

THIRD EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL ASSEMBLY

Rome: first stage of the European "pilgrimage"

From 24-27 January 2006, 150 delegates from Europe's churches, Bishops' Conferences, ecumenical bodies, communities and movements will gather in Rome for the start of the process of the Third European Ecumenical Assembly (EEA3) organised by the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC). The Assembly theme is *The light of Christ shines upon all. Hope for renewal and unity in Europe.*

Along new lines, the EEA3 follows the tradition of the European Ecumenical Assemblies held at Basle (1989) and Graz (1997). The novelty of this Assembly lies in the fact that it is not just a one-off event but a process. Through four stages, the EEA3 aims at being a type of symbolic pilgrimage encountering the richness of different Christian traditions and rediscovering Europe's Christian roots:

- 1. The first and third stages** will take place in Rome (24-27 January 2006) and Wittenberg-Lutherstadt, Germany (15-18 February 2007) respectively. They will bring together 150 delegates from churches, Bishops' Conferences, ecumenical bodies, communities and movements.
- 2. The second stage** will consist of national and/or regional meetings throughout Europe in the second half of 2006 or at the start of 2007.
- 3. Finally, the Assembly itself**, which will take place in Sibiu, Romania (4-8 September 2007) with the participation of 3000 delegates. At the same time, meetings will be held in European cities wherever possible.

First stage, Rome (Italy) 24-27 January 2006

Significant events during the first stage of the process include participation at Vespers in the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls at the end of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (25 January), presided over by Pope Benedict XVI, and a meeting with the Holy Father.

The ecumenical meeting will be opened on 24 January 15:00 with addresses from Bishop Amédée Grab, *CCEE President*, Pastor Jean-Arnold de Clermont, *CEC President*, Cardinal Camillo Ruini, *President of the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI)*, Prof. Gianni Long, *President of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy (FCEI)* and a representative of the Orthodox Church.

The meeting will then split up into a number of thematic sessions:

24 January, 17:00 - The ecumenical scene in Europe

Speakers: Cardinal Walter Kasper, *President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity*, and Bishop Dr. Margot Kässmann, *Evangelical Church in Germany*

25 January, 09:00 - Signs of the light of Christ in Europe

There will be a presentation of some ecumenical examples of collaboration in

pastoral areas (migration, twinning, 20th century martyrs, mixed couples, etc.).

25 January, 11:00 - Aims and themes of the EEA3

Speakers: Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O' Connor, *Archbishop of Westminster* and Metropolitan Daniel *of Moldavia and Bucovina*.

26 January, 09:00 - The EEA3 process and national/regional meetings.

Speakers: Mgr Aldo Giordano, *CCEE General Secretary*, and The Venerable Colin Williams, *CEC General Secretary*.

26 January, 11:00 - Themes of the EEA3

Speakers: Prof. Dr. Viorel Ionita, *CEC Study Secretary*, and Ms. Sarah Numico, *CCEE Collaborator*

In addition, meeting schedules will be mixed with various opportunities for prayer in the different Christian traditions (24 January: Vespers in the Basilica of S. Maria in Trastevere), meetings with local communities from different denominations (evening of 25 January: Lutheran Church and the Romanian Orthodox Church) and two pilgrimages "to the tomb of Paul the Apostle" (25 January, 15:00) and "to the tomb of Peter the Apostle" (27 January 08:30).

The meeting will also be broadcast live on the official website of the Third European Ecumenical Assembly (www.eea3.org).

Geneva/St Gallen, 10 January 2006