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## **“Together for Europe” – 12th May 2012**

A day in Brussels and in 144 cities throughout Europe

While in Europe there is renewed birth of nationalism and division, the economic crisis weighs down several countries and it is difficult to think of a common future, Christians from various denominations, belonging to movements and new communities, have reunited in Brussels, in the Gold Hall of the Square Meeting Centre, and linked up by satellite with another 144 European cities, for the initiative “Together for Europe” edition 2012, after that of Stuttgart 2004 and 2007. More than a thousand people met in Brussels from every part of Europe and tens of thousands in 22 countries, have given a message of hope, unity and peace to Europe.

Hundreds of movements and communities in Europe have promoted the event, among them the YMCA of Germany, Schonstatt, The Community of Sant Egidio, The Focolare Movement, Fondacio, the Christusbruderschaft Selbitz, Syndesmos (young orthodox) and the Catholic Charismatic Fraternity. In the presence of parliamentarians, politicians and administrators of various countries, evangelical, orthodox and catholic bishops, men and women of cultures and representatives of civic society, the manifestation of “Together for Unity 2012” has been launched. Returning to the vision of unity of the founder fathers of Europe, the movements and new communities appeal to the European people to continue facing the challenges of a globalised world and not retreat into irrelevencies. “Europe is a destiny and a necessity because it reconciles differences, in a society where all live together”, one reads in the manifesto.

Maria Voce, president of the Focolare Movement, referring to the process leading to the event of today, has talked of “a fascinating task that prepares, in a spirit of communion, a future of brotherhood and of peace for the individual and for society”. At the manifestation, others who have given their contribution were the previous president of the European Commission Romano Prodi – who praised the “humble strenght of Europe” - , the Italian Minister for international cooperation and integration Andrea Riccardi, Thomas Romer of the YMCA of Munich, the economist Luigino Bruni. Among those

present were the European Commissioner John Dalli, the Belgian Minister Mark Eyskens, the French Jacques Barrot.

In his message, the president of the Council of Europe, Herman Van Rompay, has affirmed that “the destiny of Europe is based on the philosophy of relationships and encounters, a unity in diversity and for awareness of the other”. Minister Riccardi, has on his part called for hope for Europe and in turn hope from Europe to the world. He called on the Europeans not to think that they can come out of the crisis on their own and not to give in to pessimism, calling for a sense of a common destiny: “The culture of unity” – he affirmed – can regenerate a soul in our Europe”.

The soul of Europe was evident from the concrete witness, the vitality and determination of youths and the very young. A soul that could be appreciated in the 144 European cities where the various initiatives and meetings were being held concurrently. From the Piazza of Campidoglio in Rome to the Seat of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, from Vilnius to Shengen, from Prague to Madrid, from Chisinau to Tirana, to 29 German cities one could see how the old continent in reality has been transformed by a new energy towards solidarity, progress and unity.

Attached: “Together for Europe 2012”, themes of Maria Voce, Andrea Riccardi, Thomas Romer.



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