



History of the Conference of European Provincials

In the tradition of the Society of Jesus meetings of provincials and cooperation at the European level were not foreseen. It was Fr. Arrupe who in 1972 suggested that the Society needed to consider what it might do specifically in the "European milieu". He established in the same year a **Committee of European Provincials**, with the major superiors of the western European provinces. The members met yearly and discussed areas of cooperation at the European Level and the Jesuit contribution to the European Institutions.

In 1976 Poland and Yugoslavia joined the group. In 1981 a **first European Network** Eurojess was set up, a network of Jesuits and collaborators in our social centres and social institutes.

Fr. General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach appointed Fr. Ignasi Salvat, provincial of the Tarraconense Province (Catalunya) in Spain as first **"President of the Committee of the European Provincials"** in 1986. A year later the "Conference of European Provincials" (CEP) met for the first time in Zagreb. An important theme at that time was "Formation in Europe". Euro-groups for directors of formation centres and for lecturers in philosophy were set up. Increasing collaboration between the Jesuit Study Centres was discussed.

In 1993 at the 3rd General Assembly of the CEP the provincials approved to meet every two years. Fr. **Philip Harnett** (Ireland) became the first **full-time President of the CEP**. He removed his residence from Brussels to Strasbourg. A few years later an Executive Secretary was appointed as Assistant/Socius to the President.

In February 1997 the **first digital newsletter** "Jesuits in Europe" appears and speaks about more than 24 European Jesuit groups which gather regularly to explore realms of inter-provincial collaboration. It mentions particularly JCS, The European Network of Jesuit China Service and Euro-Missio, Jesuits involved in publications on missions and development.

From 2000 on there is a **yearly General Assembly** of the CEP. After short presidencies of **Gerwin Komma** (Austria) and **Alfred Darmanin** (Malta), **Mark Rotsaert** (North-Belgium) is appointed President. In 2001 A 'Formation Committee' was set up to determine criteria for assessing our European Formation Centres. In the General

Assemblies more and more themes are discussed: "Movement of peoples", Vocations, A new European Tertianship in Dublin, Co-operation between Africa and Europe, The question of Islam in Europe.

In 2007 Fr Brendan MacPartlin (HIB) was appointed as the first **Social Delegate of the CEP**. And in 2009 . Fr Severin Leitner (ASR) was appointed part time **Delegate for the European Formation Centres**.

The **revised Statutes** of the CEP were approved by Fr. General in 2009.

In 2010 Fr. General Adolfo Nicolas appointed Fr **John Dardis** as President of the CEP. New themes appear: The renewal of province structures, solidarity in the funding of formation, reconciliation. Jesuit Faculties and Universities in Europe. New CEP projects are developed: The European Leadership Training Programme, Higher Education for Social Transformation (HEST) and Ethical Standards in Ministry (Safe guarding).

During General Congregation 36, in 2016, Fr Arturo Sosa (VEN) was elected Superior General and Fr John Dardis as one of the Assistants "Ad providentiam". A few month later, in 2017 Fr. **Franck Janin** was appointed President of the JCEP. Under his impetus, the European provincials now meet twice a year, although from the summer of 2020 onwards they do so mainly digitally. Greater attention was given to the common discernment and the choice of the apostolic preferences of the whole Society of Jesus in 2019.

The **reorganization of the European provinces**, started in 2014, with the creation of the Spanish Province, went on in 2017 with the creation of the French speaking province of Western Europe (South-Belgium, Luxemburg, France and Greece), the European Mediterranean Province (Italy, Malta and Romania) and the European Low Countries Region (Netherlands and North-Belgium). In 2021 the Central European Province has been created (Lithuania, Germany, Austria and Switzerland).

New **European Networks** such as the Kircher Network (Jesuit universities), archivists, treasurers, YAM (Young Adult Ministry) and Discerning Leadership saw the light of day.

On January 1st, 2021, after a long process of revision concluded with the formal approval of Fr. General, **new Statutes of the JCEP** became effective. The same year the JCEP Apostolic Plan was also finalised.

A **new European Tertianship** (next to Dublin), guided by Fr. Dany Younés is going to start in Lebanon in 2021.