched an initiative to promote regional agricultural products by a so-called “regional window” label. The JP president bishop Dr Ackermann in a letter to the minister then had requested to include also foreign products which are consumed in Germany into this initiative as a contribution to sustainable agriculture and social justice in the global context.

**Decent work as an objective of the post 2015 agenda**

The ILO has initiated the setting-up of a small working group of Catholic organisations having consultative status at the ILO. This group shall support the ILO in its endeavours to introduce the right to decent work as an objective of the MDG/SDG agenda. Among the members of this group are representatives of the ILO and of Kolping International (represented by Justitia et Pax), Caritas internationalis, the World Movement of Christian Workers (WMCW), the International Young Christian Workers (IYCW), the Catholic Rural Youth Movement (MIJARC), of pax romana, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), the International Christian Union of Business Executives (UNIAAPAC), the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the Nunciature in Geneva. Pierre Martinot-Lagarde SJ, ILO and Dr Hildegard Hagemann JP are presiding this working group.

**Participation in the World Social Forum on Migration**

At the end of 2012, the World Social Forum on Migration offered the opportunity to evaluate the efforts of trade unions, domestic workers organizations, migration organizations and churches to have the C189 ratified by as many ILO member states as possible. The event lasted from 26 to 30 November 2012, and on three days half-day workshops were offered where the different strategies and political activities were discussed in a participatory manner.

On the last day, the „Andres Bonifacio Day”, a Philippine day of remembrance of the revolution against Spain in 1872 and of workers' rights, an event with a great publicity effect was organized.


**Consultation tour to Singapore and Hong Kong**

Having attended the World Social Forum on Migration, Dr Hagemann visited the Justice and Peace structures of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences and of the Archdioceses of Singapore and Hong Kong. The consultation tour took place from 3 to 7 December 2012 and brought together local actors from domestic workers organizations, migration organizations and Church institutions.

The already existing contacts between the local groups could be revived and deepened and possible areas for cooperation of Justice and Peace sister structures could be explored. On 18 December 2012, the International Migrants Day, Hildegard Hagemann described the situation of domestic workers in Hong Kong and Singapore in an interview with KNA (Catholic News Agency).

http://www.weltkirche.katholisch.de/de/weltkirche/aktuelles/20121218_migration_interview_hagemann.php
Expert meeting on the human rights concept of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

The BMZ and the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) on 24/25 October 2012 held an expert meeting in Berlin on the sustainability of the human rights concept and its importance for the cooperation with the private sector. The human rights concept is far from being implemented and from being a binding commitment for the realizing organisations. Dr Hildegard Hagemann was the JP representative in a panel discussion of the Human Rights Forum. The “economy and development” working group of the Human Rights Forum remains in contact with the BMZ, for instance with regard to the promotion of a complaints mechanism in the German bilateral development cooperation as well as to the dialogue with the KfW which has started on 19 December 2012.

Egypt in the centre of attention of the initiative 'solidarity with persecuted and oppressed Christians'

In 2012, the document "solidarity with persecuted and oppressed Christians" focused on the situation in Egypt. On 29 November, the document was presented in Berlin in a discussion with MPs and in an ensuing press conference. In their statements, archbishop Schick and Prelate Krämer emphasized the importance of the human right to religious freedom and pointed out the wrongful restrictions which hinder people in many countries to exercise this right. Bishop Kyrillos Samaan from Egypt talked about the situation of Christians in his home country.

About 20 members of the parliament took part in the discussion, and the ensuing press conference also was well attended.

At present, the Christian Churches seem to get more involved in politics. Bishop Kyrillos said that there are plans to make the dialogue between the Coptic Catholic and the Coptic Orthodox Christians a permanent institution. This body shall be entrusted with the coordination of the appearance of the Christian Churches in public and in politics. Bishop Kyrillos considered the "dialogue of life" to be the most appropriate form of interreligious talks which he has successfully established in his diocese. Especially the social and charitable commitment of the Churches is largely appreciated in society, but public awareness still should be increased.

GKKE, 10 years of coherence discourse

On 19 November 2012, a meeting was held in Berlin on "demands on an effective civil society commitment for more development-related policy coherence". The meeting reflected on the past 10 years of GKKE’s coherence discourse and discussed on the future orientation. The presentation of the OECD’s view of the shift in the coherence challenges during the past 20 years and the comparison between the international debate and the national discourse were very instructive. In February 2013, a dossier with the working title “a global securing of the future needs policy coherence” will be published in the magazine “weltsichten”.

GKKE Pharmadialogue

During the last meeting held in Berlin by the working group Churches/pharmaceutical industry on 21 November 2012, the study on the state
of and the need for pharmaceutical training in Tanzania was presented. The study had been prepared in the context of the cooperation programme “Access to Medicine” with the financial support and in cooperation with GIZ. The study discovered a considerable demand for the training of pharmaceutical assistants and so-called “dispensers” as well as serious shortcomings in the equipment of schools and scientific educational institutions. Involving the existing church, state and other educational institutions in Tanzania, it was suggested to carry out a three-year project in order to improve the training of pharmaceutical qualified personnel there. In addition, the working group critically discussed Clinical Studies in “Low-Income-Countries”.

**GKKE Arms Export Report 2012: Weapons do not create stability**

GKKE presented the this year’s arms export report compiled by the expert group under the direction of Jan Grebe in Berlin at the Federal Press Conference on 10 December 2012, and had a remarkable press response. Amounting to 42 per cent, arms export licences to third states, i.e. to countries outside the NATO and the EU, in 2011 accounted for nearly half of all export licences. “The exception seems to have become the rule” Prelate Dr Karl Jüsten commented.

On the argument put forward by the Federal Government that exporting arms to partners in conflict regions creates “anchors of stability” Prelate Dr Bernhard Felmberg said: “It is a dangerous fallacy to believe that deliveries of weapons or war material could contribute to a stabilization (of the situation in conflict regions).” Such a policy is too short-sighted and ignores the problems that can result from arms exports. GKKE welcomed the Federal Government’s commitment in favour of a strong Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and encouraged to continue efforts despite the so far failed conference of the parties to this treaty. The GKKE’s report has been published in a printed version as issue no 58 of the GKKE series of papers.

"Between a new start and criminalization"

Under the heading “Between a new start and criminalization”, the GKKE’s expert group ‘Civil Society’ published trends and recommendations for action in order to strengthen civil societies in the global South. In issue no 57 of the GKKE’s series of papers, the essential results of the recent work period are made available to the specialist public.

**EDP Zambia: Social Impulses through the Cotton Trade II**

The EDP demonstrated in an impressive way that enterprises are able to be engines of sustainable development in the rural sector, summarized Dr Daniel Legutke after having participated in the Zambia EDP at the beginning of December 2012. EDP carried out this programme in cooperation with COMPACI and Cargill Zambia, among others. With the COMPACI-programme, in which the Federal Government is also involved, the enterprise promotes the development of family-based farms.
First objective of Cargill is the sustainable increase of productivity – a desired side effect is the general increase of productivity of family farms by a comprehensive package of measures. So Cargill makes an important contribution to the promotion of rural development in Zambia – from an increase in profits by the sales of cash-crops and horticultural products, to an improved access to education up to the promotion of entrepreneurial activities of women.