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## **Germany: Bishops' plenary session. Card. Marx (Munich and Freising), "the Church must stand on the side of freedom"**

German Cardinal Reinhard Marx has called on the Church to defend freedom. "Freedom may be threatened, but we as a Church must stand on the side of freedom", he said in Augsburg today. "Not on the side of authoritarian regimes, not on the side of those who dream of the past, or dream the dreams of AfD [Editor's note: the far-right party Alternative für Deutschland] or dream the dreams of Putin or dream the dreams of Kirill", the Archbishop of Munich and Freising said, with a clear reference also to Moscow's Orthodox Patriarch who supports the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. Card. Marx made these comments on the second day of the plenary meeting of the German Bishops' Conference. The Cardinal added that democracy and religion need each other. Indeed, according to Card. Marx, religion, too, needs democracy. "Unlike state organizations". It needs "co-determination, co-creation, responsibility, the inclusion of all, all charisms, all possibilities. Without this, there will be no future for us". The Church should remain engaged in dialogue "with culture without being conformist, she should not see the culture of freedom as a negative culture, but as a culture made fundamentally possible by the Gospel". The Cardinal also spoke on the theme of ecumenism. According to Card. Marx, the divisions between the Eastern and Western Churches or caused by the Reformation were not willed by God but "made by us". And he underlined: "We miss our brothers and sisters from the other Churches. We will not be complete until we are together again".

Valentina Bombelli