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*„Zeichen schauen wir nun,  
Irdisches wird zum Bilde hier;  
denn das kreisende Jahr  
lässt nach des Winters Frost und Nacht  
den Frühling die Erde für Ostern bereiten“*

*(Lenten hymn)*

The staff members of the JP secretariat wish you a blessed Easter Season

***Ackermann advocates reform of global financial system***

As the G 20 Summit in London was approaching, Auxiliary Bishop Dr. Stephan Ackermann, President of the German Commission for Justice and Peace, declared that the interests of the poorest in the world must no longer be ignored as efforts are being made to stop the financial and economic crisis and to reform the global financial system. He said: "The financial sector has long violated a key principle of the Social Doctrine of the Church, which says that capital has to serve the global common good. For this reason, the industrial countries must do more than stimulating their own economies with short-term packages and initiating some cosmetic changes of the international financial system. During their meeting in London, they are rather obliged to make arrangements for a true reform of the global financial system in order to avoid a repeat of the financial crisis and to address the considerable global imbalances."

Moreover, Bishop Ackermann spoke out in favour of a crackdown on tax havens, which has always been a priority issue for the Church partners in Africa. The developing countries have tax losses amounting to hundreds of billions due to offshore deposits. Even conservative estimates suggest that the lost tax revenues exceed the total aid given to developing countries including debt relief. This reveals massive deficiencies in global governance. He called for integrating the poor countries in the negotiations as this is indispensable for a sustainable world economy.

***Dialogue meeting with Dresdner Bank on financial crisis***

"Global Finance and Global Common Good" – this was the title of a dialogue meeting on entrepreneurial responsibility and the role of politics which was co-hosted by Dresdner Bank and JP Germany. The event took place in Berlin on 28 January 2009. Auxiliary Bishop Dr. Ackermann, Prof. Dr. Wallacher (both JP Germany), Prof. Heise (chief economist of the Allianz insurance group) and Georg Fahrenschon (Bavarian Finance Minister) discussed the current financial crisis from the viewpoint of the Social Doctrine of the Church. The event was attended by about 200 guests primarily from the trade, industry and financial sectors. It was recorded by the TV channel Phoenix and broadcast a few days later. This dialogue meeting made clear that this subject requires substantial further discussion.



The panel discussion at Dresdner Bank, Berlin...



... was attended by (from the left) Prof. Wallacher, Auxiliary Bishop Dr. Ackermann, Prof. Heise, Minister Fahrenschon

### ***Solidarity Based Economy in Uruguay, South-South exchange and seminar***

In the course of the JP project on "Decent Work", representatives of Latin American institutions concerned with solidarity economy met for a South-South exchange from 5 to 8 November 2008. The meeting took place on the occasion of a seminar on "Instruments for economic development and social security" in Montevideo on 6/7 November 2008 which was co-organized by Kolping Uruguay and the Uruguayan association for solidarity based economy. Participants included the Deputy Minister of Labour, three members of parliament and another 70 representatives of institutions such as Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Organizations from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Peru presented their political and economic initiatives. The quite new Uruguayan association, which counts about 35 members, was given encouragement and examples of practical and political involvement and networking. The event also provided an excellent opportunity for the international guests to extend their networking efforts, which are still insufficient at international level although cooperation at national level is quite good (especially in Brazil and Peru).

The South-South exchange also comprised a visit to the first shop selling fair trade products in Montevideo, visits to Kolping groups and various networking and evaluation meetings with Uruguayan hosts and international guests. A documentation of the seminar will soon be available.

### ***Strengthening cooperation of civil society players from European and ACP countries on Cotonou Agreement***

78 members of the European Parliament and 78 representatives of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states meet twice a year under the Cotonou Agreement. The most recent Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) took place in Papua New Guinea from 24 to 28 November 2008.

The Cotonou Working Group of CONCORD, the European NGO confederation, was represented by Dr. Hildegard Hagemann who sought to encourage and support civil society initiatives and to explore opportunities for discussion. The MEPs welcome the exchange with regional and local NGOs. Many ACP states, including Papua New Guinea, still have reservations about the civil society players. The German-speaking countries in Europe have traditionally had close relations with the former German colony in the Pacific. So it was obvious for the German Church agencies Misereor and Brot für die Welt/EED to approach partners in PNG offering cooperation with regard to the organization of meetings with MEPs. The Eco Forestry Forum (EFF), an environmental network of about 15 organizations in Papua, coordinated the activities ranging from an information stand to preparing position papers, organizing press conferences and a working dinner.

The critical voices on the part of the NGOs had an overwhelming response from the press. While the partners were happy with the results of their public relations work, they complained about the restrictive policy pursued by their government concerning the presentation of their positions during the JPA. The European partners had little influence in this respect. The Cotonou Working Group continues to intervene with MEPs to get civil society more involved in the JPAs.

### ***Religious freedom in the field of tension between mission and conversion***

A conference entitled "Religions and freedom of religion. Aspects of human rights in the field of tension between mission and conversion", which took place in Bamberg from 18 to 20 February 2009, addressed one of the most difficult questions of religious freedom, i.e. the attitude towards mission and conversions. Representatives of different religions and denominations including Orthodox, Free Church, Jewish and Muslim participants were invited to take part in this exchange. Auxiliary Bishop Dr. Stephan Ackermann opened the conference by emphasizing that the "Declaration on Religious



Information stand of EFF, CONCORD, Greenpeace and others at the JPA in Papua

Freedom" of Vatican II is of central importance for the Catholic doctrine, for Catholic identity and for the dialogue with other religions. The importance of the Vatican II document "Dignitatis Humanae" has lately become obvious in the fierce debate about the Society of Saint Pius X. All speakers agreed that while the state has a responsibility to guarantee the right to religious freedom, it cannot enforce this right without involving the religions. A talk on the current challenges faced by the human right to religious freedom given by Asma Jahangir, the UN special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, attracted public attention and was recorded by the ARTE TV channel. The conference was co-organized with the Centre for Interreligious Studies in Bamberg.

### *MDP meeting discussed international volunteer services*

The members of diocesan committees on mission, development and peace as well as experts on international Church affairs met in Trier from 5 to 7 February 2009 to explore the potential of international volunteer services for diocesan activities and the progress of a project "On the future of international activities of the Church". The international volunteer services are usually an invigorating element of diocesan partnerships. Homecoming volunteers can bring to life international activities and parishes based on their experiences. Reverse programmes are being developed. Many dioceses use funds from the "weltwärts" programme of the BMZ in order to increase the number of their placements and to train programme managers. The participants raised the question as to what extent the developed programmes should pay more attention to the special role of the volunteer sending Church organizations. It was also discussed whether volunteer services should be accepted as an element in the training of pastoral workers. The meeting was also attended by Auxiliary Bishop Ackermann.

### *„Act to Protect"*

How can Church organizations improve coordination of their activities to help prevent severe, systematic and ongoing human rights violations? Following preliminary talks between representatives of Misereor, Caritas and JP Germany, Michael Hippler of Misereor invited partners such as Dr. Wolfgang Heinrich of EED and Dr. Annette Weber of Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (formerly Ökumenisches Netzwerk Zentralafrika) to meet at AGEH (Cologne) on 22 January. Ethiopia was considered suitable for a case study, because the security concerns and the resulting policies of the Ethiopian government have already caused massive restrictions with regard to human rights both in the region and within the country itself, threatening internal peace and fuelling conflicts with the neighbouring countries. It is possible and necessary to break down the culture of silence. The participants agreed that an ecumenical approach is required at the Horn of Africa.

### *"Poverty has a face" exhibition opened in Strasbourg*

The "Poverty has a face" exhibition of the Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions was opened on the premises of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 27 January 2009. In a concerted action, the European JP Commissions had invited artists from all over Europe to take up the themes of poverty and exclusion to create works of art. The opening ceremony was attended by Terry Davies (Secretary General of the Council of Europe), Archbishop Gérard Defois (President of JP Europe), Annelise Oeschger (President of the Conference of the INGOs at the Council of

Europe), and approximately 100 guests including MEPs, ambassadors and some of the artists whose works were exhibited. The exhibition ended in Strasbourg on 6 February and moved on to the building of the French bishops' conference in Paris where it was on display from 18 to 27 February. In the run-up, the Presidents of JP Germany and of JP Europe had invited the German MEPs to the exhibition.

### *GKKE conference on democratic budgetary control and budget*



Terry Davies, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, at the opening ceremony

## *support*

At a GKKE conference entitled "Strengthening the role of parliaments and civil society in budgetary processes" held on 4/5 March 2009, German political experts on budgetary and development policies had the chance to get insight into the positions of African GKKE partners and their experiences. This conference followed a workshop which had been organized in cooperation with CPLO and EFSA in Stellenbosch, South Africa, in September 2008. The participants discussed a range of problems associated with the implementation of transparent budgetary processes and possible solutions. It was said that it is not enough to train MPs, governmental players and civil society in budget monitoring as it is already practiced by many Church partners. Many countries have neither legal provisions nor adequate procedures and structures in place that would allow an efficient participation in budgetary processes. They primarily need to establish the necessary institutions. SAD-COPAC, the Southern Africa Development Community Organizations of Public Accounts Committee, which is supported by European MPs was quoted as a successful example. It was also suggested to open governmental negotiations for MPs in order to guarantee transparency and qualified decisions. Budget support was a controversial issue. Some said that there is no alternative, if the countries are to be responsible owners of their development processes. Others felt unease or even rejected any kind of budget support as this would make budgetary control even more difficult. There was no agreement on the question as to whether democratic and transparent budgetary processes should be a prerequisite for or the objective of budget support.

## *GKKE arms export report 2008, EU Code of Conduct and debate of the Bundestag*

When the GKKE arms export report 2008 was presented at the Federal Press Conference in Berlin on 8 December 2008, its key messages attracted enormous public attention. The report criticizes the alarming new increase in overall arms exports and the increase in supplies to crisis regions and developing countries. GKKE demands the withdrawal of the promised government export credit guarantee for a submarine deal with Pakistan and welcomes the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions. The printed version of the report was distributed in December 2008.

On the same day, the EU Foreign Ministers in Brussels agreed to transform the EU Code of Conduct on arms exports into a legally binding Common Position, in accordance with the repeated demands that have been voiced by GKKE and the Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions for quite some time. GKKE considers this measure to be an important step forward towards a coordinated and efficient European arms export control policy. But in order to be truly effective it needs to be implemented in national law and above all it needs to be reflected in coherent approval processes in all member states of the European Union.

The Federal Government published its own report on arms exports for the year 2007 on the Internet on 17 December 2008. On the following day in the evening, the Bundestag debated the major interpellation on arms exports to Pakistan as well as two motions proposed by Bündnis 90/Die Grünen concerning the improvement of parliamentary control and the rejection of the submarine deal with Pakistan, which were in line with the concerns of GKKE, and finally the arms exports reports 2004-2006 by the Federal Government. Many speakers referred to the GKKE report. The roll-call vote on the submarine deal with Pakistan was decided along traditional party lines. Only Bündnis90/Die Grünen, Die Linke and Otmar Schreiner voted against it. The MPs spent only thirty minutes on this subject, which is absolutely inappropriate.

## *Talks with bankers on the financing of arms deals*

At the suggestion of the "Urgewald" NGO, GKKE representatives met bank-

ers at the HypoVereinsbank in Munich on 29 January 2009 for a discussion on binding and effective rules on (financial) transactions with armaments. As part of their reputation risk management, the participating banks showed interest in binding and transparent rules and effective control mechanisms. The Allianz insurance group which manages government export credit guarantees, declared its intention – probably in cooperation with GKKE – to support restrictions concerning the use of government export credit guarantees for financing arms exports.

### *Term of work ended – farewell of Archbishop Marx*

The spring meeting of the German Commission for Justice and Peace on 13/14 March 2009 focused on the evaluation of the completed term of work based on a report that had been prepared on the 2004-2009 term of office. In his introduction, Auxiliary Bishop Dr. Ackermann explained that based on the Social Doctrine of the Church, JP Germany has been working on strategically relevant subjects such as religious freedom (human rights), nuclear armament (peace) and decent work in the increasing informal sector (development), introducing them in the political dialogue, in cooperation with researchers and with international networking partners. Individual working groups summed up weak points and strong points. Above all it was suggested that JP Germany should increase its media presence.

Archbishop Dr. Reinhard Marx, who served as President of the Commission until 2008, was given a farewell – along with other retiring members including Auxiliary Bishops Leo Schwarz and Engelbert Siebler, Magdalena Bogner (formerly kfd President) and Rev. Andreas Mauritz (BDKJ President). Archbishop Dr. Marx called on the members of JP Germany to make the Church's voice for justice and peace heard loud and clear, be it convenient or inconvenient – and he promised to back the activities!



Auxiliary Bishop Ackermann, President of JP Germany (right), presents a book on 40 Years Justice and Peace to his predecessor, Archbishop Marx (centre); on the left: Auxiliary Bishop Schwarz, member of the Commission since 1974 and its President from 1988 to 1999

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