



COMECE Presidency to be received in an audience by the Holy Father Leo XIV

The members of the Presidency of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE) will be received in a private audience by the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, at the Vatican on Thursday, 21 May 2026, at 10.00 a.m. The audience will be followed by a press conference in the Sala Marconi, Piazza Pia 3, Rome, at 11.30 a.m.

This audience with Pope Leo XIV will mark the second meeting between the Holy Father and the Presidency of COMECE since his election to the Chair of Saint Peter in May 2025.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to reflect with the Holy Father on the current state of the European integration process and to discuss the role of the European Union in promoting peace and integral human development in an uncertain and rapidly changing world.

During the audience, the COMECE Presidency intends to address a number of policies and broader issues relevant to the Church and currently featuring high on the EU's agenda.

The COMECE Presidency will also present to the Holy Father the proposal to hold a new edition of *Rethinking Europe* in autumn 2027, exactly ten years after the first edition, which brought together around 300 participants at the Vatican, including political representatives from the European Union and its Member States, academics and representatives of Churches. The event aimed to reflect on the challenges facing the European Union and to explore ways to strengthen and renew the European project.

The COMECE delegation will comprise:

- Mgr Mariano Crociata, President
- Mgr Bernardito Cleopas Auza, Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union
- Mgr Antoine Hérouard, First Vice-President
- Mgr Rimantas Norvila, Vice-President
- Mgr Nuno Brás da Silva Martins, Vice-President
- Mgr Czesław Kozon, Vice-President
- Fr Manuel Barrios Prieto, General Secretary of COMECE
- Alessandro Calcagno, Assistant General Secretary of COMECE

Press Conference & Accreditation

A press conference will follow the audience. The press conference will take place in the Sala Marconi, Piazza Pia 3, Rome, at 11.30. Journalists and media professionals wishing to participate are invited to submit a written request through the online accreditation system of the Holy See Press Office: press.vatican.va/accreditamenti