

Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden Meets with Swedish Minister of Religion



STOCKHOLM – On the afternoon of May 30, 2023, the representatives of CEC and COMECE met with the Swedish Minister of Health, Social Welfare, and Religion, His Excellency Mr. Jakob Forssmed, at his office in Stockholm.

Mr. Forssmed is responsible for matters related to religious communities, social welfare, sports, and the youth, including public health, health care, and care for seniors and persons with disabilities.

The following individuals attended the meeting with Mr. Forssmed:

- a) Representing the Commission of the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE) were its Chairman Bishop Mariano Crociate of Latina, Cardinal Anders Arborelius of Stockholm and its Assistant Secretary General Mr. Alessandro Calcagno.
- b) Representing the Christian Council of Sweden were its Secretary General Ms. Sophia Camnerin and CCS associate Rev. Jan Eckerdal.
- c) Representing the Conference of European Churches (CEC) were its Vice-President Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden and All Scandinavia and Secretary of Studies Dr. Peter Pavlovic.

The aforementioned initially gathered on site at the headquarters of the Swedish agency SENSUS, where Dr. Pavlovic briefed them on the agenda of items that would be discussed with the Minister, which were as follows:

- 1) Social Integration. The CEC and COMECE support the approval process for the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, aimed at promoting solidarity and mutual responsibility between EU member states, while taking into account the corresponding needs and particulars associated with each state.
- 2) EU Unity. The CEC and COMECE are putting forth common efforts for the prevalence of justice, peace, and collaboration between European nations, as well as the various social groups and religions in Europe.
- 3) The War in Ukraine. The CEC and COMECE look toward a viable solution to this conflict, rooted in dialogue, which will secure a “just peace” with complete respect for international law.
- 4) A Sustainable Future. The CEC and COMECE welcome the fact that the Swedish

Presidency of the Council of the EU proclaimed the issue of Energy as a priority and support efforts for the fulfillment of our duty toward future generations by expediting the long-term goal of fossil fuel decoupling and reduction of vulnerability regarding energy resources.

Afterward, a meeting was held with members of the Swedish media and Minister Forssmed.

On behalf of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Metropolitan Cleopas presented the Minister with a copy of the former's English-language study *Speaking the Truth in Love*, while also conveying the Patriarch's warmest congratulations on the assumption of his ministerial duties.

The Minister publicly expressed his thanks to Patriarch Bartholomew for his wishes and gift, and assured the participants of the meeting, after first carefully listening to the recommendations and proposals made by the representatives of the CEC and COMECE regarding the aforementioned issues, that the Swedish Government, which has currently assumed the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU, considers it a priority to continue to staunchly support these issues.

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Photos by Ms. Kristina Hellner, Head of Communications, Katolska kyrkan in Sverige

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