

CURRENT UPDATE

"Called to Future"

Over 100 leaders of the Christian network 'Together for Europe' (TfE) gathered from 6 to 8 November 2025 in Castel Gandolfo, near Rome. They responded to the call to give Europe back its soul. To this end, they sought new ways to address the wounds of society and bring brotherhood where divisive forces prevail. The conference was characterised by **intense and threefold listening** (to the Holy Spirit, to one another, and to the signs of the times). As a next concrete step, consideration was given to organising a decentralised event linking a main event (perhaps in Rome) with simultaneous actions connected via a digital network with various European cities in May 2028.

Continuity

The meeting of the 'Friends of Together for Europe' took place this year in Italy and, with the guiding theme '**Called to Future**', continued the series of previous years. It marked the third preparatory step for a new phase, building on 'Called to Unity' (Timisoara/Romania, 2023) and 'Called to Hope' (Graz/Austria, 2024).

Participants from **17 European countries** represented the wide range of Christian traditions and movements within *TfE* – from Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox to Evangelical Free Churches and ecumenical initiatives. Among those present were also prominent representatives of movements and communities: **Margaret Karram** (President of the Focolare Movement), **Nuria Alonso** of CHARIS (Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service), **Fadi Krikor** (Head of the 'Meeting of Leaders'), **Reinhard Schink** (Director of the German Evangelical Alliance) and **Valeria Martano** (Community of Sant'Egidio).

Actively shaping the future

This year's conference deliberately focused on communities that want **to actively shape the future of *TfE***. 'We want to shape the future with courage and innovation in the light of the *TfE* charism,' summarised a 43-year-old participant. The central theme 'Called to Future' thus became an invitation to 'search for traces of the future'.

The **polyphony of voices** in Castel Gandolfo was a strong sign of unity in the common commitment to Europe. 'Every contribution composes a symphony, whose score is written in heaven,' emphasised one participant. Significant contributions were also made by several speakers in their brief addresses. In addition to Fr Hans-Martin Samietz (Schönstatt Movement), who emphasised how one charism highlights the charism of another, and parish priest Matthias Leineweber (Community of Sant'Egidio), who reported on his community's peace initiatives, Jesús Morán (co-president of the Focolare Movement) also spoke. Morán spoke, among other things, of an epochal change and a collective 'dark night' that requires a new culture of unity. He highlighted the steps taken in the 20th century and the current challenges, finally moving from Modernity (progress) to Postmodernity (plurality) to **Hypermodernity**. The latter shifts the focus from the 'I' to the "We" ('one' in Christ).

Nuria Alonso conveyed the friendship and solidarity of **Pino Scafuro**, moderator of CHARIS. Subsequently, a panel discussion with Valeria Martano, Margaret Karram and Fadi Krikor took centre stage. Together, they emphasised how God's greatness is the source of inspiration for daring to do great things courageously. In conclusion, Fadi Krikor defined *TfE* as 'a thought in the heart of God'.

Searching for traces

The work in discussion groups was important, where **active listening** to each other and to the Spirit of God was central to the transition from 'I' to 'We.' Among other things, the focus was on strengthening **friendship**, which has always been the foundation of *TfE*, and on increasing the **visibility** of *TfE* in politics, cultural life and society. To this end, local meetings are being held, as well as a joint meeting in a broader (real and virtual) setting on the key issues of **peace and democracy**. For this reason, a **larger meeting** is planned for **May 2028**. Communities have been asked to provide feedback by March 2026 on how they can get involved in this project.

In May 2026, a group of students and young adults – accompanied by *TfE* – will travel to **Brussels**, as they did in 2025, to engage in dialogue with European parliamentarians from various parties. 'The European vocation and spirit can only manifest itself through the daily decisions of its citizens. And that is where we must actively contribute. The more of us there are, the better,' explained an Italian student.

As every year, at the end of the meeting, participants solemnly renewed the **Covenant of Mutual Love**, based on John 13:34-35, also renewing their commitment to follow Jesus' example. The various outcomes of the conference will now be shared in this spirit with regional networks and communities.

Twenty-six years after the founding of *TfE*, a **generational change** is underway in the Steering Committee. In line with this change, Fr. Lothar Penners (Schönstatt) and Gerhard Pross (YMCA) have compiled a book of fundamental and guiding texts from the history of *TfE*: '*Sternstunden der Einheit – Erfahrungen aus 25 Jahren Miteinander für Europa*' (**Golden Moments of Unity – Experiences from 25 Years of Together for Europe**). The book will be published shortly.

Movements and communities present in Castel Gandolfo: International Association of *Caterinati*, Christusbruderschaft Selbitz, Communauté de l'Epiphanie et de la Croix, Don Camillo Community, Community of Sant'Egidio, Risen Jesus Community, John XXIII Community, Victory of God Community, Fifth Dimension Community, Cursillos de Cristiandad, CVJM (Christlicher Verein Junger Menschen - YMCA), Empowering Europe, ENC (European Network of Communities), Equipes Notre Dame, FHN (Father's House for all Nations), Focolare Movement, Gemeinschaft Immanuel, GGE (Geistliche Gemeindeerneuerung der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland), Jesusbruderschaft, OJC (Offensive Junger Christen), Carmelite Ecclesial Movement, MSSP (Missionary Society of St. Paul), Open Doors, Schönstatt Movement, Schwert des Geistes, Vineyar

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