
EU-Churches: online meeting. Athenagoras, “Covid measures are necessary, religious communities will show responsibility”

Covid, terrorism and migrations - these are the main topics discussed at today's meeting between the European Union, represented by European Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas, and the great monotheistic religions present in the old continent. Metropolitan Athenagoras, from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Belgium, said the meeting was a chance to discuss the multiple crises facing Europe. Special attention was given to the “soul” of the continent, that must be preserved, and the need to nurture social and political unity. Some “necessary measures have been taken” to fight the pandemic, which also have an impact on religious communities. The latter, in this regard, assure that they will take responsibility for protecting public health. As regards terrorism, Athenagoras said that faith communities insist on “youth education as a means to counter the emergence of extremist and violent behaviour”. Also, religious education “should prepare Europeans to live out the value of diversity”, raising their awareness of the different religions present in the EU. As for migration: “We should work together to fight human trafficking, and everyone's commitment is needed to make every migrant feel welcome in Europe. This, however, requires genuine integration and the chance for migrants to participate in our societies”.

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