
COMECE: Barrios Prieto, “need for social vaccine against indifference”. Appreciation for document from EU Ethics Group

The secretary of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE), Manuel Barrios Prieto, welcomed the document entitled “European Solidarity and Protection of Fundamental Rights in the COVID-19 Pandemic” issued by the European Group on Ethics on 2 April. The document, written in plain language, addresses these two crucial issues in these times of crisis while also providing recommendations for “ways out of the crisis”. “The protection of human health - the first recommendation reads - is accorded a much higher priority in the system of values of the European Union than economic interests”. The economic measures undertaken to support individuals, families, and community businesses – according to the second recommendation - should be continued and strengthened (and additional measures should be undertaken to improve housing security). Third: those with sufficient healthcare resources should share them with those in need. Fourth recommendation: “Restrictions of rights and freedoms that are imposed in order to save lives in an emergency situation need to be removed, and data need to be destroyed, as soon as the emergency is over”. And the final recommendation: once the crisis is over, a common strategy should be developed at the European and global levels “to deal with a pandemic and similar threats” undermining “our democracies, individual rights and economic sustainability”. The document ends with an appeal to find a “social vaccine” that provides “resilience, lasting social and economic solidarity and lasting immunity against indifference”.

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