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## **EU: Comece, “Europe, renew your vocation to promote peace”.**

### **Calling on the European Council to grant Ukraine EU candidate status**

The Bishops of the European Union are getting in the game too to ask the European Council, which is due to meet on June 23rd and 24th, to grant Ukraine EU candidate status. They do it in a statement on peace in Ukraine out today, titled “Europe, renew your vocation to promote peace”, in which the Bishops call on the European Union to fully understand “the importance of its role in providing the European continent and the world with a new strategic view for stability, justice and peace”. The text has been worked out by the Comece Commission on EU External Relations, which is chaired by the Lithuanian Bishop mgr. Rimantas Norvila. “Russia’s unfair aggression of Ukraine – mgr. Norvila explains – has not only caused horrible human sufferings in that country and in its people, it has also disrupted the global security order”. That’s why the EU Bishops ask the European Union, along with the international community, “not to stop making efforts to put an end to the war, with Ukraine free, safe and independent within its universally-recognised borders”. Now, “our efforts must be directed at building a new architecture of peace in Europe and in the world”, the Bishops write. And the pillars of this new European deal include a commitment to carrying out “a reliable process for the enlargement of the EU with all the European countries that have applied for it, including the start of accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia and the granting of candidate status to Ukraine”. Comece also invites the member states to “responsibly and cooperatively take action for security” by developing “adequate” defensive systems, “without breaching the principle of proportionality” and “without breaching human rights, international law or ethical standards”. “Now, Europe and the world seem to be at a crossroads”, the Bishops conclude. “With Pope Francis, we ask the European Union and its member states not to let the dream of peace fade away. Hopefully, a new Europe is just being born. A Europe of values, not of selfish interests, a Europe with open arms, not with walls, a Europe for which human dignity, justice, freedom and democracy are not just empty words but fundamental principles upon which a peaceful, prosperous future may be built. A Europe that is not withdrawn onto itself but that is open to further enlargement. A Europe that takes responsibility for providing security, without strengthening the armament dynamics. A Europe that is not built on a mentality of fear, but fosters a culture of encounter and peace”.

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