

A Message from our associates in Belgium

Outcome of EU Summit Meeting on 19th November

The appointment of Herman van Rompuy, the current Christian Democrat Prime Minister of Belgium, as the new permanent President of the European Council was not unexpected. His evident skills as a reconciler of conflicting cultural and linguistic groups will undoubtedly be an asset in this new post, but will be sadly missed in Belgium where his premiership has brought a year of governmental stability after many previous months of instability and inability to form a durable governing coalition.

The appointment of Baroness Catherine Ashton (the current UK European Commissioner responsible for international trade) as the new High Representative for Foreign and Security Affairs was not predicted. She will need to exercise formidable negotiating and diplomatic skills to represent Europe for good in the many trouble spots of the world.

Both Mr van Rompuy and Baroness Ashton technically take up their new posts on 1st December. However, it will take some weeks before their new office teams are fully up and running and as they are both filling posts that did not previously exist they will need creative inspiration to initiate new relationships and ways of working.

Please pray for both of them to be able to be effective quickly and have a servant heart for the people of Europe, as well as compassion and vision for the good difference Europe can make in other parts of the world where there is conflict and suffering.