



Memorandum of Understanding **between the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE)** **and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CEE)**

The Preamble of the Statutes of the Federation of Catholic Family Associations in Europe (FAFCE), states:

“FAFCE is, in fact, the only European family associative movement acting for all families while referring explicitly to the Social and Family Teachings of the Catholic Church. Fundamental texts such as "*Familiaris Consortio*", the "Charter of the Rights of the Family", "*Christifideles Laici*", as well as the Apostolic Exhortation "*Ecclesia in Europa*", constitute, in particular, the guiding lights of its actions and its missions.”

“FAFCE is an association of the lay faithful. As such, it operates in perfect autonomy of action vis a vis ecclesiastical authorities, even though it seeks counsel for the execution of its actions by the European organisms instituted by the Church”.

This is why FAFCE wishes to clarify its links with the ecclesial authorities.

I. Foundations

FAFCE's project concerns the right of the lay Christian faithful “to have recognized that freedom which all citizens have in the affairs of the earthly city” (can. 227) and the freedom they have, “By means of a private agreement made among themselves, (...) to establish associations” (can. 299).

FAFCE is a Catholic-inspired platform of Family Organisations and promotes veritable family policies on European and international levels.

It is in this sense that FAFCE takes its responsibility at the service of the Church, as recognised as such, by the ecclesial community.

The juridical status of FAFCE is one of a private-law association, founded on the 14th of June 1997. The updated Statutes are deposited with the Tribunal of Strasbourg (France) on the 2nd of August 2004.

II. Applications

In order to carry out its mission, FAFCE intends to strengthen its relationships with the ecclesial institutions. This relationship encourages the deepening of the convictions that orient the action of those responsible for the associations at the service of the family. Furthermore, it reinforces the reciprocal trust, the dialogue, and the collaboration in the light of the “Criteria of Ecclesiality” defined in *Christifideles Laici* (30).

1) Relations with the Church's European organisms

CEE ensures the spiritual accompaniment of FAFCE without any specific obligation on its side.



FAFCE participates— as an observer – in the CCEE Commission for Family and Life so that it may share its expertise, also in the promotion of Catholic family associations, in accordance with its mission. It also provides assistance to other organisms of the Catholic Church in Europe, which may make such a request, among which is the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE) that holds a special place, due to its role within the European institutions.

FAFCE also maintains close relations with the Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the Council of Europe, by virtue of its participatory status with this institution.

2) Relations with the Church's national authorities

To become a member of FAFCE, every family association must:

- a) apply ("Application Letter") to the Board of the Presidency, declaring its full adherence to the Statutes;
- b) attach a letter of presentation and confirmation on behalf of the relevant Bishops' Conference.

These provisions, approved *ad experimentum*, shall be subject to a joint evaluation after three years.

Saint Gallen, 9 July 2021

Atty. Vincenzo Bassi
FAFCE President

Card. Angelo Bagnasco
CCEE President