„Europe for Christ!“

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Hostility against Christians in Europe: Christianophobia

Dear friends,

Today we would like to bring to your attention the growing hostility against Christians in Europe. Two features you find below: A short article written by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn and the introduction of our new additional website, www.christianophobia.eu.

While www.europe4christ.net serves as the base for our network of prayer, action and information, www.christianophobia.eu picks up the problem of growing hostility against Christians and Christian symbols and positions in Europe. This new website publishes cases of hatred against Christians. Its goal is to make people and legislators aware of the problem – and thereby contribute to the creation of a more tolerant atmosphere.

We would like to apologize to all non-English speakers: the new website www.christianophobia.eu is only available in English. It is simply not possible for us to keep the provided information up to date and at the same time have it translated, as we rely upon volunteer work.

Please read an introduction to the issue below.

Your Europe for Christ! Team in Vienna

PS: Don't forget to pray a daily Our Father for a Christian Europe.

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Christians are out there on the streets!

by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn (Vienna)

Something is happening in our old Europe. Christians are answering back instead of putting up with all and everything. They go out on the streets to demonstrate. Not with loud slogans and even less with violence. Peaceful and friendly they come in big numbers. Such big numbers, that some media want to play them down.

In January in Madrid a huge "Family Day" was celebrated. This peaceful demonstration addressed the anti-family policies in Zapatero's government which introduced "express-divorce" and "gay marriage". Almost two million people gathered – many European media spoke of only 150.000.

Pope Benedict was invited to give a lecture at Italy's biggest university. Some professors and students protested and threatened to disrupt the speech, claiming that the Pope was intolerant and ultra-conservative. The Pope called his lecture off. Last Sunday about 200.000 people – among them many young – came to St. Peter's square to show their support for the Pope in a peaceful and cordial manner.

Jesus told his disciples to turn the other cheek when hit. But he also questioned the one who acted unjustly: "Why do you hit me?". Christians in Europe begin to question their allegedly tolerant adversaries: why do you hit the Church, that is, us? Are we doing something bad when we defend the family, stand up for the right to life and thus help Europe to have children, that is, the future?

Appeared in: Daily "Heute", Column "Answers" by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, 25th January 2008

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Website Launched: Christianophobia in Europe

www.christianophobia.eu was recently launched in Vienna by the Christian network platform Europe for Christ! (www.europe4christ.net). The website displays cases of Christianophobia in Europe. It also gives quotes and references of the use of the term.

"Christianophobia means irrational fear or hatred of Christians, or Christianity in general," says Dr. Gudrun Kugler, jurist and founder of the website. She adds: "it includes anti-Christian bias, and also manifest itself in the slow marginalization of those confessing the Christian faith."

Listed cases include several instances of mockery or ridiculing of the Christian faith; the removal of Christian symbols as well as the prohibition of wearing these personally, and attacks in movies and television broadcasts.
The persecution of 'politically incorrect' positions intrinsic to the Christian faith, such as the opposition to abortion and gay marriage, is severe: Recorded cases range from people being sacked or sentenced to pay a fine, to some cases where people have even been jailed. French member of parliament, Christian Vanneste, was sentenced to payments of about 10 000 Euro for his critical comments on homosexuality.

The term 'Christianophobia' has already entered several UN and OSCE documents. Several Vatican officials spoke up in support of the recognition of the phenomenon, including recently Archbishop Dominique Mamberti, Vatican secretary of relations with states, as Zenit reported.
Joseph Weiler, Jewish author and Professor of International Law at NYU, "European laicité, as distinct from American secularism, is not simply an 'I don't happen to believe in God.' It is a kind of faith in itself. It is a positive hostility to religion, which in Europe means Christianity."
Bishop Hilarion, representative of the Moscow-based Russian Orthodox Church to European organizations, accuses the European Union of turning a blind eye to anti-Christian practices in EU countries: "In insisting on tolerance, EU leaders slam Islamophobia and anti-Semitism but often ignore various anti-Christian practices," he says and cites alleged efforts to oust the church from public life as one such practice.

Initiator Dr. Gudrun Kugler: „The attitude in Europe is becoming very hostile. We work on the issue and publish these cases in order to alert. Our work is not about self-pity. It is about solutions which must include the political level."

She also thinks that as a remedy, European Christians should have more self-confidence: "Christianity constitutes a large part of the humanism Europe is famous for. It gave much – and it still has a lot to offer. It is on us Christians to participate in the public square with self-confidence. As a result, christianophobic tendencies will diminish."
To do so, the Europe for Christ! initiative offers concise descriptions of tools of public life as well as summaries of issues at stake.