

We Have Moved!

Our new address is 323 Rue du Progrès/Vooruitganstraat, 1030 Brussels, Belgium.

CONTENTS

Global

Pax Christi International's closure of its 70th anniversary celebrations.....	2
Leadership transition at the International Secretariat.....	2

Africa

EurAc on Burundi's situation.....	2
Congolese Church urges constitution to be upheld in 2016 elections.....	2
"We have fought with your weapons": Report from a former child soldier.....	2

Americas and the Caribbean

Pax Christi USA speaks out against anti-Muslim rhetoric.....	2
Social organisations call for bilateral ceasefire in Colombia.....	3
Haiti: Concerns about increase of violence.....	3

Asia-Pacific

National Pax Christi coordinator honoured by receiving Kiwibank Local Heroes award.....	3
Celebration of International Human Rights Day.....	3

Europe

Pax Christi France: COP21... and then?.....	3
Event in solidarity with Roma in Austria.....	3
National conference of Pax Christi Italy.....	3
Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles holds presentation on Islamophobia.....	4

Middle East

Pax Christi International at Holy Land Coordination 2016.....	4
Pax Christi members send messages of peace and solidarity to Palestine.....	4
Pax Christi Austria against expansion of Syrian war.....	4
Pax Christi Germany's president responds to Germany's military engagement in Syria.....	4
Pax Christi UK on airstrikes in Syria.....	4

Advocacy and campaigns

Delivery of the climate justice petition.....	4
PAX co-initiates new peace prize for cities.....	5

Human rights

Human rights situation in Guatemala.....	5
--	---

Disarmament

European Forum on Armed Drones strategy workshop.....	5
Pax Christi International presents testimony at Biological Weapons Convention.....	5
Pax Christi Germany's comment on the SIPRI figures.....	5

Peace spirituality/peace education

Year of Mercy - Call for Radical Solidarity.....	5
Nonviolent communication: Finding peace with yourself and others.....	5
Exhibition: The Catholic Church and Polish-German relations after 1945.....	6

International Secretariat

Rue du Progrès, 323
1030 Brussels, Belgium

Tel. +32 2 502 55 50 - Fax +32 2 502 46 26

www.paxchristi.net

GLOBAL

Pax Christi International's closure of its 70th anniversary celebrations

On 16 December, a Pax Christi International delegation attended the Papal Audience at the Vatican as a symbolic way of closing our 70th anniversary celebrations. The delegation presented Pope Francis with the "Bethlehem Commitment: Bringing the Future into Focus 2015-2020". We look forward to continuing our work with renewed hope over the next five years.

Leadership transition at the International Secretariat

For the past three years we were blessed by the commitment and hard work of José Henríquez as Pax Christi International's Secretary General. Jose gave generously of his talents to our common pursuit of a just peace and strengthened Pax Christi's global network in many ways. Upon careful discernment, Jose decided to resign from his position as Secretary General, effective at the end of 2015. With the whole Pax Christi International Board, we have initiated a process that will ensure continuity and continued excellence as we move through this significant transition.

We are pleased that Greet Vanaerschot, whose commitment to and over 30 years of experience with Pax Christi International is well known to all of us, has agreed to serve as interim Secretary General during the transition. Read [more](#). ■

AFRICA

EurAc on Burundi's situation

The European Network for Central Africa (EurAc), of which Pax Christi International is a member, released a position paper on 17

December which documents the latest assassinations and escalation of violence in Burundi. EurAc calls on the EU and its member states to take strong measures, such as sending in a UN peacekeeping mission, to prevent a slide into a civil war and to protect the people of Burundi. Read more in French [here](#).

Congolese Church urges constitution to be upheld in 2016 elections

The leadership of the Congolese Catholic Church, Pax Christi Flanders and Broederlijk Delen call on the Congolese people to support compliance with the constitution in the elections in 2016. The population is encouraged to mobilise themselves in peaceful marches and prayers. On 16 February, 2016, a massive demonstration to protect democratic institutions and the constitution will be held. Read more in Dutch [here](#).

"We have fought with your weapons": Report from a former child soldier

On 30 November, Pax Christi Limburg (Germany) invited Junior Nzita from DR Congo to Frankfurt (Germany) to present his book "We have fought with your weapons" in which he wrote about his life as a 12 years old child soldier. He fought for four years before he could escape in 2000. The presentation was followed by a discussion and questions. Read more in German [here](#). ■

AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN

Pax Christi USA speaks out against anti-Muslim rhetoric

On 22 December, Pax Christi USA, together with 50 leaders from a host of religious denominations and community organisations, signed onto an open letter from the "Shoulder to Shoulder" campaign. The letter expresses the organisation's public stand

against the current alarming level of anti-Muslim rhetoric and bigotry in America. The letter was also published in the [Washington Post](#) on 21 December. Read more [here](#).

Social organisations call for bilateral ceasefire in Colombia

Along with 130 other organisations, the International Secretariat and Pax Christi Germany co-signed a letter expressing concern that the Colombian government's increased military ground offensive against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which has complied with a unilateral ceasefire, jeopardises the peace negotiations between the government and the FARC. The letter is available [here](#).

Haiti: Concerns about increase of violence

The Haitian Pax Christi member organisation National Commission for Justice and Peace, in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince Justice and Peace Office, wrote an open letter to civil, judicial and police authorities in Haiti. The letter promotes the 55-56th report on violence in metropolitan areas, which focuses on the last half of 2015. The commission notes that violence and accidents have increased. ■

ASIA - PACIFIC

National Pax Christi coordinator honoured by receiving Kiwibank Local Heroes award

Pax Christi Aotearoa-New Zealand national coordinator Kevin McBride and his wife Barbara were honoured at the [Kiwibank Local Heroes](#) award ceremony on 1 December in Auckland. The award aims to identify and reward everyday people doing extraordinary things in their local communities. Click [here](#) for photos.

Celebration of International Human Rights Day

On 12 December, the Sri Lankan Pax Christi International member organisation Human Rights Office Kandy celebrated the International Human Rights Day with an event that promotes independent and credible investigations to ensure the rights of the victims. Special guests were Dr. Jürgen Morhard (Ambassador of Germany) and Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Chandrasiri Perera (Bishop of Ratnapura). Read more [here](#). ■

EUROPE

Pax Christi France: COP21... and then?

Pax Christi France's office in Toulouse wrote, in regards to the COP21 agreement that "one can only rejoice in the international awareness that underpins this agreement." But there are also some downsides, such as the provision that each country can withdraw from the agreement until 2023. Moreover, the agreed-upon deadlines and policies will need concrete actions as a foundation. Read more in French [here](#).

Event in solidarity with Roma in Austria

On 23 January, Pax Christi Austria will celebrate the "Roma ball 2016", a solidarity event to illuminate the presence of Roma in Tirol and to call against anti-Romani sentiment. The event will include live music, Roma specialities from various countries, information and an exhibition. The event is organised by Pax Christi Austria and the Haus der Begegnung (house of meeting). Find more information, [here](#).

National conference of Pax Christi Italy

On 30-31 December, Pax Christi Italy held its national conference in Molfetta, Italy. The motto of the conference was "Marching, craftsmen of peace". It included lectures, a reflection from Pax Christi youth activists on

their experience in Paris during COP21, and prayers. For more information in Italian, click [here](#).

Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles holds presentation on Islamophobia

On 12 December, Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles held a presentation and discussion on Islamophobia in Saint-Gilles (Belgium). Islamophobia is fuelled by an acute desire for security, which turns every Muslim into a potential suspect. But Islamophobia is not just a criticism of Islam – it is an act of racism. Read more [here](#). ■

MIDDLE EAST

Pax Christi International at Holy Land Coordination 2016

On 6-14 January, 2016, Pax Christi International will attend the program of the Holy Land Coordination 2016. Participants will first go to Gaza and then to the West Bank, and will receive an update about and visit the Cremisan Valley. The rest of the meeting will be held in Jordan to get more direct reality about the refugee crisis. Diplomats are invited as well and the publication of a final statement will be the conclusion of the meeting. Read more [here](#).

Pax Christi members send messages of peace and solidarity to Palestine

The Arab Educational Institute (AEI), member organisation based in Bethlehem, Occupied Palestinian Territories, received a number of messages of hope and solidarity from Pax Christi members around the world during Advent and Christmas. Read the greetings here on the [AEI's website](#).

Pax Christi Austria against expansion of Syrian war

On 15 December, Pax Christi Austria published an article warning against Germany's and the UK's involvement in the

Syrian war. Pax Christi Austria calls instead for stepping up the diplomatic process, which began a few weeks ago in Vienna, to find a peaceful solution. Pax Christi Austria also supports internationally coordinated measures such as preventing oil sales by the IS. Read more in German [here](#).

Pax Christi Germany's president responds to Germany's military engagement in Syria

In a statement released on 4 December, Bishop Heinz Josef Algermissen, Fulda (Germany), warned against Germany's participation in the Syrian war. He acknowledges that the military intervention is initiated in solidarity with France, but solidarity cannot be lived in supporting military operations. Pax Christi Germany still sees the talks in Vienna and New York as a glimmer of hope for Syria, where a ceasefire could be achieved. Read more in German [here](#).

Pax Christi UK on airstrikes in Syria

On 3 December, Pax Christi UK published an article expressing its distress at the decision to expand airstrikes in Syria. Many Pax Christi UK members lobbied Members of Parliament right up to the last moment, urging them not to vote in support of airstrikes. The latest news is that 232 Members of Parliament are definitely against the bombing, including 150 (70%) of the Parliamentary Labour Party. Read more [here](#). ■

ADVOCACY & CAMPAIGNING

Delivery of the climate justice petition

On 10 December, French President Francois Hollande "praised the efforts of campaigners and faith leaders who personally delivered to him a collection of petitions containing over 1.8 million signatures calling for climate justice", according to a Religions for Peace press release. Jacqueline Rougé, Honorary President of Religions for Peace and former

Pax Christi International representative at UNESCO, attended the ceremony in Paris. Many of our member organizations around the world collected signatures in support of this petition. Read more [here](#).

PAX co-initiates new peace prize for cities

PAX, Pax Christi International's section in the Netherlands, along with the Union of Dutch Cities and the cities of Barcelona and Bogota, have initiated a new award, the UCLG City of Bogota Peace Prize, to be given once every three years to a local government or a local coalition distinguishing itself with dealing with conflicts or peace work. The first one will be presented in October 2016; the winner will receive a prize of 20,000 Euros. Read more on [PAX's website](#).



HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights situation in Guatemala

Pax Christi International Guatemalan member organisation Grupo Apoyo Mutuo recently published a report monitoring violence and human rights violations from January to November 2015. According to the report, Guatemala experiences 16 murders per day; at the time of the report's release, 5,221 people have been murdered in 2015. Read more at their [website](#).

DISARMAMENT

European Forum on Armed Drones strategy workshop

On 14 January, the European Forum on Armed Drones (EFAD) will hold a strategy workshop in Brussels hosted by the [Quaker Council for European Affairs](#). Several members from Pax Christi sections will be involved, such as PAX Netherlands, Pax Christi Flanders, Pax Christi Germany and Pax Christi UK.

Pax Christi International presents testimony at Biological Weapons Convention

Pax Christi International submitted a statement to [the Biological Weapons Convention Meeting of States Parties](#), held 14–18 December 2015, at the United Nations in Geneva. See the statement [here](#).

Pax Christi Germany's comment on the SIPRI figures

On 14 December, Pax Christi Germany and the "Action outcry – Stop weapon sales" campaign released a comment on the latest SIPRI fact sheet entitled "[Top 100 arms-producing and military services companies](#)" which shows that, while global weapon sales decreased in 2014, Germany's arms sales increased by 9.4 percent. Read more in German [here](#).

PEACE EDUCATION & PEACE SPIRITUALITY

Year of Mercy - Call for Radical Solidarity

On 1 December, to start the Year of Mercy, Pax Christi International published a statement calling for radical solidarity. "The current global debate concerning refugees poses a significant challenge for the Catholic Church's Year of Mercy ... [C]losing borders is a short-sighted political response. ... More political energy should be invested in the root causes of migration: poverty, civil war, exclusion, forced displacement." Read the full statement in [English](#) or [Dutch](#).

Nonviolent communication: Finding peace with yourself and others

The Pax Christi Bamberg (Germany) will host nonviolent communication training days once per month in 2016. The launch and introduction of the training will be on 8 January, 2016. The event is based on the methodology designed by Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, which contains a reflection and acceptance of one's own feelings to find

peace with yourself and others. Registration for the launch is open till 6 January. Read more in German [here](#).

Exhibition: The Catholic Church and Polish-German relations after 1945

An exhibition in Berlin documented the path of Polish-German relations after 1945 and told stories of people from both countries making important contributions to reconciliation. The exhibition, which closed on 16 December, also reported on the important contribution of the Pax Christi movement during this time. For more information in German, click [here](#). ■

PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL IN THE MEDIA

[Catholic peacemakers: Bombing Syria is not Just War](#),

independent catholic news, 3 December 2015

[Immigration opposition: My country, 'tis of me, but no room for thee](#),

Catholic News Service, 18 December 2015

■

RESOURCES FROM MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

- Pax Christi USA: [ON THE LINE](#): December 2015 edition
- Antennes de Paix: [newsletter](#)
- PAX Netherlands: [Syria Alert Issue XVI](#)
- PAX Netherlands: [Syria Alert Issue XVII](#)
- REPAM newsletter, [Acuerdos finales de la COP21](#)
- Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles: [Mémoire coloniale belge : revisitons notre histoire](#) (Analyse), December 2015
- Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles: [René Girard, une œuvre entre désir et violence](#) (Analyse), December 2015

- Pax Christi Wallonie-Bruxelles: [“Did she look like a Gipsy?”](#) (Analyse), December 2015 ■

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Online Volunteer Translators

Pax Christi International is looking for online volunteers to translate and/or proofread its monthly newsletter as well as occasional advocacy documents and statements pertaining to human rights, human security, disarmament, demilitarization, just world order, religion and violent conflict, from/into: English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, Russian, Arabic, etc. For details, click [here](#). ■

INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

Click [here](#) to view the International Calendar of upcoming events.

To unsubscribe from this list, contact: hello@paxchristi.net.

To make a donation to Pax Christi International please click [here](#).

Find us on [Facebook](#).

Follow us on [Twitter](#).

■