A SOUL FOR EUROPE?

Contributions of European Churches to the Forum of the Convention on the Future of Europe

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Master’s Thesis in Church and Social Studies
August 2007
The aim of this research was to study how European churches contributed to the shaping of the Constitutional Treaty during the work of the Convention on the future of Europe through the public discussion forum, established by the Convention for this specific purpose in the years 2002–2003. In particular, this study sought to uncover the areas of interest brought up by the churches in their contributions, the objectives they pursued, and the approaches and arguments they employed to reach those objectives.

The data for this study comprised all official submissions by European churches and church alliances to the Forum, totalling 21 contributions. A central criterion for inclusion of the data was that the organization can reasonably be assumed to represent the official position of one or more Christian churches within the European Union before the 2004 expansion. The contributing churches and organizations represent the vast majority of Christians in Europe.

The data was analyzed using primarily qualitative content analysis. The research approach was a combination of abductive and inductive inference. Based on the analysis a two-fold theoretical framework was adopted, focusing on theories of public religion, secularization and deprivatization of religion, and of legitimation and collective identity.

The main areas of interest found in the contributions of the churches were the value foundation of the European Union, which is demanded to coherently permeate all policies and actions of the EU, and the social dimension of Europe, which must be given equal status to the political and economic dimensions. In both areas the churches claim significant experience and expertise, which they want to see recognized in the Constitutional Treaty through a formally guaranteed status for churches and religious communities in the EU.

In their contributions the churches show a strong determination to secure a significant role for both religion and religious communities in the public life of Europe. As for the role of religion, they point out to its potential as a motivating and cohesive force in society and as a building block for a collective European identity, which is still missing.

Churches also pursue a substantial public role for themselves beyond the spiritual dimension, permeating the secular areas of the social, political and economic dimensions. The arguments in support of such role are embedded in their interest and expertise in spiritual and other fundamental values and their broad involvement in providing social services. In this context churches use expressions inclusive of all religions and convictions, albeit clearly advocating the primacy of Europe's Christian heritage.

Based on their historical role, their social involvement and their spiritual mission they use the public debate on the Constitutional Treaty to gain formal legitimacy for the public status of religion and religious communities, both nationally and on a European level, through appropriate provisions in the constitutional text. In return they offer the European Union ways of improving its own legitimacy by reducing the democratic and ideological deficit of the EU and advancing the development a collective European identity.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Europe at a crossroads

We are in effect at a crossroads in the history of European construction. - - - If in the next ten years we haven't managed to give a soul to Europe, to give a spirituality and meaning, the game will be up. - - - This is why I want to revive the intellectual and spiritual debate on Europe. I invite the Churches to participate actively in it. We don't want to control it; it is a democratic discussion, not to be monopolised by technocrats. - - - We must find a way of involving the Churches.¹

In 1992 former President of the European Commission Jacques Delors expressed his belief that within a decade the project of European integration would be in serious jeopardy, unless the economic and legal construction would be given "a breath of air" and a "soul". For decades the European project had been mainly concerned with building up international security in the face of a recovering post-war Germany and the escalating Cold War, and with consolidating Western European economies in the face of a globalizing economical competition.² However, the implications of the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, establishing the European Union as a political body, were so far-reaching that more than European political institutions and legal instruments would be required for this massive reform to become anchored in European life and to be embraced and endorsed by European citizens.³ For people to identify with the highly integrated European Union, it must be furnished with a meaning. Delors called particularly on the churches to be involved in this spiritual dimension of the European development.⁴

The transformation that was set in motion in Europe in 1992 is unprecedented in modern European history and is reshaping the social, political and economic life as well as the governance of the European Union and will continue to do so even more significantly in the years to come. One major development is the rapid enlargement of the European Union. In 1995 three new

¹ Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission from 1985 to 1995, in his speech to representatives of the European churches on 4 February 1992. The exact historical wording of the speech is open to debate. This wording is from the Newsletter 2/1992 of the European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society, as quoted by Luibl (2005, 197–198), with correction of the obvious spelling errors by the author.
³ Dinan 2003, 34–35.
⁴ In 1994 Delors created the "Initiative a Soul for Europe" meant to bring together organizations, churches and religious communities to further develop and promote the spiritual basis of the European Union (Foret 2004, 4). In 2002 the Initiative was institutionalized as an association under Belgian law (COMECE 2007).
members joined the EU, followed by ten new member states in 2004, many of them former Socialist states from Eastern Europe, and two in 2007, raising the number of member states from twelve in 1992 to 27 in 2007 and the number of EU citizens by 40% from 350 million to 490 million. Three more countries are in the process of negotiating accession.

The second major development was initiated in December 2001, when the European Council issued the Declaration of Laeken dealing with the future of the European Union. Aware of the immense pressure that the upcoming enlargement would put on the institutions of the Union and on its procedures of governance, the European Council concluded that a massive overhaul was needed in many areas. Also the problem of democratic deficit, i.e. the general belief that the EU lacks democratic control, and the perceived distance between the citizens and the institutions of the EU were areas of major concern.

In its pursuit of a more efficient, transparent and democratic governance the Council decided to set up a Convention on the Future of Europe, starting its work on 1 March 2002 and aiming at completing it after one year. The main purpose of the Convention was to prepare a proposal to the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) of 2003 on how to solve the problems of bureaucracy and complexity and how to bring the EU institutions closer to its citizens, thus strengthening their European identity. In practice this task was perceived as the draft of a new Constitutional Treaty for the European Union, replacing the various earlier Treaties with a single, consistent and updated one. The resulting draft was published in June 2003 and approved and signed in Rome on 29 October 2004. In order to come into effect, the Constitutional Treaty has to be ratified by all the member states of the EU. Ever since France and the Netherlands rejected the Constitutional Treaty in its present form in referendums in May and June of

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5 Eurostat 2007, 51. The figures are estimated based on those given in the yearbook for the years 1995 and 2005.
6 The present candidate countries are Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (European Commission 2007b). For an overview of the most relevant enlargement-related challenges, see Friis (2000, 178–179) and European Commission (2002).
7 European Union terminology is explained in Appendix 2. The term Council will be used as a short form for the European Council.
8 I will generally use the term European Convention or Convention as short forms for Convention on the future of Europe. These short forms are common EU usage. See Appendix 2.
9 The IGC was unable to complete its work on the Constitutional Treaty in 2003. It was finally approved and signed in Rome on 29 October 2004.
2005, respectively, the process of ratification has been in an impasse, which the
German Presidency of 2007 seeks to release at present.\textsuperscript{11}

Among the new working methods that were to be adopted by the European
Convention was the presentation of all its discussions and official documents in
the public domain. A Forum was opened for organizations representing civil
society, a term specified in the Laeken Declaration as "the social partners, the
business world, non-governmental organisations, academia, etc."\textsuperscript{12}. The Forum
was to be informed regularly and without delay of the proceedings of the
Convention, giving its participants an opportunity to react and contribute to the
discussion on the future of Europe, thus implementing genuine and transparent
dialogue. Physically the Forum was implemented as a dedicated internet
website.\textsuperscript{13}

1.2. The socio-political role of European churches

Several churches and other Christian organizations seized the opportunity to have
a say in building the constitutional basis for Europe through the Forum of the
European Convention. They issued a number of official contributions to the
Forum, both individually and in cooperation with other churches and related
organizations, in response to the Laeken Declaration and to the material published
by the Convention.\textsuperscript{14} For many churches these contributions are a persistent
continuation of their long-term involvement in society and politics in Europe.

The Christian church has had a fundamental impact on the history of
Europe for well over a millennium. Until the end of the Middle Ages church and
society were inseparably intertwined. There was a strong concentration of political
power in the Vatican, including the appointment of the European Emperors,
although in practice there was a strong ongoing competition between ecclesiastic
and secular powers. Social welfare, health care and education were almost
exclusively the realm of the church. With the dawning of the Renaissance and the
Reformation the position of the Roman Catholic Church weakened in many

\textsuperscript{11} Information on the present status of the ratification procedure is found on the website of the
European Union (2006). The position of Germany concerning the Constitutional Treaty is given on
the website of the German Council Presidency (EU2007.de 2007).

\textsuperscript{12} European Council 2001, 7.

\textsuperscript{13} European Convention 2003d.
countries during the sixteenth century; yet its influence on European politics continued to be significant. In countries most affected by the Reformation the Protestant churches often managed to attain a position of power and influence much similar to the one Rome had exercised before. Except for France, where the Revolution of 1789 changed the relation between the church and the state dramatically, major national churches have continued to enjoy a status of intensive political and social partnership with the secular government until well into the twentieth century, often as an official state church. In many countries the church–state relationships have gradually been relaxed, and in several countries church and state have separated completely. Churches have been active in the pursuit and promotion of European integration particularly after World War II, setting an example of international cooperation across national and denominational borders. The formation of the European Catholic Bishops’ Conference and the ecumenical Conference of European Churches, and the increasing cooperation between the two bodies have provided a model for international cooperation of national governments.

Another channel of political influence was established through the Christian Democratic movement, originally a Vatican initiative. It was launched by Pope Leo XIII in his memorable encyclical *Rerum Novum* of 1891 and was given the name Christian Democracy ten years later. Originally meant as a Catholic alternative to the rising Socialist movement, it became an important conservative and stabilizing force in Western European politics. Similar movements were started among the Protestants and gradually an ecumenically based Christian Democratic movement emerged in Europe, which in most countries had rather relaxed ties to the churches. Particularly after World War II the Christian Democratic movement played a decisive role in facilitating and implementing the first stages of European cooperation which has developed into the present European Union.

15 A state church is characterized by an official public and privileged position stipulated in the national constitution.
17 Rémond 1997, 12.
18 Pope Leo XIII 1891, paragraphs 57–64.
20 See e.g. CEI 2004, 83–85 for an example of Christian Democracy in a Nordic context.
The social role of the churches in Europe can hardly be overemphasized. Building on their religious authority and mission they have upheld the spiritual and social values that make up the foundation of society and provide social cohesion. Using their political influence they have lent a powerful voice to the voiceless in society and contributed to the development of the various forms and expressions of a European social model, which continues to reflect the religious history and current situation in each country or region. Churches have also maintained an important role in Europe in either providing charity, social welfare, health care and education or supporting the state in doing so. Thus churches are service providers and major employers of both paid and volunteer workforce.

In order to express their concerns and assert influence on political, social, economic and moral issues, churches have been using channels for dialogue with national, regional and local authorities, that have been generally well-established over a long period of time, often even embedded in the national constitution and other legal provisions. However, such official channels are not in place with the institutes of the EU. For this reason many churches have resorted to various forms of political lobbying. Several individual churches have established an EU office in Brussels or Strasbourg. However, most churches operate through one or more assemblies or conferences of churches, such as the Conference of European Churches (CEC) with more than 120 members representing Anglican, Protestant, Orthodox and Old Catholic Church traditions from every country in Europe. Its Church and State Commission (CSC) has been charged with the responsibility of following the social and political developments in Europe. The Roman Catholic Church is represented in Brussels both directly by the Holy See of the Vatican and by the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community (COMECE).

In face of the avalanche of developments on the European scene churches face major challenges. In many countries in Europe religion is unmistakably undergoing a rapid process of marginalization and privatization, affecting the role and impact of the churches both nationally and on a European scale. However, at the same time signs of a growing public significance of religion and of churches

as religious, social and political actors can be observed, putting religious beliefs and institutions back into the limelight of the social and political debate. A fairly recent and clearly growing phenomenon is the competition that traditional mainstream churches in Europe experience from other world religions, new religious movements, and un-European (e.g. African) forms of Christian expression. Furthermore, the present socio-economic developments, such as the rapidly globalizing economy, the harmonization of European legislation on employment and services, the financial pressures facing social welfare systems in general, and the increasing mobility of the workforce have an inevitable effect on the social challenges imposed on the churches and on the way they can continue to implement their social role.

The Forum of the Convention on the Future of Europe provides the churches with a unique opportunity to participate in public and on unambiguously predefined terms in the debate on the future of Europe and in the conception of the Constitutional Treaty, which lays the legal foundation for the future European Union. The way the churches use this opportunity is the focus of this study.

1.3. Previous research

The involvement of churches in the shaping of European integration has only recently become a focus of sociological research. Johannes Haapalainen in his Master's thesis of 2001 studied the relations between the major European churches and the European Union. His aim was to examine the position of the churches in the EU as perceived by the Union and by the churches themselves. In his research he focuses on the Roman Catholic Church and the Conference of European Churches (CEC). His research is based on the texts of EU treaties and other legislation, as well as on publications by the lobbying offices of the aforementioned churches. He approaches his research question using Parson's functional system theory. Haapalainen points out to the significance and diversity

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of the relationship between the churches and the EU, which goes far beyond the weight given to churches on an official level.\textsuperscript{31}

Teemu Isokääntä has analyzed the reactions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF) on the European Community and the European Union. He focuses on the years 1992–1999, the years immediately preceding and following the accession of Finland to the Union in 1995. The Church Council of ELCF was charged by the Synod with the monitoring of the European integration. In the beginning of this period public discussion was intensive and opinions strong for and against joining the European Union. ELCF attempted to join the debate while remaining neutral at the same time. Only towards the end of the period the official reactions of the church started to reflect an understanding of the European Union and the church’s possible role in it.\textsuperscript{32}

Churches and European Union (CEU) is an interdisciplinary research project conducted at the University of Helsinki, studying the changing role of churches in Finland and the Baltic countries in the context of the changes taking place in the European Union. The research focuses on the way the meaning and public role of religion and of the churches develop, especially in civil society and the area of social welfare. Case studies of cooperation and networking between parishes and local authorities and NGOs are included, with a particular emphasis on development projects funded by the European Social Fund. Also European legislation affecting the churches and religious communities, including areas of employment, human rights and freedom of religion, are studied with special attention to the growing number of religions represented in the EU. The research project is still in progress.\textsuperscript{33}

Partnering with the CEU project, the international research project Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective (WREP) studied the role of the majority churches in eight European countries as agents of social welfare. This comparative study, conducted in the years 2003–2006, looks at different church traditions in countries with different welfare models, seeking answers to questions concerning the ways in which the churches exercise influence through action and public debate, particularly considering the significant religious, economic and social changes that Europe is undergoing at the moment. The research was carried

\textsuperscript{31} Haapalainen 2002.
\textsuperscript{32} Isokääntä 2001.
\textsuperscript{33} CEU 2007.
out in the form of local case studies. The project includes the perspective of theological and ethical positioning of the churches, their relations with local and public authorities, and especially gender issues, bearing in mind the important role of women in social welfare.\textsuperscript{34}

Churches and European Integration is a three-year international research project coordinated by the Department of Church History of the University of Helsinki.\textsuperscript{35} Based on studies in five countries with different political and church situations it examines the role and influence of churches on European integration from a historical perspective, with special attention to the situation during the Cold War and its immediate aftermath. It is an interdisciplinary project, combining approaches from general history, church history, and systematic theology. The project reveals the great significance of religion in Cold War era politics, even in Northern Europe, which has generally been considered far too secularized for that. Churches have been generally supportive to the cause of European integration, actively pursuing political solutions that lessened tension and prejudice and promoted peace, justice, unity and human rights.\textsuperscript{36}

Legislative issues related to the relations between religions and the European Union have been studied by Lasia Bloß as part of the Jean Monnet Program of the New York University. She looks particularly at the impact of European law on the corporate element of the freedom of religion. Based on the existing legal frameworks in four EU member countries she analyzes to what extent the concept of religious liberty, guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950, is supported or jeopardized by national laws, which are not necessarily overruled by EU legislation. These include stipulations concerning church–state relations, which are safeguarded from EU intervention by Declaration No. 11 of the Amsterdam Treaty.\textsuperscript{37} Bloß also looks at primary and secondary EU legislation, pointing out to the possible effect of the competition rules dictated by the Maastricht Treaty on the work of churches in the area of health and welfare provision, and of employment laws on the right of churches and religious communities to use religious conviction as a criterion

\textsuperscript{34} WREP 2007.
\textsuperscript{35} CEI 2003. CEI is a cooperative project of the Universities of Helsinki, Tartu, Münster, Glasgow and Lund.
\textsuperscript{36} CEI 2004.
for employee recruitment. Also the question of state support for religious organizations such as established churches is dealt with in this study.\textsuperscript{38}

On a more general level, Tapio Lampinen has studied the interaction between religion and politics from a sociological perspective. His focus is on the relationship between religious and political authorities, the historical development of religion and politics, the employment of symbols and rites, and the question of legitimacy. His study is based on four national case studies, covering Japan, Greece, Norway and the United States of America. In order to describe the impact of religion on different societies, Lampinen uses the concepts of civil religion and diffused religion. Lampinen draws attention to the variety of ways religious and political authorities interact in different situations to further their own interests and seek to gain legitimacy for their courses of action from the other.\textsuperscript{39}

José Casanova has studied religion as a public phenomenon in modern societies, particularly in the light of the process of secularization. Based on five case studies from four different countries he analyzes the public role that the Christian faith and the Christian churches have developed in those countries. He looks both at the official status of the churches and at the actual role and significance of the religious dimension in those countries. He points out to the variety of ways in which religion and the churches continue to be relevant in society despite the substantial changes that have taken place in the religiosity of the people, in the relationship between state and church, and in the way society functions and is organized. Casanova uses the findings of his research to test the validity of the widely supported theories of secularization, and formulates his own thesis of the deprivatization of religion.\textsuperscript{40}

Much more research has been done and many research projects initiated more recently which deal with the status of religion in modern society and particularly in Europe. A renewed interest in these areas of research may be ascribed to the tragic events on 11 September 2001 and to the discussion about the role of religion in the European Union which has received much media coverage during and after the work of the European Convention and which focused in particular on whether God and Christianity should be mentioned in the Constitutional Treaty and on the implications of a possible accession of Muslim

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{38} Bloß 2003.
\textsuperscript{39} Lampinen 1995.
\textsuperscript{40} Casanova 1994.
\end{footnotesize}
Turkey to the European Union. However, I consider that this research is not \textit{a priori} close enough to the focus of this study, and I will therefore ignore it at this stage.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{41} See e.g. Byrnes and Katzenstein (2006) for some of the research foci within the framework of religion in the expanding European Union.
2. RESEARCH APPROACH

2.1. Aim

In this research I will examine how European churches have contributed to the shaping of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe through the Forum of the Convention on the Future of Europe. I will specifically seek answers to the following questions: What are the prevailing themes and issues taken up by the various churches in the debate on the future of Europe? What objectives do they seek to achieve? How do they pursue these objectives, i.e. what approaches and arguments do they employ to influence the process of shaping the future Constitutional Treaty of the European Union?

In the specific context of the European Convention the repertoire of themes and issues is shaped by two different sources. The Declaration of Laeken raised some major issues that were to be confronted by the Convention and resolved in a possible Constitutional Treaty. Most central was the quest for a more democratic, transparent and efficient governance of the European Union. Laeken's agenda also mentions a rethinking and redefinition of the global role of Europe, not only as an economic power, but foremost as a provider of peace and sustainability. Underlying the Laeken Declaration is the need to build a European identity and to secure credibility and ownership of the European Union and its institutions among the citizens. The agenda of the Laeken Declaration provides an obvious collection of themes for the churches to deal with in their contributions.

In addition, throughout the process of European integration churches have raised a variety of issues of their own. Some of these are dealing with political, social, economical or ethical questions, while others focus specifically on questions of faith and religion, of the meaning of Christianity and Christian values, and of the role of the churches in European life.

When studying the churches' contributions, it may therefore be meaningful to distinguish between Laeken-inspired issues and own initiatives as well as between general questions and those pertaining to religion and in particular to the churches and religious communities.

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2.2. Data

Churches throughout Europe and even beyond its borders have since long taken a relatively active part in the discussion on the future of Europe in different contexts. In addition to individual involvement, churches have increasingly resorted to cooperation in alliances across national and denominational borders in order to increase their impact and become more effective in their involvement. I narrow down my research to the contributions of churches and church alliances operating within the European Union (E-15) to the Forum of the Convention on the Future of Europe. The reason for this focus is twofold.

First of all, the Forum is a unique opportunity provided by the European Council to churches and other organizations in civil society to contribute transparently and in public to the debate on the future of Europe. At a crucial moment in the history of the European Union when efforts are made to secure the legal foundation for the future Union, churches are given an opportunity to be heard. From the point of view of the churches the uniqueness of this situation is accentuated by the fact, that they have no official channels of communication with the European Commission, nor are they being formally recognized as a distinct interest group apart from non-governmental organizations and civil society in general.

Secondly, the Forum provides a well-defined and delimited area of research. The discussion on the Forum has a clear agenda, stipulated by the European Council in the Declaration of Laeken. It has a clear target: the conception of a new Constitutional Treaty for the enlarged European Union, reflecting greater democracy, transparency and efficiency and a stronger European identity for all citizens of EU countries. Physically, the Forum is implemented as an unambiguously defined area on the internet, inaugurated on 7 March 2002, and

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2 See e.g. CEC 2001b.
3 An example *par excellence* of this is the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches, which was established in 1999 as a result of the fusion between CEC and the European Ecumenical Commission on Church and Society (EECCS), and which has been systematically involved in evaluating the developments in the EU and contributing to the debate ever since, see CEC 2004.
4 The European Union before the enlargement of 2004 is often designated as EU-15, whereas the enlarged Union before 2007 is called EU-25. The enlargement of the EU in 2007 is not taken into account since it was not relevant at the time of the European Convention.
6 COMECE 2002.
closed for contributions on 31 July 2003, three weeks after the Convention on the Future of Europe concluded its work.\(^8\) Thus limiting myself to the contributions found on the website of the Forum provides me with a highly defined and precisely limited set of data, which lends itself well for the research for my Master’s thesis. Moving beyond these limits would open up a virtually unlimited range of data from multiple sources over an extended period of time in many forms and languages, severely complicating both data acquisition and analysis.

The scope of my research needs delimiting in yet another sense. Which organizations must be included under the heading of European churches and church alliances? This question can be broken down into three more specific questions: What religious organizations can or should be considered Christian churches? What alliances and other organizations can be considered to be legitimate representatives of these churches, i.e. be endorsed to speak out on their behalf? Should major movements within the churches or specialized (e.g. diaconal) organizations be included? Because these choices may contain an element of arbitrariness, I will explain my criteria in the following paragraphs. At this stage I will introduce the contributors only to the extent needed to justify my selection procedure. When analyzing the final research data in Chapter 3, I will present the selected organizations in more detail.

Some European churches have submitted individual contributions to the Forum. These are the (Orthodox) Church of Greece, represented by its Holy Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark, represented by the Committee for International Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of Copenhagen. I include these three contributions without further discussion. The Evangelical Church in Germany has submitted one contribution together with the German Conference of Bishops, which represents the Roman Catholic Church in Germany on a national level. I consider also this one contribution an indisputable part of my research data.

On a European level the Roman Catholic Church is represented by the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community (COMECE), appointed by the Catholic Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union as a liaison with the political organization of the European Union. Since the Holy See has not participated in the Forum, the contributions of COMECE must

\(^8\) European Convention 2003d.
be interpreted as representative of the concerns and positions of Rome.\textsuperscript{9} COMECE participates through three individual and three joint contributions, which I will include in my research.

The Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, represented by the Department for External Church Relations, can be duly categorized as a Christian church. However, its jurisdiction does not extend to the area of the enlarging European Union (EU-25).\textsuperscript{10} In this research I therefore consider the Russian Orthodox Church an external actor on the scene and do not incorporate its two contributions into my research data.

The Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers, is represented on the Forum by the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), which has participated with seven contributions. Quakers are not unambiguously Christian in their outlook. Although Quakers started off as a radical, but distinctly Christian, protestant church movement, some important characteristics set them apart from the majority of Christian churches. One is the absence of formal structures and rites typical for Christian churches such as the sacraments and the ministry.\textsuperscript{11} In the Conference of European Churches they enjoy observer status\textsuperscript{12}, whereas in the World Council of Churches only the American and Canadian Quaker societies have attained membership.\textsuperscript{13} Because they lack a formal doctrine, it is impossible to evaluate to what extent Quakers subscribe to general Christian beliefs. Their main emphasis is on peace-building. The spiritual dimension of Quaker belief is summed up in the phrase "that of God in us"\textsuperscript{14}, expressing a universalism that is foreign to most Christian denominations. I have decided not to exclude QCEA \textit{a priori} in my research. However, I will take into account the aforementioned considerations for and against as well as the size of membership they represent\textsuperscript{15} in the weight attributed to its contributions.

Two major church alliances contribute to the Forum: the Conference of European Churches (CEC), represented by its Church and Society Commission,\textsuperscript{9,10,12,13,14}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item COMECE 2004a and 2004b.
\item In one of its contributions (Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate 2003) an appeal is made to the “hundreds of thousands of our church members [who] now reside in the European Union countries”. However, none of the Orthodox Churches in the enlarged EU are under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.
\item Religious Society of Friends 2004.
\item CEC 2003c.
\item World Council of Churches 2004.
\item QCEA 2001.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
and the Leuenberg Church Fellowship of Protestant Churches in Europe (LCF). CEC comprises a membership of 127 Protestant, Old Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches, of which 57 in the European Union during the time of the Convention (EU-15) and 87 in the enlarged Union (EU-25). LCF counts 103 Protestant member churches, of which 64 in EU-15 countries and 82 in EU-25 countries. Approximately half of these churches are also members of CEC. Both church alliances represent a significant portion of the non-Roman Catholic Christian population and Christian churches in the EU, of which only very few have individual contributions to the Forum. Therefore the contributions of the Conference of European Churches and the Leuenberg Church Fellowship will be included in the data.

A small national church alliance contributing to the Forum is the Free Church Council of Finland, representing the Evangelical Free Church, the Methodist Church, the Pentecostal Church, the Salvation Army and the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Finland. Its member churches have a marginal minority position in a relatively small EU country where nearly 85% of the population belongs to the established Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland. These churches are not members of CEC, but three of them are members of the Finnish Ecumenical Council. Therefore I will include the one contribution of the Free Church Council of Finland in my research.

I exclude from my data the contributions of movements that operate independently from within churches or on an ecumenical basis, often on a grass-root level. That includes e.g. a number of Roman Catholic women's organizations, as well as the European Network Church-on-the-Move, which is an influential lay movement within the Roman Catholic Church. Many of these movements are

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15 In the year 2000 Western Europe counted 19 251 members, of which 16 729 (87%) in the United Kingdom alone (Quakerinfo 2006).
16 The Leuenberg Church Fellowship changed its name to Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) in November 2003 (CPCE 2004). In this research I will use the old name, since it applied during the time of the Convention on the Future of Europe.
17 These data are derived from the information contained in CEC 2003c.
18 CPCE 2004.
19 These data are calculated from a detailed comparison of the information provided by LCF (CPCE 2004) and CEC (2003c).
20 FCCF 2003.
21 Church Research Institute 2005, 21.
22 Suomen ekumeeninen neuvosto 2006.
23 A complete listing of contributors and contributions can be found on the website of the European Convention (European Convention 2003n). For more information on these Christian organizations I wish to refer to their websites.
actively engaged in the discussion on the Forum, but cannot be considered to represent the official position of the churches they belong to.

The European diaconal organizations Eurodiaconia and Caritas Europa contribute to the Forum both individually and in a number of cooperative efforts. Their role is somewhat difficult to define. Their position is recognized in the churches with which they operate, they have channels of consultation with bodies officially representing European churches and have participated in one joint contribution with church alliances. Yet these organizations can operate independently, they are highly specialized and focused, and they do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the churches they associate with other than in joint contributions with these churches. Therefore I do not include their contributions in my research.

Altogether, my research data comprises 21 contributions totalling 66 pages by seven individual churches and three church alliances. Four of the submissions are joint contributions, of which one is also signed by specialized church-related organizations.

2.3 Methods of analysis

I will analyze the research data primarily using qualitative methodology. More specifically, I will use qualitative content analysis to study, organize and describe themes, concerns, statements, stated objectives, arguments and verbal constructs within the data. This method is especially suitable to extract, arrange and conceptualize meaning out of textual data. I will use limited quantification only in order to discover the most relevant themes and compare the various contributors as to their specific focuses and degrees of interest.

The research question defines a clearly defined set of empirical data, but not ready topics or obvious theoretical frameworks as a starting point for my

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24 Eurodiaconia has two individual contributions on the Forum (Eurodiaconia 2003a and 2003b), and one jointly with Caritas Europa (Caritas Europa & Eurodiaconia 2002). In addition, they participated in one joint contribution with CEC, COMECE and other organizations (CEC & COMECE et al. 2002).


26 The term 'qualitative content analysis' is used for a variety of related research methods. I use the term here in the same sense as e.g. Flick (2002, 190–193) and Mason (2002, 147–172).

analysis. This has two important implications for my research process. Firstly, I will have to extract the themes and concepts for my research predominantly from the data alone. There are two main principles of inference that can be applied to this situation: induction and abduction. Inductive reasoning takes particular empirical data as its point of departure and refrains from assuming an a priori theory or hypothesis. Induction aims at reaching general conclusions and formulating generalized hypotheses from a limited number of cases and data. These hypotheses may then serve as the theoretical framework or starting point for future deductive research in which the validity of the theory is tested in different cases and contexts.

Abductive inference, a concept originally developed by Charles Sanders Peirce, combines and intertwines deductive and inductive reasoning. It starts off from a limited set of empirical data, but in the process of generating probable or possible hypotheses it also inverts the process to embrace deductive testing of these hypotheses. In its ideal form this results in a highly fluid and dialectic research process, where data acquisition, analysis and theory building constantly interact, each being shaped and reshaped by the other elements of the process. Every answer, finding or conclusion gives rise to new questions, that need to be answered, e.g. by new sets of data. In the abductive process hypotheses are constantly tested and modified to accommodate the growing amount of empirical evidence until a point of saturation is reached, when new data do not contribute anything significantly new to the substance of the theory or hypothesis. Abductive inference plays an important part in the grounded-theory method of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, which provides a detailed methodological toolbox for qualitative research and theory-building. Jennifer Mason rightly points out, that real-life research strategies almost always combine different principles of logic. In particular, she considers the claim of purely inductive

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28 The third method of inference, deduction, starts from an existing theory or hypothesis, which is applied to a specific situation. The purpose of deduction is to explain the particular situation on the basis of the general theory, to confirm or refute the hypothesis, or to test its validity for this specific case. This approach obviously is not applicable to my research because of the lack of a starting hypothesis or theory. (Mason 2002, 180–181 and Levin-Rozalis 2004, 6–7).
reasoning naïve, since it presumes that the researcher works in a theoretical vacuum.\textsuperscript{33}

Also in my research I need to combine different inference principles. My research obviously does not permit fluidity in data acquisition, since the data have been fixed at the very beginning of the process. Apart from that I will try to apply the dialectic principal of abductive inference where possible in the form of an ongoing interplay between data, analysis and arising hypotheses.

A second implication of my empirical approach is that the theoretical concepts, definitions and contextual information pertaining to the content of the contributions cannot be known in advance, i.e. before the data are being analyzed and reveal what is relevant information for my research. Yet in order to make sense of the data this information needs to be incorporated in the analysis process. Therefore, I will use the technique of explicative content analysis, providing, and discussing when appropriate, definitions, historical and other contextual material, when the data so demands.\textsuperscript{34} These may include e.g. theoretical treatises and encyclopaedic works of reference, documents produced by the European Convention and other EU institutions, and documents and websites of the contributing churches and church alliances. This is naturally also reflected in the structure of my thesis.

For the practical implementation of my analysis I will use computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). I have chosen to use ATLAS.ti because of its good availability. This software was originally developed to assist in grounded-theory analysis, so it is likely to lend itself well for my research.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{33} Mason 2002, 181.
\textsuperscript{34} Flick 2002, 191–192.
\textsuperscript{35} A description of the program can be found on the website of ATLAS.ti (atlasti.com).
3. CHURCHES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FORUM

3.1. Contributions in their context

3.1.1. General overview

Before embarking on the actual content analysis, I looked at the contributions as a whole and tried to set them in their proper context. I looked at the contributors, locating information about them that may be of significance for the analysis, and determining their position along a number of relevant dimensions. I also studied the chronological context of the contributions.

In the nearly 17 months that the Forum of the European Convention was open for contributions, a total of 1,264 submissions were made by 556 organizations, divided in four main categories: (1) Political or public authority, (2) Socio-economic, (3) Academic and think-tank, and (4) Other, civil society, NGOs and schools of thought. The fourth category, to which all the religious organizations belong, collected 838 contributions from 344 organizations, i.e. 66% of all contributions. 40 organizations with 60 contributions had a religious or church affiliation, of which one Muslim and 39 Christian organizations. Eight contributors can be categorized as churches, of which one from outside the European Union. Three organizations I have classified as church alliances. Thus the contributions that I include in my research make up for 1.7% of the total amount of contributions and for 2.5% of the contributions from the civil society sector.¹

These figures show a considerable activity of civil society and NGOs as compared to the other sectors, which may be explained by their lack of other formal channels of influence. At first sight the number of churches and religious organizations involved does not seem to be very high. However, the percentages are partly misleading. Churches, like no other organizations, have succeeded in joining forces and cooperating across both national and denominational borders. Taking the three church alliances into account, the number of churches involved increases to 179, of which 93 from the European Union before the enlargement of

¹ I have assembled these figures from the information provided on the Forum website (European Convention 2003d). There may be small errors in the numbers of contributions, because joint
2004 (EU-15). These represent the vast majority of the 282 million Christians in EU-15 countries, accounting for almost 75% of the total population.²

3.1.2. Contributing churches and organizations

Table 1 gives an overview of the contributions in chronological order. For reference the table also shows the Declaration of Laeken and the most important draft proposals issued by the European Convention. The table also classifies the churches and alliances based on a number of independent dimensions: whether the church or alliance operates nationally or internationally, the national status of the churches in relation to the state, where applicable, the percentage of the population they represent in their areas, the total membership, and their theological or denominational orientation.³ The table shows that the contributing organizations represent a wide variety of positions in all the given dimensions. The content of the contributions may be correlated with these dimensions to see what their significance is. However, it is good to take into account that these dimensions are not all mutually independent and that there may be other important factors influencing the issues, positions and arguments used by the churches in their contributions, which do not show in the table.

Of the individual churches contributing to the Forum four are member churches of CEC, three of which also belong to the Leuenberg Church Fellowship.⁴ CEC and LCF have 54 member churches in common, of which 30 in EU member states (EU-15). Therefore these multiple contributions must be seen as complementary. On the one hand, it cannot reasonably be assumed that all member churches find total agreement on the positions and statements submitted in the name of large church alliances. On the other hand, churches may have

² These figures are based on Statistics Finland 2006, CEC 2003c, CPCE 2004 and Church Research Institute 2005, 21.
³ These data are collected from a number of sources. Different sources may give slightly divergent results, whereas some of the figures had to be estimated on the basis of scarce available information. Sources: Statistics Finland 2006, Flügge 2006, Deutsche Bischofskonferenz 2006, Church Research Institute 2005, Suomen Ekumeeninen Neuvosto 2006 and Quakerinfo 2006.
⁴ The Greek Orthodox Church is member of CEC, whereas EKD and the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Denmark and Finland are members of both CEC and the Leuenberg Church Fellowship.
unique views and needs arising from their particular situation, which are not covered by the submission of the church alliance.

### TABLE 1. Convention proceedings and church submissions in chronological context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>European Union</th>
<th>SSEG</th>
<th>COMECE</th>
<th>CEC</th>
<th>LCF</th>
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The Orthodox Church of Greece, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland are majority established or state churches. The German Constitution does not mention either EKD or the Roman Catholic Church, but both churches have a substantial and privileged role in the country.\textsuperscript{5}

The church alliances need somewhat more explanation at this point. The Leuenberg Church Fellowship is an alliance of Protestant churches with a clear doctrinal basis. Its primary goal is the reconciliation of Lutheran and Reformed churches based on a common understanding of Christian doctrine. Its members, representing 30 million Europeans, have signed the so-called Leuenberg Agreement, drawn up in 1973.\textsuperscript{6} Not only its basis but also the focus of its activities is doctrinal. It seeks to "promote the unity and community of the Protestant churches through joint theological doctrinal conversations". Only as a secondary focus it represents the "positions of Reformation churches on important spiritual and social challenges such as the question of a just war, the Christian understanding of freedom, the relationship of church, state, people and nation". Most LCF members are minority churches, many of them in Eastern Europe, and LCF does not have a special workgroup or commission involved in European politics.\textsuperscript{7}

The Conference of European Churches, representing a total membership of 55 million Europeans, has a much wider ecumenical focus, counting also Anglican, Old Catholic and Orthodox churches among its members. Several member churches have a majority position or are in the position of an established or state church in their country. Although church unity is high also on the CEC agenda, it has for years focused on letting the voice of the churches be heard in European politics. For this reason CEC has lobbying offices in Brussels and Strasbourg. The Church and Society Commission of CEC has for years been involved in many European policy issues, through its specialized working groups on e.g. economic, environmental, social, security and human rights issues. The participation in the Forum of the European Convention is one stage in its

\textsuperscript{5}Robbers 2005, 578–580 and Bloß 2003, 39–42.
\textsuperscript{6}Some Nordic Lutheran churches including the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland have participated in the Leuenberg process without signing the agreement. These are listed as participating members.
\textsuperscript{7}CPCE 2004.
continuing commitment to the building of Europe's future. Underlying the contributions to the Forum is a permanent channel of communication with its member churches, for which CEC has drawn up detailed information pertaining to the European situation, the work of the Convention, and the ways in which CEC intends to participate. CEC also maintains close connections with the institutions of the European Union. This means that it is familiar with the diplomatic language and the channels of influence of the EU. In a sense this raises expectations with respect to the quality and effectiveness of the contributions of CEC, but at the same time it raises awareness of the fact that parallel to the official contributions to the Forum informal communication with the Convention or the European Commission is likely to take place, which is not visible to the outsider and is beyond the limits of my research.

The Free Church Council of Finland is in many ways at the opposite end of the scale compared to CEC. Representing five churches with a total membership of less than 70,000 members, FCCF gives no indication whatsoever of an interest in political involvement in the European Union, nor does it have an organization or workgroup for that purpose. Therefore the contribution to the Forum is an isolated and exceptional case, which should be viewed and interpreted as such.

Two contributors, COMECE and QCEA, are organizations founded for the specific purpose of representing their churches on a European level in dealing with European political questions and maintaining communications with the European Union. For this purpose both have their office in Brussels. COMECE represents 188 million Roman Catholics in the EU-15 region, whereas QCEA speaks on behalf of less than 20,000 members, of which more than 17,000 in the United Kingdom and Ireland alone. This puts them on extreme ends of the scale of represented membership. Otherwise, what is said above about CEC in terms of

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8 CEC 2001b.
9 CEC 2005.
10 CEC 2001b.
11 The membership of the churches represented by FCCF is hard to establish exactly. The Salvation Army does not maintain a membership list, so that their membership is measured rather in terms of staff and regular attendance. The Pentecostal Church has only recently been established and registered as a church organization. Before that Pentecostal congregations were independent and their membership could only be estimated. At the moment the admission of congregations to the Pentecostal Church is in progress.
12 The Finnish Adventist Church states on its website (Suomen adventtikirkko 2006) that it does not take a position in any international political disputes. The other members of FCCF do not mention anything remotely associated with political involvement or European integration.
both expertise and multiple channels of communication with the EU is valid for these organizations, too.\footnote{COMECE 2004a and 2004b, and QCEA 2003g.}

One third of the contributions that make up my research data have been submitted by QCEA, which speaks for only 0.005% of the population of EU-15 countries. This means that in the framework of my research the amount of material of QCEA is out of proportion. Especially taking into account the theological considerations in Chapter 2 and the fact that QCEA does not make a single allusion to Christianity or the Christian faith on its extensive website, I deem it justified to attribute relatively little weight to these contributions compared to those of the larger churches and church alliances, in order to avoid a too distorted representation of the involvement of European churches in the debate on the European Constitutional Treaty.

Because of the central role of the Conference of European Churches and the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community I will primarily deal with their submissions to provide a general overview of how the churches in Europe contribute to the debate on the future of Europe, of their opinions, wishes, interpretations and claims. On a second level, I will look at the contributions of the other churches and organizations for differences in emphasis and argumentation and dissenting opinions. I will try to correlate these with the background information available about these churches and organizations, such as the considerations given in this chapter and the information directly provided by these organizations about themselves and their involvement in the European Union.

3.1.3. Chronology of the submissions

One variable of potential significance is the chronology of the contributions, in particular the sequential relation between the individual contributions and the relevant documents produced by the European Convention during the process, such as the various drafts of the Constitutional Treaty. This chronology is depicted in Table 1.
The dating of two of the contributions by CEC proves deficient. Its first submission is dated May 2002 without an exact day.\textsuperscript{14} For the reconstruction of the chronological sequence this is not problematic, since there are no other documents or submissions during that month. However, the submission of CEC on the social dimension is not dated at all.\textsuperscript{15} There are two references to this contribution on the CEC website, which make it possible to set an earliest and latest date for this source. A CEC news release dated 4 December 2002 mentions that "a CEC submission on social issues is under preparation".\textsuperscript{16} On 15 January 2003 a CEC press release quotes this submission and mentions that it has been sent to the Convention on the Future of Europe.\textsuperscript{17} These publications allow us to place the submission after the Preliminary draft Constitutional Treaty of 28 October 2002, the first official proposal by the Convention, which provides a rough framework and skeleton of the Treaty under preparation,\textsuperscript{18} and before the first draft of articles 1–16, which form the first detailed proposal for the Constitutional Treaty.\textsuperscript{19} For our research this dating accuracy is sufficient.

Table 1 shows that nine contributions (35 pages) by eight organizations were submitted before the Preliminary draft, with only the Laeken Declaration as concrete reference material. This constitutes roughly half of the textual material. Five organizations contribute after the publishing of the Preliminary draft, with twelve contributions (31 pages). Only CEC, COMECE and QCEA have submitted contributions before and after that date, which may be indicative of their continuing commitment to the process. As mentioned earlier, these organizations are specialized in dealing with issues concerning the European integration and their involvement is not limited to the debate on the future of Europe initiated by the Laeken Declaration.

The Church of Greece, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, the German churches and the Leuenberg Church Fellowship only give initial submissions, providing the Convention with a general account of their position on the future of the European Union and on the Laeken mandate. They do not participate individually in the debate after that. The Evangelical Lutheran Church

\textsuperscript{14} CEC 2002a.
\textsuperscript{15} CEC 2003a.
\textsuperscript{16} CEC 2002b.
\textsuperscript{17} CEC 2003b.
\textsuperscript{18} European Convention 2002b.
\textsuperscript{19} European Convention 2003a.
in Denmark and the Free Church Council of Finland enter the debate after more than a year, both with a single contribution.

If we discount the QCEA contributions, the emphasis of the churches is clearly on initial contributions: 30 pages in eight submissions, as compared to ten pages in five contributions after the Preliminary draft. In this respect QCEA employs a radically different working strategy than the other contributors, altering the overall image of church involvement through the sheer size of its contribution.

3.2. Content of the contributions

At the onset of the actual analyzing process I coded the data using detailed open and in vivo coding techniques, i.e. primarily using the terminology occurring in the data rather than e.g. terminology based on theoretical premises. I coded both the topics occurring in the texts and the statements related to the topics, such as opinions, claims etc. As the process advanced I fell increasingly back on codes already used earlier. I assigned the codes to the entire paragraphs in which the terms occurred rather than to single words or sentences in order to maintain a simple and easily manageable structure. At the end I had a list of 836 codes, of which 464 occurred only once in the data.

In the next stage I combined codes into larger categories and established relationships between them through the technique of axial coding. On the basis of this process I also eliminated codes with poor grounding (less than three quotations) and low density (less than three relations to other codes or categories). After recurrent use of this combination procedure I ended up with 22 categories. In Figure 1 these categories are depicted in order of their frequency of occurrence. With occurrence I mean here the number of quotations, i.e. paragraphs that deal with the theme, not the number of times the term itself is found in the text. For clarity the contributions of QCEA are marked in a different colour. The figure shows three clearly dominating themes: values, social dimension, and the churches' role and status. This is true both for the total of all contributions and for the contributions excluding QCEA. In the latter case the order of the three is reversed.

The category of values stands for texts dealing with the value foundation of Europe as well as with particular values, such as fundamental human rights,
justice and solidarity. Several of these are also mentioned as separate categories, if their frequency of occurrence justifies it. Also basic principles underlying democratic governance and political action are often included by the contributors in their list of values, which is why they are included in the count of occurrences. The social dimension category contains references to various aspects of social life, such as employment, social security, poverty and social exclusion, welfare, and the various aspects of civil society. The churches’ role and status as a category embraces both the role of churches in politics and society and their formal legal status in the member states and in the European Union at large.

Figure 1. Main categories and their frequency of occurrence

Values are an important theme for both Quaker and non-Quaker contributors, perhaps even a point of convergence. Otherwise the interests of QCEA and other contributors go separate ways. The former is more engaged in political questions such as global and European governance, peace, and sustainable development, whereas the latter are more strongly concerned with religiously oriented questions such as the role and status of the churches, the spiritual foundation of Europe, and religious freedom. In this context it must also
be said that QCEA contributions which comment and react on specific Convention proposals contain many quotations of Treaty Articles, where often only some words have been added or omitted by QCEA. Therefore, the occurrences of themes in those contributions do not give an entirely unbiased picture of the concerns of the Quakers.

Figure 2 illustrates the dense and complex network of relationships between the main categories. The network, constructed using the advanced analytical and graphic capabilities of Atlas.ti, shows a total of 45 relationships between the 22 main categories. For the sake of my research it would be beneficial to obtain a simplified arrangement with a small number of more or less distinct families of categories, that can be dealt with separately. However, the figure indicates that this is nearly impossible without loss of information concerning how categories interrelate. Any rearrangement or redivision of categories is a choice which indisputably manoeuvres the research in a certain direction.

One possible way of arranging and assessing the categories is by placing them in a two-dimensional matrix. One dimension is formed by the degree of religious content or association, ranging from purely secular (e.g. political or social) to purely religious (e.g. reference to God or religious practice). The other dimension depicts the degree of tangibility and ranges from abstract and fundamental deliberation (e.g. on values or the spiritual foundation) to concrete and pragmatic issues, such as the formal status of churches or governance issues. Figure 3 shows how the categories can be placed on this two-dimensional field. The exact position of many categories is, of course, debatable and dependent on the content given to them in the churches' submissions. It is even likely that in different contributions the emphasis within categories slightly varies. However, the diagram is helpful in deciding how to proceed in the analysis of the data.
Figure 2. Main categories and their network of mutual relations
The first observation we can make is that a division between secular and religious categories is problematic when dealing with fundamental questions. It is largely a matter of interpretation, and even a central issue in the debate, whether values and principles are secular and democratic or spiritual and Christian. That is why I have drawn many of the categories that express values and principles midway between the secular and religious ends of the scale.

The second observation is that the transition between fundamental considerations and tangible issues is fluid, particularly when looking at the secular side of the diagram. Drawing a clear dividing line anywhere is rather arbitrary. When dealing with religiously oriented questions, the categories are fewer and better defined, so that a division is less likely to cause problems. I have drawn the three largest categories, values, the social dimension, and the role and status of the churches, in the diagram as large, partly overlapping areas with vague border lines. I suggest that it might be helpful to group the 22 main categories found thus far around these three and analyze them in that way. Because of the somewhat vague dividing line between them the sequence of the analysis matters. The starting point for the analysis is the area of fundamental deliberation on values and
principles that lie at the heart of the European integration. From there I will move on to the social dimension and related political issues. I will look at the role and status of churches in the social and political scene of Europe and its member states, including the question of explicit religious references in the Constitutional Treaty, within the framework of the first two categories, as they logically arise from the context.
4. VALUES AS A FOUNDATION FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION

4.1. The quest for European values

Values are a predominant and central theme in the contributions of the churches to the Forum of the European Convention. They are discussed on a fundamental level in 17 of the 21 contributions, totalling 92 quotations and directly related to twelve other main categories.\(^1\) The only contributor not to deal with values in generic terms is the Free Church Council of Finland.\(^2\) The discussion on values deals with the notion of the European Union as a community of values and with questions of what those values actually are or should be, what their sources are, how values affect Europeans, and what the implications of values are for the legal text of the Constitutional Treaty and the implementation of European governance and policies.

Values are one of the themes presented by the Laeken Declaration. It calls Europe "a continent of humane values - - - open to countries which uphold basic values such as free elections, respect for minorities and respect for the rule of law". It claims that the "European Union derives its legitimacy from the democratic values it projects", and proposes that one of the basic features of the European Constitution might be comprised of the "values which the Union cherishes".\(^3\) The introduction of values in the discussion of European integration actually dates back to the first treaty of what was later to become the European Union, the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) of 1951. The Preamble of this treaty mentioned the pursuit of global peace and solidarity as central motives for the establishment of the ECSC.\(^4\) Although values have been part of the formulation of further treaties in the decades to come, the signing of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union almost fifty years later signified a major breakthrough in making values an integrated and recognized part of the European project. The Preamble of the Charter proclaims:

\begin{quote}
The peoples of Europe, in creating an ever closer union among them, are resolved to share a peaceful future based on common values. Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the\end{quote}

\(^1\) See Figure 2.
\(^2\) Nonetheless the contribution of FCCF does focus on one significant value, namely that of freedom of religion (FCCF 2003).
\(^3\) European Council 2001, 8.
\(^4\) ECSC Treaty 1951.
rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice.

The Preamble also mentions the "values, freedoms and principles" of balanced and sustainable development, free movement of persons, goods, services and capital, and the principle of subsidiarity.²

Churches recognize the growing significance of values in the development of European integration. They applaud the endeavours of the European Council to pursue the inclusion of values in the legal foundation of the future European Union. Both contributions of CEC point back to the original values of the European project, mentioned in the ECSC Treaty of 1951.⁶ Five contributors in ten submissions, seven of which submitted before the first draft proposal by the European Convention, explicitly refer to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.⁷ CEC acknowledges the importance of the Charter both as common ground between the churches and the European Convention and as a defining document of European values, and interprets the signing of the Charter as an indication that the European Union is serious about rising beyond its functional aspirations to become a community of values.⁸ COMECE calls it "a remarkable achievement", particularly for taking human dignity as its starting point.⁹ QCEA commends the Charter for giving expression to European values and recognizing them as both indivisible and universal.¹⁰

The use of the term values is ambiguous, perhaps even intuitive, both in the documents of the European Union and in the contributions of the churches. The churches use both descriptive categories of values and lists of specific values, although no attempts are made to systematically correlate these. When speaking of shared, common or European values, churches refer to the whole range of values under discussion.¹¹ More specifically, fundamental human values, also called universal, basic or core values, are mentioned 14 times as a category.¹² More sparingly churches use the terms spiritual¹³ or Christian values,¹⁴ as well as

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² European Union 2000, 8.
⁸ CEC 2002a.
⁹ COMECE 2002.
¹⁰ QCEA 2003b.
¹³ CEC 2002a.
moral or ethical values. More practically oriented and definable categories are those of legal, democratic and social values.

A total of 24 specific values can be identified in the contributions of the churches. Table 2 lists these values, giving the number of contributions in which they are explicitly affirmed as values. The overall picture is obscured by the fact that these values are also classified elsewhere in the contributions as principles, objectives, obligations, aims, policies, processes, bases, notions, fundamental rights, commitments, missions, tasks, anchors, concepts, and guarantees. Thus their actual frequency of occurrence, as given in Figure 2, which includes the use of these terms regardless of their classification in the immediate context, does not correlate well with the figures in Table 2.

Table 2. Values explicitly mentioned in the data, with the number of contributions in which they are designated as values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>contributions in which classified as values</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>contributions in which classified as values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>justice</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>sustainability</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solidarity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>religious freedom</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>democracy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>responsibility</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fundamental / human rights</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>integrity</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freedom / liberty</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>rule of law</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peace</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>social justice</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>human dignity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>transparency</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subsidiarity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(fight against) poverty and social exclusion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(pursuance of the) common good</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>tolerance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equality</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>accessibility</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reconciliation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>family life</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accountability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>stewardship of the earth</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of these values can be traced back to treaties of the European Union and its predecessors, to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and to the Declaration of Laeken. Although the churches are ready to recognize these EU initiatives, they see the need to emphasize or focus some specific values as well as introduce some which are missing from the original EU agenda. To the value of peace churches add that of reconciliation, moving beyond the narrow and

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16 CEC 2003a.
17 QCEA 2003b.
negative meaning of peace as the absence of armed conflict to the wider and positive attitude with which to prevent such conflict and which applies to all levels of relationships, not just between nations.\textsuperscript{19} Solidarity is accompanied by the value of pursuance of the common good, providing a wider perspective that embraces social, economic and even environmental aspects.\textsuperscript{20} The use of the term stewardship of the earth by COMECE provides a more holistic perspective on environmental protection, which is the term used in EU texts.\textsuperscript{21} QCEA wants the principle of justice applied particularly to social situations, adding the specific value of social justice to the list to distinguish it from a purely legal interpretation of the term.\textsuperscript{22}

The principle of subsidiarity, also classified as a value, is mainly taken up in the context of the social dimension of the European Union, and I will therefore deal with it in Chapter 5. Religious freedom is particularly approached from an institutional and corporate angle, having direct bearing on the official status and role of the churches and religious communities. I will therefore come back to that topic later on in this chapter. Moreover, some contributions emphasize that the list of values can never be considered final and exhaustive, since in the end individual values do not make up the value foundation of the EU but are merely its specific expressions or consequences.\textsuperscript{23}

4.2. The spiritual foundation of the European community

4.2.1 The religious heritage of Europe

The Charter of Fundamental Rights states that the values on which the European Union is founded are indivisible and universal and are anchored in its spiritual and moral heritage.\textsuperscript{24} Nothing specific is said about what that heritage is—it is either presumed common knowledge or considered insignificant. For many churches,
however, the question of Europe's spiritual heritage is of major importance, both because of its transcendent nature and for its implications for the role of the churches in Europe.

All contributors with the exception of ELCD and QCEA stress the importance of recognizing that values are not merely a matter of consensus or democratic decision-making, but must be traced back to a more fundamental source. CEC reminds the Convention in its first submission, that although people may look at a variety of sources for their values, the values underlying European civilization are in fact all inspired by God and embedded in the Christian gospel.\(^{25}\) Especially the concept of human dignity, on which the Charter of Fundamental Rights is founded, is considered an essential element in the value foundation of Europe. COMECE claims that it is inspired by the Judeo-Christian image of humankind,\(^{26}\) whereas the Church of Greece alludes directly to the "sacred and unique character of the human person as being the image of God in the world".\(^{27}\)

Churches communicate a strong conviction of the importance of religion for the European citizens. Religion "provides the foundation and orientation that gives meaning to life" and a source of inspiration. Religion also connects people, building community and furnishing it with a common identity.\(^{28}\) For this reason churches also believe that the relevance of religion and religious communities as providers of meaning, community and identity is growing as the European integration project moves on. Based on this assumption the churches present a number of proposals aiming at giving religious communities the status that such an increasing relevance calls for.\(^{29}\) I will deal with these proposals later.

Churches do not hesitate to emphasize the central role of the Christian faith and the Christian churches among the "communities of faith and conviction"\(^{30}\) in providing, conveying and fostering the spiritual foundation of Europe and in shaping the identity of modern Europe and its democracy, both through the long historical process of social involvement and civilization building and through their experience in dealing with value-related questions. COMECE

\(^{25}\) CEC 2002a.
\(^{26}\) COMECE 2002.
\(^{27}\) “[Le] caractère sacré et unique de la personne humaine comme étant l’image de Dieu dans le monde.” (SSEG 2002, translation by the author).
\(^{28}\) COMECE 2002.
\(^{29}\) CEC & COMEC 2002.
\(^{30}\) CEC uses this expression to include all religious and philosophical movements, including e.g. humanism (CEC 2003a).
reminds the Convention that "no other religion or philosophical movement has inspired Europe as much as Christianity".\(^{31}\) Also CEC and ELCF give undisputed precedence to Christianity over against other spiritual foundations.\(^ {32}\) Nonetheless, many churches are inclusive and non-discriminatory in their approach to the spiritual foundation of Europe. Churches relate sensitively to the fact that not all European citizens adhere to the Christian faith and many may "draw their inspiration from other sources".\(^ {33}\) COMECE repeatedly expresses the spiritual and value foundation of Europe in terms of "religious, spiritual, and intellectual movements and traditions", keeping the door open for Islam, humanism and other religions and philosophical schools of thought.\(^ {34}\) Also the Church of Greece is emphatic in stressing, that the spiritual heritage is a "synthesis of the Greek, Roman and Christian civilisations."\(^ {35}\) ELCD and FCCF even mention Judaism and Islam in this context.\(^ {36}\)

For these reasons, then, churches expect the European Convention to acknowledge the significance of religion and accredit the churches and religious movements explicitly in the text of the Constitutional Treaty. In a common contribution before the release of the Preliminary draft of the Constitutional Treaty\(^ {37}\) CEC and COMECE state:

> If a future Constitutional Treaty, designed to guide the European Union through the next decades, were not to make any reference to religion, churches or religious communities, this would constitute a vacuum, given their vital significance to society as a whole, to the values and identities upon which a society is based, and to the Union’s relationship to its citizens.\(^ {38}\)

The Draft Preamble of the Constitutional Treaty, issued in May 2003, does indeed allude to the spiritual foundation of Europe, mentioning by name several of the traditions that have contributed to it. Yet, it totally ignores the role of Christianity and the Christian church in its description.\(^ {39}\) This triggers a strong reaction only

\(^{31}\) COMECE 2003b.
\(^{32}\) CEC 2002a and ELCF 2002.
\(^{33}\) CEC 2002a.
\(^{34}\) COMECE 2002.
\(^{35}\) "Une synthèse de la civilisation grecque, romaine et chrétienne", (SSEG 2002, translation by the author).
\(^{36}\) ELCD 2003 and FCCF 2003.
\(^{37}\) European Convention 2002b.
\(^{38}\) CEC & COMECE 2002. The same claim is made by the German churches (EKD & DBK 2002), FCCF (2003) and LCF (2002).
\(^{39}\) European Convention 2003k.
from COMECE, which expresses its sheer astonishment at the omission, and emphatically calls upon the Convention to reconsider its choice.²⁰

4.2.2. Reference to God in the Constitution

In this context, COMECE also makes a strong appeal for an explicit reference to God in the Preamble of a future Constitutional Treaty. It provides three arguments in favour of such a reference. To begin with, the recognition of a higher authority sets appropriate restrictions to the authority and power of human institutions—it communicates that "public power is not absolute". Because of the acknowledgement of a higher authority, those in power are responsible, even beyond the realm of democratic accountability, to "God, Humankind and Creation".

Secondly, a reference to God implies the freedom to invoke him, i.e. it secures the foundations for freedom of religion, as opposed to freedom from religion, a not unusual interpretation of the French laïcité, both for the individual believer and for the religious communities. This applies not only to private or internal matters, such as prayer, worship and rituals, but also to the public sphere, including e.g. education, employment and social issues.

Thirdly, considering that approximately 75% of the population of the enlarged European Union (EU-25) profess the Christian faith and another 3% are Jews or Muslims,²¹ a recognition of the faith they confess and the God they worship on the part of the European Union, even if only as a non-exclusive option, may help believers to identify with the EU, its values and its progressing integration. In view of the perceived distance between the European Union as a political institution and the citizens within its borders, the transcendent and faith-related issues form a more solid and deep-going basis for identification than a political union or a Constitutional Treaty. Refuting or discounting the religious dimension of life, on the other hand, may instead reinforce the alienation between

²⁰ COMECE 2003b.
²¹ These figures are derived from the data given by Statistics Finland 2006.
citizen and EU.\textsuperscript{42} Also LCF, the German churches, and FCCF express their desire for explicit references to the Christian spiritual heritage of Europe and to God.\textsuperscript{43}

However, not all churches agree. Whereas ELCF and QCEA do not discuss the issue at all,\textsuperscript{44} the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark emphatically disagrees. ELCD is the only contributor who expresses its complete gratification with the absence of any reference in the revised draft text of the Constitutional Treaty to a particular spiritual heritage or transcendent being. This is, in fact, the central theme of the Danish contribution. The objections against such religious references are based on three arguments. Firstly, the purely secular nature of the European Union demands respect for the strict distinction between religion and politics, taking into account the existing status of various churches and religious communities in the member states of the EU. Secondly, the Union should be careful not to give priority to any religion or single out any faith as particularly European, since a multitude of faiths and religions have contributed to the development of the modern European mentality. Thirdly, beside the major monotheistic religions also polytheistic religions and various philosophical schools of thought have made important contributions to the values of the European Union, particularly to the formulation of human rights. Therefore ELCD strongly opposes inclusion of references to either God or the Christian or Judeo-Christian heritage of Europe, and commends the Convention for its proposal as it stands.\textsuperscript{45} In this respect, the Danish contribution is a clear departure from the general position of CEC, whose member ELCD is.\textsuperscript{46}

\subsection*{4.2.3 Freedom of religion}

Religious freedom of the individual is a fundamental human right written into virtually every national constitution of the EU member states. It generally includes the freedom to believe and belong, or alternatively not to believe and not to belong, the freedom to express one’s faith in worship individually and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{42} COMECE 2003b.
\item \textsuperscript{43} EKD & DBK 2002, FCCF 2003 and LCF 2002.
\item \textsuperscript{44} As for ELCF this may be interpreted as agreement with the position of CEC, whose member they are.
\item \textsuperscript{45} ELCD 2003.
\item \textsuperscript{46} This situation was probably anticipated when CEC expressed that "many of the churches would welcome an acknowledgement of the religious and spiritual heritage of Europe (CEC 2002a)."
\end{itemize}
corporately, and the freedom of conscience. Limitations to individual religious freedom are usually only dictated by the rules of general law and order and by criminal law. Religious freedom of the individual is also a part of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights of the United Nations, and the European Convention of Human Rights. However, these documents do not secure the extension of religious freedom to a corporate and institutional level, neither are they legally binding per se.\footnote{Robbers 2002, 1–4.}

Institutional religious freedom, i.e. the right to self-determination of religious communities and institutions, is a much less defined area of concern in the EU and its member states. To some extent national constitutions mention and delineate corporate and institutional freedom of religion, but there are clear variations from country to country.\footnote{Robbers 2002, 4–7.} Moreover, the institutional dimension, much more so than the individual dimension, may be affected by present or future secondary legislation of the EU, such as labour and anti-discrimination laws.\footnote{Bloß 2003, 14–20. The right to reserve the ministry to men only or the right to demand church membership of a potential employee are examples where these laws may overrule those of institutional freedom, if no provision is made in the Constitutional Treaty.}

Therefore, for most contributing churches existing provisions under national law are not a sufficient guarantee without a qualifying statement in the Constitutional Treaty.\footnote{All except the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark raise the specific issue of institutional religious freedom (21 quotations in 12 contributions).}

For many churches the institutional dimension of religious freedom is not an independent issue, but forms an integral part of the fundamental human right of religious freedom, as guaranteed by the Charter.\footnote{CEC & COMECE et al. 2002.} To speak about religious freedom while ignoring the specific real-life issues that the institutional dimension raises, is too general.\footnote{COMECE 2002.} Therefore CEC and COMECE propose the adoption of the following clause into the text of the Constitutional Treaty:

\begin{quote}
The European Union recognises and respects the right of the churches and religious communities to freely organise themselves in accordance with national law, their convictions and statutes and to pursue their religious aims in the framework of fundamental rights.\footnote{CEC & COMECE 2002.}
\end{quote}

This formulation stipulates that by mandate of the Constitutional Treaty existing and future EU legislation will not be able to curtail beyond the limitations

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{47} Robbers 2002, 1–4.  
\textsuperscript{48} Robbers 2002, 4–7.  
\textsuperscript{49} Bloß 2003, 14–20. The right to reserve the ministry to men only or the right to demand church membership of a potential employee are examples where these laws may overrule those of institutional freedom, if no provision is made in the Constitutional Treaty.  
\textsuperscript{50} All except the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark raise the specific issue of institutional religious freedom (21 quotations in 12 contributions).  
\textsuperscript{51} CEC & COMECE et al. 2002.  
\textsuperscript{52} COMECE 2002.  
\textsuperscript{53} CEC & COMECE 2002.}
imposed by national law and fundamental human rights the freedom of religious communities to organize themselves in line with the beliefs and foundations they are committed to. It does not propose changes in competence between the EU and its member states, but is meant to maintain and guarantee the status quo of churches in their national context and to hedge it against possible invasion from European laws and directives. It deliberately allows for significant variations in the interpretation and implementation of institutional religious freedom between various member states rather than spelling out a universal principle by which this dimension of religious freedom should be applied throughout the EU. Although the clause does not eliminate the risk of restriction of religious rights through tightening national legislation, churches seem confident that the right to self-determination of the religious communities is sufficiently secured by adopting the clause in the Constitutional Treaty.\textsuperscript{54}

The reference to the framework of fundamental rights in the proposed formulation is a reminder that the pursuit of religious objectives has the potential to cause severe infringements on the fundamental rights of others. Churches consider fundamental human rights to be Christian values. Therefore it is both inconsistent and unacceptable to allow religious pursuits to violate them. Although many examples could be given of such religious practices, the text most likely refers first and foremost to the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 in the USA, which the Laeken Declaration explicitly mentions as an example of religious fanaticism.\textsuperscript{55}

Not all churches are ready to rely unconditionally on the provisions under national law. The Free Church Council of Finland (FCCF), representing small minority churches living alongside the established Lutheran church with a membership of nearly 85%, claims that full institutional religious freedom and equality of various religious communities under national law are not respected in all EU member states. On the one hand, some Christian churches and communities have been blacklisted as cults which are “dangerous to the state or society in general”, including the Pentecostal and Baptist churches and the Salvation army. FCCF points its finger especially to Greece, France, Belgium and some of the Eastern European states, which were admitted to the EU in 2004.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{54} CEC & COMECE 2002.
\textsuperscript{55} CEC & COMECE 2002 and European Council 2001, 2.
\textsuperscript{56} FCCF 2003.
On the other hand, institutional religious freedom can be limited under national law in a variety of ways. E.g. in Greece the national constitution prohibits proselytizing.\textsuperscript{57} This means that evangelistic activities by Christian faith communities other than the Orthodox Church of Greece can be interpreted as offending the constitution, if they are directed, deliberately or inadvertently, towards adherents of another religion. With 97% of the population belonging to the Church of Greece, this can be a serious restriction to the religious freedom in Greece. However, for the Orthodox Church the prohibition of proselytism is a guarantee of freedom of religion, which they wish to see included in the Constitutional Treaty:

The principle of religious freedom and the fundamental human rights must be fully safeguarded. Proselytism must be prohibited in accordance with the Treaty of Rome in such a manner, that it will be guaranteed by the institutional functions of the European Union.\textsuperscript{58}

4.3. Europe as a community of values

Although churches recognize and welcome the role that values have played ever since the inception of the European integration project, they stress that in order to build a true community of values a mere proclamation of the value foundation of Europe is insufficient. CEC pleads for a determined and ongoing development of the EU as a community of values in perpetuation of the original aims of the European project. In addition, CEC undertakes to use the values affirmed by the future Constitutional Treaty as benchmarks for evaluating the success of the whole European project.\textsuperscript{59}

The churches demand that the European Union show in practice that values are not just a rhetorical device to gain legitimacy and facilitate the citizens' identification with the Union and its institutions. Instead it must demonstrate a genuine commitment to the values which it proclaims. That implies first of all that the values, however abstract and intangible they may be, must be made legally binding to the EU through inclusion in the Preamble of the Constitutional Treaty. In particular, the proclamation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights is considered

\textsuperscript{57} Constitution of Greece 2001, Section II, Article 13, Paragraph 2.
\textsuperscript{58} "Le principe de la liberté religieuse et des droits fondamentaux de l’homme doit être entièrement sauvégaré. Le prosélytisme doit être prohibé suivant le Traité de Rome et tel qu’il est garanti par les fonctions institutionnelles de l’Union Européenne." (SSEG 2002, translation by the author).
\textsuperscript{59} CEC 2002a.
a clear sign of the Union's commitment to human rights, wherefore most contributors wish to see its complete text included in the Constitutional Treaty, thus giving also the Charter legally binding status.\textsuperscript{60}

A separate article on values in the Preamble is not sufficient to instil faith in the commitment of the EU to its values. Churches want guarantees that the proclamation of the value foundation in the Preamble is not divorced from the objectives, policies and actions of the EU spelled out further on in the Constitutional Treaty. Therefore they call for a strict coherence in the constitutional text. On the one hand, the values mentioned in the Treaty should be mutually coherent, i.e. there should be no discrepancy or tensions between e.g. social and legal values.\textsuperscript{61} On the other hand, the values of the Preamble should be coherently reflected and applied by all the objectives, policies and actions of the EU.\textsuperscript{62}

For the European Union to truly become a community of values, both the Union itself and its citizens must clearly perceive it as such. Self-perception, i.e. perception by the political actors and decision makers of the Union, is crucial to provide the motive for a committed implementation of value-based policy and development, as opposed to void political rhetoric.\textsuperscript{63} Churches are also convinced that the perception by European citizens of the Union as a real community of values is a prerequisite for the development of trust in the Union and its institutions. This does not materialize primarily through rhetoric or legal texts but through the recognition that the Union has a positive impact on everyday life and that citizens can exert genuine political influence. This in turn can bring citizens and EU institutions closer together, help overcome the democratic deficit, which troubles the EU at present, strengthen the European identity of the citizens, and consequently improve the democratic legitimacy of the Union. The most obvious way in which citizens can experience the Union's positive impact is through transparency of governance, the principle of subsidiarity, and the realization of social values.\textsuperscript{64} These questions will be addressed in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{61} CEC 2003a. The coherence between social and economic objectives is an expression of this same concern. As Table 2 indicates, values and objectives are partly interchangeable terms in the debate on the text of the Constitutional Treaty.
\textsuperscript{63} CEC & COMECE \textit{et al.} 2002.
5. THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

5.1. Background

Questions pertaining to the social dimension of the European Union are found in 71 quotations in all except two contributions. Protestant churches, including CEC, are most actively engaged in this discussion, with 39 quotations, as compared to five by COMECE and two by the Greek Orthodox Church. In joint contributions of Roman Catholic and Protestant churches six quotations on the social dimension are found. For comparison, QCEA deals with social issues in 19 quotations. CEC raises the issue under a separate heading in its first submission and devotes another entire four-page submission to this theme, totalling 25 quotations. Also ELCF gives much attention to the question of the social dimension as a whole (12 quotations). The other contributions merely deal with separate themes within the social framework.

The social dimension is not rigidly defined. Its meaning can best be understood by perceiving it as one of three dimensions, along which the European integration project develops. Juhani Lönnroth describes these three dimensions, economic, social and political, and their interrelation, as well as the way in which the social dimension of the EU has developed over time. Initially, it was conceived to cover primarily the area of employment, labour conditions, the free movement of labour, and the creation of the single market, in other words the field where the social partners (employers organizations and labour unions) exercise their influence. Gradually the understanding of the social dimension widened to include human rights, formally introduced in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 2000, and social inclusion, introduced as part of the European Employment Strategy.

In the contributions of the churches the concept of social dimension is interpreted more comprehensively. In addition to the traditional relation between people and work, churches add the question of volunteer activities and not-for-profit organizations. They expand the discussion on human rights to cover the

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1 They are not taken up in COMECE 2003b and FCCF 2003.
2 CEC 2002a.
3 CEC 2003a.
4 ELCF 2002.
whole value foundation of the EU and its impact on society. They look at social inclusion in the wider context of solidarity and social justice. They deal with the European social model and its central components of welfare, health care and education. They raise the question about the role and status of organized civil society, and particularly those of the churches. The involvement of citizens and civil society in the political processes and governance of Europe—participation and democracy—as well as the European identity are points of contact between the social and political dimensions. Other points of contact are the extent of European Union competences and the principle of subsidiarity.

I have dealt with the value foundation in the previous chapter, so in this chapter I will limit myself to their social applications and implications and will deal in more detail here only with the principle of subsidiarity. I will divide the analysis of the social dimension into two parts. First I will look at the European social model, the principles of European governance and subsidiarity, and the role of civil society. In the second part I will analyze the role and status of the churches in the context of the European social space.

5.2. The European Union as a social space

5.2.1 The European social model

For the churches the social dimension takes up a central role in the future of the European Union. Whereas the economic and political dimensions have long received primacy in the course of the European integration project and the development of the European Union, CEC sees the development of the European social model as critical to the success of European integration. It demands that the Constitutional Treaty contain the basis for a social policy and that it outline its principles, providing a workable and legally binding foundation for the European social model for the future. What precisely the European social model actually stands for is unclear. From the context we may conclude that it comprises the social values, principles, policies, services, infrastructure and procedures of dialogue and governance, in other words the totality of conventions and systems.

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based on which society functions. In addition, to speak about 'the' European social model is misleading, since at this point in the European integration process it is basically just a collection of different national social models with some characteristics in common but also with distinct differences from one country to another. A fruitful approach may be to simply look at the specific issues concerning the European social model that the churches single out in their contributions.

The first issue is the employment sector. Particularly CEC calls for a development of the relation between people and work which reflects a socially responsible market economy. It welcomes the pursuit of the Union to guarantee the right to work for all citizens, but also underscores that such guarantee is not sufficient. Beside a high employment rate it also wants to see the Constitutional Treaty include an explicit statement that the EU promotes above all high quality and meaningful jobs, in line with the value of human dignity central to the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Because the full employment target is unlikely to be within reach, the guarantee of citizens' basic rights must be independent of the question of paid labour. Citizens must be protected against discrimination, poverty and social exclusion also when unemployed. Even the right to work should be independent of whether a paid job can be offered.

This demand leads naturally to the area of volunteer work, which is taken up by CEC because it gives citizens a concrete way of participating in the realization of the social dimension of Europe. CEC underlines the importance of not-for-profit organizations, which heavily depend on the availability of volunteers, for the functioning of civil society, particularly in areas such as social welfare and health care. This is a very close concern for the churches, because many of them, also, operate in these sectors and rely on volunteer workers alongside paid employees, e.g. in charity and diaconal work. The tension between the full employment objective on the one hand and the significant contribution of volunteer work on the grass-root level of society is one that they wish to see solved. Therefore CEC proposes to extend the participation to the social dialogue

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7 CEC 2003a.
8 Lönnroth 2002, 3.
10 CEC 2003a.
11 CEC 2002a.
beyond the social partners also to other organizations of civil society, typically the NGO sector and the religious communities.\textsuperscript{12}

Not only should the not-for-profit sector be able to take part in the social dialogue, it should also be recognized for its specific contribution in maintaining basic social services, complementing those provided for by governmental agencies. To treat not-for-profit organizations established for the common good in the same way as commercial enterprises in terms of economic regulation, competition rules and taxation, would seriously endanger their possibilities to keep on providing these vital services. Therefore CEC calls upon the Convention to include the necessary provisions in a dedicated chapter on social policy in order to safeguard the special status of these organizations and the availability of the services they provide.\textsuperscript{13}

The fight against poverty and social exclusion is very high on the social agenda of the churches and considered a key objective to be included in the Constitutional Treaty. It has traditionally been always an integral part of the social and pastoral ministry of the churches. As seen earlier, there is a connection here with the question of labour, unemployment and volunteer work. An important step towards social inclusion is the guaranteed access to services of general interest, including health care, social services and education, to all citizens of the EU. Obviously, also in this respect the recognition of the special status under the Constitutional Treaty of religious and secular not-for-profit organizations providing such services, is pivotal in the debate. Endangering their position also jeopardizes the realization of one of the key social objectives of the Union.\textsuperscript{14}

Within the social dimension the value of solidarity is raised with particular emphasis on inter-generational relationship. Churches want to ensure that the weakest age groups in the Western market economy, the elderly and the very young, i.e. families with children, are being taken care of. This is one very concrete application of the fight against and the prevention of social exclusion.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12} CEC 2002a and 2003a.
\textsuperscript{13} CEC 2002a and 2003a.
\textsuperscript{15} CEC 2003a.
5.2.2. Civil society and the principle of subsidiarity

The European Union is often perceived by its citizens as a distant, bureaucratic and over-institutionalized system of governance. Its ambitious process of expansion and integration as well as the increasing concentration of power to the institutions of the EU have aroused a lot of suspicion. Even the European Council in its Laeken Declaration admitted that the EU suffers from a major democratic deficit. The White Paper on European Governance already recognized the need to involve civil society more in dialogue and consultation concerning the development of European policy. The paper mentions churches and religious communities as having "a particular contribution to make". The potential of organized civil society to mobilize and involve people has indeed been acknowledged, but the efforts to involve civil society have been of little effect so far.

There is general agreement among the churches, that a system of structured dialogue between civil society and the institutions of the European Union should be incorporated into the Constitutional Treaty. They insist that this dialogue should be open, transparent and regular. Its purpose should be to genuinely involve citizens in the development of the European community and its policies, to create a sense of ownership of and identification with the European Union, to decrease the democratic deficit, and to make available the vast experience of citizens' organizations on local, regional and national levels to the EU institutions and policy makers. Democratic legitimacy is not determined by political structures and legal texts alone, but by the perception and awareness of the citizens that they can truly participate in the development of Europe and affect its policies.

A major threat to the democratic credibility of the EU is the feeling that local and regional issues are decided in Brussels and Strasbourg and that European legislation and procedures of governance are being increasingly harmonized throughout the Union. The principle of subsidiarity stipulates that decisions should be made there where it is most appropriate. This refers in a vertical dimension to the level within the European hierarchy, seeking a level of

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decision making mostly as close to the citizens as possible. In a horizontal dimension it refers to the various subsystems of society—economic, social, political, religious—and seeks to guarantee maximum appropriate autonomy and minimum interference between them.\textsuperscript{18} In principle the EU has made a commitment to comply with this principle in both dimensions, but many citizens feel that, even so, decisions are often made on a higher and more centralized level than is appropriate.\textsuperscript{19}

Churches urge the Convention to include the principle of subsidiarity in the text of the Constitutional Treaty in a coherent and consistent way, providing an imperative to make decisions as close to the citizens as practically feasible. Only by applying the principle of subsidiarity can the EU give full recognition to the wide local, regional and national diversity that exists within its borders. The way to create unity in Europe should be by recognizing and exploiting that diversity rather than by trying to harmonize it. Democracy should be achieved primarily through partnership, not through intervention.\textsuperscript{20} This principle in both its dimensions also has a strong impact on the position of churches and religious communities. I will come back to that question later in this chapter.

5.3. The position of churches in the European social space

5.3.1. The socio-political status of churches in the European Union

The Laeken Declaration divides the organisations representing civil society into four areas: social partners, business world, academia and NGOs.\textsuperscript{21} The list is neither official nor exclusive, but it reflects the way in which the European Union perceives civil society. According to this division churches and religious communities are an anonymous part of the heterogeneous and rather indefinable sector of NGOs, which consists largely of ‘one-cause organisations’. Placing churches and religious communities there suggests them to be organisations merely concerned with the one cause of religion.

\textsuperscript{18} Quadrio Curzio 2004.
\textsuperscript{19} Bomberg & Stubb 2003, 14.
\textsuperscript{21} European Council 2001, 7.
Churches are not content with this position, because they are strongly engaged in many sectors of civil society, and their focus is much wider than that of most NGOs. Although there are significant variations between different churches and different countries, they claim their share in the provision of social and health care, education, culture and the media in a large part of the European Union. The involvement of the churches in society is manifest on various geographical levels. Their main emphasis is on the grass-root level of the local community, but they also operate regionally, nationally and even internationally—the Roman Catholic Church in its capacity as a transnational organization and other churches through international ecumenical organizations—in the service of society. Churches perceive themselves as representatives of the citizens, not just of their own members, which make up almost 75% of the EU population, but of humanity at large. They claim to speak particularly for the voiceless in society and for the people outside the EU, whose lives are factually or potentially affected by the policies and actions of the Union. They promote fundamental human values and rights, as we have seen in the previous chapter, as well as important social principles such as equality, mutual respect, participation, dialogue and reconciliation.

When addressing social, humanitarian or environmental issues, churches often work side by side with NGOs. However, they want to emphasize that there is much that sets them apart from the nongovernmental sector. They consider themselves special and significant actors in the social dimension of the European Union. Beside the broad spectrum of social activities they are involved in, they perform spiritual and pastoral functions and take upon themselves the task to guard and promote the spiritual foundation of Europe and its fundamental values in which they claim to have acquired unique expertise. Because of this holistic approach to the needs of society and because of their special mission, churches refuse to accept being categorized by the EU as an NGO. They want to be recognized, inclusive of other non-Christian religious communities, as a distinct sector in civil society, a fourth factor alongside employers organisations, trade
organisations and NGOs. The views of the European Council and the churches are illustrated in Figure 4.

The White Paper on European Governance already included such a special recognition, albeit without specifying what it is that sets religious communities apart from the rest of organized civil society or what that recognition implies in practice. Churches demand that this acknowledgement be made legally binding by an explicit clause in the text of the Constitutional Treaty. In addition, the churches demand that the Constitutional Treaty stipulate official structures for an open, transparent and regular dialogue between religious communities and the institutions governing the European Union: “The European Union respects the specific identity and the contribution to public life of churches and religious communities and maintains a structured dialogue with them.”

Figure 4. Two views of the main actors of organized civil society.

This view is shared by virtually all the churches, with the exception of QCEA who insist that faith communities should not be given preferential status compared to other organizations, but should be made an integral part of the dialogue between the EU and organized civil society. The emphasis on the openness, transparency and regularity of the dialogue is an expression of the

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23 The academia, mentioned by the European Council as a specific actor, are not recognized as such by the churches. This is in line with the concept of the social dimension described by Lönnroth (2002, 5–6). There is no evidence in the data suggesting that more significance should be attached to this choice.
suspicion that the EU might not wish to develop such dialogue beyond the confines of formality.  

5.3.2. The national status of churches in a unifying Europe

One practical application of the subsidiarity principle is the area of church–state relationships. The position that churches have attained nationally is generally the result of a long and complex historical development. It has several dimensions, which can be expressed in terms of church–state relationships, the church’s role in society, the specific rights and obligations of churches and their officers, and the function of church and religion in the formation and maintenance of national identity. The diversity in church status within the borders of the enlarged European Union is immense, varying between the extremes of the French laïcité and the Greek state church.

Originally conceived as an economic community, the European Community has had no particular interest in religious issues and the question of national church status. The conception of the European Union in 1992 and the expansion of its domain of governance to areas of foreign and home policy European made church leaders and politicians aware of the fact that the spheres of EU governance and of the religious communities were bound to overlap sooner or later. Pressure from the churches presumably led to the attachment of Declaration No. 11 to the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997. It states:

The European Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States.

The European Union equally respects the status of philosophical and non-confessional organisations.  

The declaration was an answer to fears that the rapidly expanding legislation in the European Union and the shift of competences from national to European institutions could jeopardize the status which churches had been able to attain nationally and which, at least to some extent, was safeguarded by constitutional and other national legislation. It was also the first explicit

26 QCEA 2003d.
27 CEC 2002a.
recognition in any EU Treaty of the special status of religion and religious communities in European society. However, the declaration has no legally binding status under the provision of the Amsterdam Treaty.

CEC and COMECE repeatedly call for an inclusion of Declaration No. 11 in the text of the Constitutional Treaty, making it legally binding and securing the status of churches and religious communities nationally. Also CEC member churches which take part in the debate and FCCF raise this issue. The arguments supporting this appeal are based on three different viewpoints: the nature of national identity, diversity as the building material for European unity and identity, and the principle of subsidiarity.

First of all, in many countries the major religious communities and institutions are inseparably interconnected with the history, tradition and identity of the nation. E.g. the status attained by the established Lutheran churches in the Nordic countries or by the Orthodox state church in Greece is the result of a long common history of church and state in the development of the nation and its social, cultural, educational and governmental infrastructure. Also the situation of the Roman Catholic Church in many European countries reflects a similar pattern of historical development. If the EU would undertake to disrupt these fundamental relationships between nations and their spiritual and religious heritage, it would create tensions which would be harmful to the European project.

The second viewpoint rises from the awareness, alluded to earlier on, that European unity and identity are not brought about by homogenising life throughout the Union. Already the Laeken Declaration admitted that citizens experience many measures taken by the EU as a threat to their identity, which is primarily national, regional and local, but not European. The diversity of national and regional cultures has its roots in history and traditions and needs to be respected as an enriching European element, not as a threat to unity. Likewise the uniqueness of member states must be respected. The same is true for religious and confessional diversity. Only a provision like the inclusion of Declaration No. 11 into the Constitution can guarantee that the EU will factually continue to respect that diversity.

33 CEC & COMECE 2002.
The third argument concerns the European Union’s alleged commitment to the principle of subsidiarity. EU secondary legislation has the potential to interfere with the area of religion and the fundamental and historical rights and freedoms of religious institutions in many areas. Only through the inclusion of Declaration No. 11 into the text of the Constitutional Treaty guarantees can be made that decisions concerning the status, rights and obligations of churches and religious communities on a local, regional or national level will be made on that same level whenever possible. Accordingly, only transnational questions will be left to the competence of the European Union.

The Laeken Declaration supports the validity and relevance of the arguments of identity, unity in diversity, and subsidiarity. The inclusion of Declaration No. 11 into the Constitutional Treaty is not merely an attempt of the churches to secure their own national position and extend the present status quo into the future Union, although a certain measure of self-interest can hardly be denied. However, by incorporating all religious, philosophical and non-confessional associations and communities, the churches make sure that the principle of equality—a fundamental value included in the Charter of Fundamental Rights—is consistently applied, thereby providing a strong argument in favour of inclusion.

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34 Bloß (2003) gives a detailed overview of this.
6. PUBLIC RELIGION AND THE QUEST FOR LEGITIMACY

6.1. Theoretical perspectives

The contributions of the churches to the debate on the future of Europe offer many viewpoints on the expectations of Christian churches with respect to the process of European integration and on their potential involvement in that process and in the future European Union. However, as mentioned earlier, the participation of the churches in the Forum is only a minor part, be it crucial, of their overall contribution to the European project. For many themes raised in the data, such as the quest for values, the social dimension, or the formal role and status of the churches in the EU, a more meaningful analysis would involve looking at one actor or a limited choice of actors, primarily CEC or COMECE, and analyze their views, statements and actions relating to that theme over a longer period of time. Such an approach would allow for a more comprehensive and in-depth treatise of these themes and for a proper historical perspective.

The delineation of my research data focuses on one limited period of time and on one distinct process, viz. the drafting of the legal foundation for the increasingly integrating, expanding and dominating European Union. The involvement of the churches in its conception presents therefore a logical two-fold theoretical perspective for the themes found in the data. I have depicted this perspective in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Theoretical perspectives on the involvement of churches in the drafting of the Constitutional Treaty.
The first perspective looks at religion as a public factor in society, particularly in Europe and in the polity of the European Union. Special emphasis must be given here on Christianity and on the public role of the churches. This perspective is particularly interesting in the light of the persistent claims in both scholarly and public debate of the progressive and irreversible secularization of Europe and the marginalization and privatization of religion and religious communities. The historically developed status of churches under national law does not necessarily give any guarantees concerning their status under EU jurisdiction, particularly under a new Constitutional Treaty which overrules any conflicting national legislation and compels member states to harmonize their legislation accordingly. The impact of churches and religion on European citizens and society as a whole is also an open question.

The second perspective is that of legitimacy. Not only does the Constitutional Treaty, once it has been ratified and become effective, determine the legal framework of legitimacy of religious communities and their activities, also the European Union needs legitimation in order to function as an economic, political and social community and pave the way for the intensifying European integration. The Constitutional Treaty furnishes the EU with rational–legal legitimacy. For a truly functional and effective EU to develop, it must also enjoy broad democratic and social legitimacy from its citizens.

In the remainder of this chapter I will describe the theoretical framework for my analysis based on the dual perspective mentioned above. Under the heading of public and private religion I will look briefly at secularization in its descriptive and prescriptive connotations, i.e. as a thesis and as a paradigm, and then proceed to theories that challenge the secularization thesis, viz. desecularization and deprivatization. Subsequently I will deal with legitimation theory, especially in relation with collective identity, religion and the context of the European Union. I will restrict myself in this chapter to general theoretical considerations and leave the discussion of the results of my study and their reflection in the light of the theory for the next chapter.
6.2. Public and private religion

6.2.1. Secularization

Based on the Latin *saeculum*, meaning generation, age, world or lifetime, the word secular has historically been used to refer to the worldly or temporal realm as opposed to the sacred. In concurrence with this meaning the word secularization was first used in the 16\(^{th}\) century to refer to the confiscation of church property by the state or other secular rulers. Hence, the meaning of the term developed to indicate the separation between state and church or between politics and religion and the gradual differentiation in society between the sacred and secular spheres of influence.\(^1\) Today the word is used both in everyday language and in social sciences and theology to denote a number of more or less concurrent and interrelated processes, that describe the decline in the significance of religious claims and practice as well as of religious institutions.

There are many ways in which these secularization processes have been theoretically conceived. Karl Dobbelaere formulated the multidimensional approach to the systemization of the theory of secularization. He distinguished three levels. On a macro or societal level the progressive functional differentiation of society as a whole led to a growing mutual independence and autonomy of its various functional subsystems, such as politics, economy, education, science and culture. Differentiation and autonomization are not limited to the sacred–secular dichotomy but basically affect all the relations and dependencies between societal subsystems. For the secularization discussion the important consequence was the gradual and irreversible loss of influence and authority of religion and religious institutions in secular areas of society. This, in turn, opened the way for functional rationalization in all of these areas. That means that e.g. economic decisions and policies needed to be rationalized and justified increasingly on economic terms only and less on political or e.g. religious terms. This, in turn, required the development of self-contained models of explanation and justification within each subsystem, that need not rely on any other subsystems. This process led to an inevitable clash between the secular and sacred spheres, whose worldviews, rationale and language are mutually incompatible. When at the same time the

traditional cross-functional social networks, such as the family, parish or village, disintegrated as a result of the functional differentiation of society, religion became privatized, i.e. socially and functionally detached from other societal subsystems and networks. With respect to this thesis of privatization Dobbelaeere makes two critical observations. Firstly, it seems to suggest that secularization takes place along the dimension designated by the public–private dichotomy. To Dobbelaeere this is not true, since in reality also the private sphere, e.g. the family or even many religious communities, has undergone significant stages of secularization. Secondly, it easily calls to mind the ideological agenda of secular thinkers, that religion is, or should be, a private matter, which may not affect other societal subsystems.2

The second dimension in Dobbelaeere's conception of secularization is the meso level, focusing on the subsystem of religion. The decline of religious authority in the life of society, the family and the individual, and the privatization of religion also accelerated the pluralization of the religious 'market', allowing different churches, religions and systems of belief to freely compete. This affected the degree to which religions and churches could maintain cohesive, normative and legitimizing functions in society and particularly among their own constituency. Pluralization of religion has opened the way to an immense range of religious or quasi-religious movements, which from the point of view of the secularization discussion can be positioned along a scale ranging from transcendental or world-denying to mundane or world-affirming. Referring to the latter, Dobbelaeere uses the term internal secularization, originally introduced by Thomas Luckmann.3

The third dimension in Dobbelaeere's secularization model is the micro or individual level. Alongside the privatization process he also distinguishes the individualization of religion, meaning the tailoring of religious beliefs, practices and alliances to suit individual personal needs. Often considered a typical postmodern trait, individualization is taken to be closely connected to the decline in belief—Voyé speaks of the end of Great Narratives4—and the decline in religiosity and religious practice.5

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2 Dobbelaeere 1998, 452–453.
3 Dobbelaeere 1998, 453–455. The quote is from Luckmann.
4 Voyé, quoted in Dobbelaeere 1998, 455.
Dobbelaere draws heavily on the findings and theoretical considerations of associated scholars such as Thomas Luckmann, Peter Berger, Bryan Wilson, David Martin, Richard Fenn, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Bellah. Olivier Tschannen has compared their various secularization theories, distilled some key assumptions and analytical categories that they have in common, and synthesized them into a more general secularization paradigm. In his paradigm Tschannen distinguishes three core elements, upon which the other elements of the secularization process are dependent or from which they have been derived. These are differentiation, rationalization and worldliness. Tschannen sees autonomization, pluralization, privatization and decline of practice primarily as the inevitable result of the differentiation between the secular and the sacred. In his paradigm the other core elements, rationalization and worldliness, have a more limited impact.6

6.2.2. Desecularization

Until recently the thesis of secularization as a general and irreversible process and as the inescapable consequence of modernization has remained virtually unchallenged. Only the theories used to back up the thesis have diverged. Over the past couple of decades, however, dissident voices have been raised and the whole process of secularization has been reconsidered by a growing number of scholars. Strongly religious-driven world events, such as the Islamic revolution in Iran, the Polish Solidarity movement partly inspired by the Polish Pope John Paul II, the rise to power of the Fundamentalist Right in the United States of America, and most recently the Islam-associated terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, have done much to discredit the secularization thesis and to prove that religion is a power very much to be reckoned with in the world.

As a reaction to the growing critique on the validity of the secularization thesis, Peter Berger posed a thesis of desecularization. He recognizes the marginalization of religion in society and the pluralization of the religious 'market' as possible consequences of modernization and differentiation, and acknowledges

that the adaptation strategies of world-affirming religious communities most often result in internal secularization and religious decline. Berger, however, also sees significant countermoves among world-denying religious organizations, which refuse to adapt to the rules of secularized society. Counter-secularization takes place both on meso and micro, i.e. institutional and individual levels. The reaction against the secularization of society can be in the form of religious revolution such as in Iran or Afghanistan, political infiltration such as among the Fundamentalist movements in the USA or the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, or segregation such as among world-denying sects all over the world. Berger ascribes the success of these counter-secularization moves to the need of individuals and communities for security and certainty.7

Grace Davie agrees with Berger on the reality of desecularization around the world. However, looking at the situation of Europe she draws attention to the exceptional circumstances under which the relation between religious and secular political powers has developed and these powers have competed in the history of the continent. This leads her to pose the view of the European case not as a prototype or model of global secularization, but rather as an exception, which should be interpreted in the light of the unique European political and religious history.8 Traditional patterns of church–state relationships and the joint concerns of mainstream churches and secular authorities for nation and society have led to varying relationships between believing, belonging and participation. For many Europeans whose faith is individualized and privatized and who have hardly any active engagement in church life, the church as a vicarious actor (i.e. mediating on behalf of its members) and preserver of the religious memory and tradition is still sufficiently important to maintain membership. Thus the significance of the traditional churches in European society cannot be evaluated simply by statistics of participation or surveys on patterns of faith.9

From a comparative study, including religiosity in North-America, the model *par excellence* of modern secular society, and Christian communities and movements in other parts of the world, Davie concludes that there exist multiple forms of modernity. European modernity, which has formed the basis for most theories on secularization, is only one among many others, and should be

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relativated appropriately.\textsuperscript{10} An other vital conclusion is, that the European pattern is not an exclusive export product in the sense that what happens today in Europe is bound to happen in the rest of the world some time later. Advancing globalization, global interaction and international migration are likely to import foreign patterns of religiosity into Europe, changing the religious scene in unpredictable ways and questioning the irreversibility of secularization here.\textsuperscript{11}

6.2.3. Deprivatization

José Casanova approaches the problem imposed by the traditional secularization thesis in yet another way. He organizes the processes of secularization around the three core elements of differentiation, privatization and religious decline.\textsuperscript{12} He considers the treatise of these core processes as a single, multi-threaded secularization process problematic and insists that, instead, they have be to analyzed and appraised separately.\textsuperscript{13} In his study Casanova does so, although he focuses primarily on the question of privatization. Based on work by Thomas Luckmann, Niklas Luhmann and Wolfgang Schluchtner, he looks at the two dimensions of the privatization thesis, viz. world views and religious institutions. Modernization and differentiation reduce the authority of the churches and religious institutions over the other spheres of society. Within the religious market pluralization, in Western Europe originally triggered by the Reformation, leads to the decline in significance of a single religious truth, dogma or system of legitimation. There is a range of world views that individuals can choose from and on which they can build their own private and tailor-made system of belief. It is private, first of all, because there is no institutional religious authority to dictate or legitimate it and, furthermore, because it cannot be integrated into the systems of secular belief which are at the foundation of other societal subsystems such as politics and economy. The differentiation between secular and sacred power and the incompatibility between religious and secular beliefs, values and autonomy

\textsuperscript{10} Davie 2002, 156–159.
\textsuperscript{12} Casanova 1994, 19–39. Note that his choice of core elements is different from that of Tschannen (1991, 400–402), referred to earlier.
\textsuperscript{13} Casanova 1994, 211.
also force traditional religious institutions to the private sphere, where they have to compete with the privatized world views of individual believers.\(^{14}\)

Casanova accepts some of the theoretical and descriptive premises underlying the theory of privatization, but refuses to go along with a prescriptive or normative thesis of privatization. As a countermove he sets out to formulate his deprivatization thesis, which he tests on the basis of five national case studies, all pertaining to Christian phenomena. He defines deprivatization as

> the process whereby religion abandons its assigned place in the private sphere and enters the undifferentiated public sphere of civil society to take part in the ongoing process of contestation, discursive legitimation, and redrawing of the boundaries.\(^{15}\)

His thesis is in its simplest form that "religion continues to have and will likely continue to have a public dimension."\(^{16}\) That generalized statement does not mean that all religions everywhere are inevitably re-entering the public sphere. Casanova's point, to which his comparative case studies lend support, is that privatization and deprivatization are both historical options. What will actually happen in each case is the result of choices made by religious institutions, but also political choices and other circumstances.\(^{17}\)

Vital to a proper understanding and interpretation of Casanova's thesis is the redefinition of the public–private distinction. He holds that the traditional binary model is not adequate to explain the division of spheres in modern society. There are subsystems, which have both public and private dimensions. That is true for the family as a social institution, but equally so for the economic subsystem in a liberal economy. The continuing differentiation of societal subsystems makes it even more difficult to define public and private spheres. Where to draw the line between the two becomes rather arbitrary and depends on the issue under consideration and the angle of exploration, or simply on what point one seeks to prove. Casanova opts for the introduction of civil society as an undifferentiated sphere between the public and private spheres, diffusely overlapping on both ends. Civil society may be thought of as the area where public and private meet, mix and merge. Whereas the European Council delimits that area by naming its key

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\(^{15}\) Casanova 1994, 65–66.
\(^{16}\) Casanova 1994, 66.
\(^{17}\) Casanova 1994, 221.
actors, social partners, NGOs, academia and religious communities, Casanova respects the fluidity of the concept rather than pinning it down.

In addition, within the area of religion there are various ways of distinguishing private and public spheres. Casanova highlights three such ways: individual versus group religiosity, religious versus political communities, e.g. disestablished versus established churches, and religious versus secular spheres. The latter includes the area of civil religion, which is a secular but religion-like cult, providing the community or nation with quasi-religious values, symbols and rites that convey meaning and social cohesion.

Deprivatization, according to Casanova, can relate to the process of modernization in several ways. First of all, it can be a polemic reaction against modernity at large. Whereas rejection of modernity in most cases leads to a strict withdrawal from the public sphere, the Islamic revolution in Iran serves as an example of the opposite reaction, taking the nation back to pre-modernity through a theocratic coup d'état. Deprivatization can also be a reaction against certain forms or manifestations of modernity, while accepting the premises of modernity at large. The orientation of the church in Latin America, inspired by liberation theology, gives a good illustration of this.

In advanced modern societies, churches and religious communities are more likely to focus their activities in the area of civil society. Casanova's study of the USA shows three particular forms of public activity of churches. The first is mobilization of religious forces in defence of traditional values, such as the Pro Life movement against abortion. The second is the prophetic contesting of the autonomous and often dehumanized societal subsystems of state and market, which are guided by their own intrinsic norms only, reminding them of their accountability to society, humankind or a still higher authority. The third is the promotion of the common good as opposed to the liberal and individualistic way of life, introducing moral standards and corporate responsibility to the area of freedom of choice for the individual. Casanova stresses that in a globalizing world especially transnational religious communities are in a favourable position, because they are most likely to have substantial impact on global developments.

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19 Casanova 1994, 41–42.
6.3. The quest for legitimacy

6.3.1. Dimensions of legitimacy

The concept of legitimacy is used across a wide range of scientific disciplines: political science, law, sociology, social psychology, philosophy, theology and comparative religion. Considering the scope of my study primarily legal, social and religious aspects deserve attention. It is difficult to find a working definition that is acceptable and functional in all these scientific disciplines. The definition given by Max Weber of rational–legal legitimacy as "belief in legitimacy"\(^{23}\) is too narrow for the purpose of this study. Philippe Schmitter defines legitimacy more comprehensively:

Legitimacy is a shared expectation among actors in an arrangement of asymmetric power, such that the actions of those who rule are accepted voluntarily by those who are ruled because the latter are convinced that the actions of the former conform to pre-established norms. Put simply, legitimacy converts power into authority—*Macht* into *Herrschaft*—and, thereby, simultaneously establishes an obligation to obey and a right to rule.\(^{24}\)

David Beetham, in his sociological approach to the legitimacy of power, distinguishes three dimensions of legitimacy:

Power can be said to be legitimate to the extent that:

i) it conforms to established rules
ii) the rules can be justified by reference to beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate, and
iii) there is evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation.\(^{25}\)

The first dimension comes closest to the concept of legitimacy or legality in legal discourse. The rules may be legal codes, formal agreements, or written memoranda. They have to form a coherent hierarchical structure, so that rules are not mutually exclusive or contradictory and the order of precedence can be established unambiguously. In the legal code of a modern state the rules are formed by a hierarchical structure of national constitution, primary law, secondary law, and legally binding agreements.\(^{26}\)

The second dimension stipulates that also the rules themselves are subject to the test of legitimacy. In order to be legitimate they have to be justified by an authority that both dominant and subordinate recognize and respect. Common

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\(^{23}\) "Legitimitätsglaube", see Beetham 1991, 8.

\(^{24}\) Schmitter 2001, 1.


\(^{26}\) Beetham 1991, 16.
values and beliefs serve to legitimize power which is derived from them. This approach is closer to Weber's view of legitimacy. Sociologically it is of interest what values and beliefs are shared within a social group, where these common values and beliefs originate from, and how they are maintained and consolidated or, alternatively, questioned and renewed. Often these values and beliefs are rooted in the past of the group, both historically and mythically, in the religious system, and in significant shared experiences, such as wars, famines, and other survival-related group crises.\textsuperscript{27}

The third dimension of legitimacy is the demonstrable consent by the subordinate party to the authority in question. In modern, individualistically oriented democracies this consent is expressed through the majority vote in democratic elections. However, depending on the way a group or society is organized, legitimacy does not necessarily require individual consent. It may also be expressed by those representing groups of individuals, such as family heads, tribal chiefs, appointed or elected local or regional delegates, trade union leaders, members of parliament, etc. Legitimacy is warranted only as long as each level of authority or delegation meets with approval of its immediate subordinates or constituency, and the policies on the different levels of the power chain are aligned and coherent.\textsuperscript{28}

Important in Beetham’s approach is also the clause "to the extent that”. It expresses the reality that legitimacy is never complete. Within every power relation there are rules that are violated, beliefs that are not shared by all, and people who refuse to consent. Therefore, in evaluating legitimacy it is important to ask to which extent power is administered according to established rules, how often and how seriously those rules are broken, how generally people subscribe to the beliefs underlying those rules and the power relation, how wide the range of divergence of beliefs is, how wide and deep-seated is the dissent, and how openly and strongly is it expressed.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{27} Beetham 1991, 17–18.
\textsuperscript{28} Beetham 1991, 18–19, 150–158.
\textsuperscript{29} Beetham 1991, 20.
6.3.2. Legitimacy of the European Union and European identity

The legitimacy of the European Union as a polity is still widely contested after more than a decade. Its structures of governance and legislation have been superimposed on existing national structures and interact with them through a complex network of relationships between national and EU legislation guided by a detailed division of competencies between the Union and its member states. The way in which EU governance has developed is generally experienced as non-democratic and intransparent. The democratic deficit, recognized by the European Council in the Laeken Declaration, is the root of a major legitimacy crisis.\(^{30}\)

The Laeken Declaration raises the question of the legitimacy of the European Union:

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\text{The European Union derives its legitimacy from the democratic values it projects, the aims it pursues and the powers and instruments it possesses. However, the European project also derives its legitimacy from democratic, transparent and efficient institutions. - - - The first question is thus how we can increase the democratic legitimacy and transparency of the present institutions.}^{31}\]

The strategy for legitimation outlined by the European Council here is described by Erik Oddvar Eriksen and John Erik Fossum as the economic-utilitarian strategy. It considers the European Union primarily as an instrument of problem solving in the economic and political arena and suggests that legitimacy can be procured by ensuring that problems are solved efficiently and through proven democratic decision-making procedures. The strategy aims at breaking down the democratic deficit and gaining approval for the European Union through tangible results, which affect the citizens directly and which could not be achieved without the EU.\(^{32}\)

A vital precondition for the corroboration of the Union's legitimacy is the existence and experience by European citizens of a collective European identity.\(^{33}\)

Collective identity is made up of both cognitive and affective elements. The first cognitive element is the awareness of the existence of a social group or entity which on account of specific common characteristics belongs together and is set apart from others not belonging to the collective. The second cognitive element is the awareness of belonging or self-assignment of an individual to that collective

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based on such common characteristics. The affective element of collective identity is the emotional attachment of individuals to the group to which they have assigned themselves. Whereas the first cognitive element is binary, i.e. either true or false, the other elements are variables in two dimensions determining the degree or strength of collective identity. Individuals can simultaneously have several collective identities which do not necessarily compete unless they experience a conflict of interest. According to the meta-contrast principle the degree to which individuals assign themselves to a collective, i.e. identify with a group or social entity, is dependent on the weight assigned to what they experience to have in common with the collective, as compared to the differences between them and the rest of the collective. The degree of identification is also depending on the specific context: National identification is stronger abroad than at home, professional identification stronger at business meetings and conferences than at a family reunion.\(^{34}\)

The existence of a European identity is being both confirmed and denied. It is often considered non-existent or embryonic\(^{35}\), and some claim that even the emergence of such an identity is simply impossible.\(^{36}\) Indeed, substantial arguments can be presented against the potential of a European identity to replace national identity and perform the same functions. Europeans partly have a common history to fall back on, but particularly during the major crises in the past century—two world wars and a cold war—they have been on different sides, dividing rather than uniting them. Furthermore, Europeans lack a common language and a common religion.\(^{37}\)

However, if European identity is considered as a different type of collective identity, not competing with national identity \textit{per se}, strong indications can be seen in its favour. Cognitively, the existence of Europe as a geographic continent is an undeniable reality, although the exact borders are debatable. The European Union as a polity and a common market, its political institutions and its common currency are equally indisputable. So are EU citizenship and the right to vote in elections of the European Parliament. These are the basic building blocks

\(^{34}\) Fuchs & Schlenker 2006, 8–11.
\(^{35}\) Beetham & Lord 1998, 29.
\(^{36}\) Fuchs & Schlenker 2006, 11.
\(^{37}\) Christianity unites most, though not all, EU-25 countries, but the historical conflicts between Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant churches are a dividing factor countering the commonality of Christians in Europe. Possible accession of Turkey to the EU reinforces the dividing potential of religion.
of EU democratic legitimacy. The cognitive aspect of self-assignment is largely dependent on the extent to which the democratic deficit can be overcome and the democratic governance of the EU can be made transparent. Also affective elements of European identity can be observed already. A majority of EU-25 citizens consider themselves Europeans in addition to national citizens and express some emotional attachment to Europe. European identity is therefore irrefutably present among EU citizens. The extent to which this identity, particularly its affective element, relates to the European Union as compared to Europe as a continent, is difficult to determine. Also the stability and sustainability of the European identity is still an open question. This is, of course, an important factor in the process of legitimation of the Union.

A second strategy for legitimation beside the economic-utilitarian strategy, outlined earlier, is that of the perception and construction of the EU as a value-based community. Common values, objectives and destiny are powerful promoters for a collective identity and can contribute to the legitimation of structures and instruments of governance and decision-making, which are committed to respect these common values and strive to achieve common goals.

6.3.3. Religious references in constitutional texts

A national constitution is written with more than one purpose in mind. Legally it is the primary document by which the rational–legal legitimacy of political power and action is defined and assessed, and which guides the development and formulation of national legal code. Politically, however, it is a highly ideological document, literally 'constituting' a society and presenting it with ideals for the future. Accordingly, it legitimizes not only based on the experiences and achievements of the past and the situation of the present, i.e. confirmatory legitimation, but also on the idealized objectives and visions for the future, i.e. programmatic legitimation. In both ways it aims to confirm and strengthen the identity and cohesion of society.

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40 Markoff & Regan 1987, 161–164.
Modern Western constitutions are built on a small number of models, such as the national constitutions of France and the United States of America. As a result of globalization and cross-fertilization the structures and styles of modern constitutional texts tend to converge in time towards a more uniform prototype. Therefore, some of the most interesting questions in analyzing a constitution are the choice of the model which has been adopted and the diverging factors that can be found. Diverging content is almost always an indication of what issues are especially important to the society or nation, either in setting it apart from surrounding nations or as being potential sources for internal conflict and instability. This is especially true for many religious concerns raised in the constitution. For example the question of religious freedom is mentioned in many national constitutions in a restricted sense. It is often qualified by political objectives or by the general rule of law and order.\textsuperscript{41} The Constitution of Greece may serve as a somewhat different but equally enlightening example: In the same paragraph it pronounces absolute freedom of religion as an uninfringeable human right and demands the unconditional prohibition of all forms of proselytism.\textsuperscript{42}

Most modern constitutions start with a preamble which underscores the ideological basis on which the nation is based, the values which it treasures, and the political objectives which it pursues. The preamble also serves well to promote the national identity of the citizens and to corroborate the legitimacy of the state according to the second dimension in Beetham's analysis\textsuperscript{43} by appealing to a higher and commonly respected authority. Still many of the world's constitutions have a reference to the supreme being or beings of the majority religion, even though the nation as such may be formally secular. With religion being a reality in the daily lives of its citizens, a state does well to tap into the existing system of rules, beliefs, values and social control, and use it as the basis for its own legitimation.\textsuperscript{44}

In modern secular states religious references have become rare, and rational–legal forms of legitimation are rapidly gaining precedence. As a result of modernization and secularization traditional religions are constantly conceding their potential to legitimize rules and power relationships.\textsuperscript{45} Nonetheless the

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{41}] Markoff & Regan 1987, 164–167.
\item[\textsuperscript{42}] Constitution of Greece 2001, Section II, Article 13, Paragraph 2.
\item[\textsuperscript{43}] Beetham 1991, 17–18.
\item[\textsuperscript{44}] Markoff & Regan 1987, 168–170.
\item[\textsuperscript{45}] Berger 1973, 157–158.
\end{itemize}
power of religious language, symbolism and ritual as creators of social cohesion and legitimacy in the Weberian sense of "Legitimitäts glaube" is very strong.\textsuperscript{46} Therefore, in modern constitutions the preamble often uses religious or quasi-religious rhetoric referring to common history, values or destiny in an often transcendental perspective, in order to promote cohesion and legitimacy.\textsuperscript{47}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{46} Lampinen 1995, 33–40.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Markoff & Regan 1987, 167–171. This is a form of civil religion—the "transcendent universal religion of the nation"—, a term used by Robert Bellah (1967) to describe the situation of public religion in the USA.
\end{itemize}
7. CHURCHES’ VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

7.1. The public mission of the churches

In his redefinition of the public and private spheres José Casanova rejected the purely binary public–private dichotomy and introduced the diffuse area of organized civil society in between those theoretical extremes. In civil society also the borders between the autonomous dimensions of society fade and interaction and infiltration takes place between them.\(^1\) Figure 6 shows the four main dimensions of society and their allocation in the binary public–private space according to the secularization paradigm. The position of the social dimension is dependent on the way it is defined and delineated, but in principle it can extend to both the private and public spheres. The spiritual dimension, here thought of first and foremost as the religious dimension, belongs completely to the private sphere. In contrast, Figure 7 depicts Casanova's view of the public–private sphere as a continuum with civil society in the middle. In this model the spiritual dimension enters civil society and intersects with other dimensions of society.

Figure 6. Societal subsystems in the binary public–private sphere according to the secularization paradigm.

\(^1\) Casanova 1994, 41–42.
Over the years the European Union has formally become a multidimensional institution. Beside the economic and political dimensions, the social dimension has clearly grown in significance, particularly over the last two decades. The fourth, spiritual, dimension has only been appropriately recognized after the initiative for a soul for Europe by Jacques Delors. After more than ten years former President of the European Commission Romano Prodi continued the exploration of that dimension and in 2003, while the European Convention still worked on the draft of the Constitutional Treaty, convened a high-level advisory group to reflect on what was then called the "spiritual and cultural dimension of Europe". The group focused on "spiritual, religious and cultural values, and the ways in which these may be considered important building blocks for the future unity of Europe".²

The contributions of the churches and church alliances to the Forum of the Convention on the future of Europe provide compelling evidence in support of their determination to take up a significant position in the public life of Europe in the future. On the one hand, they strive to maintain their public status on a national level and to hedge it against potential pressure from the European Union. On the other hand, they also try to lay the foundation for the recognition and consolidation of their public role within the emerging social and political structure of the European Union itself. This public role is not limited to the field of religion

² European Commission 2007a.
only, as Chapter 5 clearly showed. When evaluating the contributions of the churches it is therefore appropriate to look at the question of public versus private religion along two dimensions: that of religious institutions and that of religious beliefs or world views. Grace Davie's research strongly suggests—and this study confirms—that especially in the European context these dimensions are largely independent.³

In general, churches subscribe to the model in Figure 7, releasing the spiritual or religious dimension from the confines of the private sphere and giving it more public significance. This is evident in the appeal for a reference to God in the Preamble of the Constitutional Treaty and for a recognition of the Christian spiritual heritage of Europe.⁴ There are some exceptions to this general pattern to which I will come back later. However, churches conceive their own public role as extending beyond the spiritual dimension, as depicted in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Churches' vision of the public role of churches and religion in the EU.

First of all, churches make claims on the social dimension, where they are important providers of welfare and other basic services. However, they do not exclude a priori the political and economic dimensions, either. As the spiritual dimension intersects with other dimensions of the European Union, churches also regard it as their task to promote the permeation of the spiritual dimension into these other dimensions. This happens first and foremost through the articulation of fundamental values that arise from the spiritual heritage of Europe, and which

churches demand the EU to apply consistently in all dimensions and policies of the Union. Figure 8 indicates some of the concrete issues raised in the contributions where the spiritual dimension potentially penetrates and affects the others.

7.2. Deprivatization of churches and religious communities

On the whole, the churches and church alliances participating in the debate on the future of Europe adopt a world-affirming adaptation strategy in their battle against marginalization and privatization. None of the contributions explicitly challenges the process of modernization or its implications for society. The process of European integration is welcomed, although not without a certain degree of criticism. The functional differentiation of society and a high degree of autonomization of its various subsystems, such as politics, economy, social infrastructure and religion, are essentially taken for granted, although churches do have fundamental reservations with respect to the extent of that autonomy. Whereas in the secularization debate strict independence and separation are a programmatic issue, particularly when applied to the relation between religious and secular dimensions, the churches generally lay more emphasis on the mutual interrelatedness, the common foundations and the need for coherence between societal subsystems. The appeal for coherence between economic and social policies and the permeation of fundamental values throughout the work of the EU are just examples of this. Casanova points out that even when subscribing to the principles of a strictly differentiated and privatized society religion is entitled to enter the public sphere to question the justification of the functional autonomy of societal subsystems and bring in e.g. ethical or moral considerations into the discussion. This is based on the fundamental right of freedom of conscience. This does not imply, that religion can impose its own 'sacred' views and norms, but acts as one of several possible channels of collective social conscience.

4 See Chapter 4, pp. 33–37.
5 See Chapter 4, pp. 40–41.
6 Critical footnotes are found in many contributions, most clearly in CEC 2002a.
7 See e.g. CEC 2003a.
8 Casanova 1994, 57–58.
In line with the world-affirming adaptation strategy, the contributions in their argumentation primarily use the secular terminology and rationale appropriate to the political discussion instead of introducing religious arguments and language in areas where they are foreign and by external standards inappropriate. Considering the state of secularization of Western Europe and the degree of internal secularization of many mainstream churches the world-affirming adaptation strategy is the most obvious one to pursue. Refusal to accept the premises of modernism would likely erode the credibility of the churches as representatives of their constituency in the political debate and in practice exclude them from any significant role in the political future of the European Union. In this context it must be pointed out that there are exceptions to this general rule of argumentation. I will come back to them in the following subchapter.

Another important general trait that can be observed in the contributions is the inclusiveness with which the churches approach issues concerning the religious dimension. This inclusiveness is evident on three levels. First of all, churches are strongly involved in ecumenical cooperation and mainly try to speak with one voice on behalf of a united Christian church. CEC represents a wide range of churches, denominations and theologies, making the ecumenical approach really the only possible alternative. CEC also cooperates with the Roman Catholic Church in three joint contributions, extending its credibility as a representative of an undivided European Christendom. CEC contributions do not make a single allusion to possible divisions among CEC member churches or within the Christian church at large. Whereas none of the other contributions contain divisive arguments or expressions, either, they do allude to their own church organization, denominational background or historical involvement to support certain positions or report on actions taken, even though their uniqueness is questionable. As an example, COMECE mentions human rights as "supported and promoted by the social teaching of the Catholic Church," although the uniqueness of the Catholic teaching is not at stake in this context—other churches consider human rights as general Christian values, whereas ELCD extends the basis for human rights to a wide range of religious and philosophical

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10 COMECE 2002.
movements.\textsuperscript{12} Also dissenting positions are expressed without drawing attention to the disagreements among the churches.\textsuperscript{13} Only FCCF in its discourse on corporate and institutional freedom of religion breaks this rule by alluding to the conflicting interests of minority and established churches.\textsuperscript{14}

On a second level, churches are inclusive of other religions and religious communities. Although the vast majority\textsuperscript{15} of the contributing churches clearly gives prevalence to Christianity as the most influential religion in the history and present-day situation of Europe—both from an institutional point of view and as a worldview—, the values of equality and non-discrimination promoted by the churches leave them no real alternatives. The most common way to refer to the rights, tasks, achievements or significance of organized religion is by the term "churches and religious communities".\textsuperscript{16} This phrase is undeniably inclusive, but at the same time it sets apart Christian churches from other religions, perhaps even hinting at the marginal significance of non-Christian religious communities. Only QCEA emphatically calls for an omission of the term church altogether in pursuit of true equality of all religious and non-religious convictions and schools of thought.\textsuperscript{17}

On a third level, inclusiveness covers also non-religious schools of thought. Sensitive to the objections raised by secularists against any allusion to religion within the secular context of the European Union,\textsuperscript{18} contributors also use terms such as "churches, religions and communities of faith and conviction"\textsuperscript{19} or "churches, religious communities and faith and philosophical organisations"\textsuperscript{20}. Formally these expressions cover all organizations with a religious, philosophical or ideological agenda. On the secular side they are meant to account for secular

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item ELCD 2003.
\item ELCD 2003.
\item FCCF 2003.
\item This excludes only the Quaker Council for European Affairs and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark.
\item QCEA 2003d.
\item Included in the Forum is one contribution from the National Secular Society (2003). The same more or less strong opinions against religious elements in the Constitutional Treaty have been and still are being voiced frequently in e.g. the media.
\item CEC 2003a.
\item ELCF 2002.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
humanism in particular. Again, these expressions imply a clear priority for religions and for Christianity in particular.

There is, then, an obvious tension between the inclusive approach of the churches and the prioritization of the Christian church and faith. It may reflect an emerging departure from the exclusivity of Christianity typical of traditional doctrine, but whether the churches have really internalized inclusive thought is yet to be seen. A more logical explanation is the necessity, induced by the secular nature of the European Union, for confessional neutrality, the resolve to demonstrate that the Christian and European value of equality is being respected even when it hits home territory, and the need to accommodate secularist critique.

A third characteristic of many contributions is their international origin and global outlook. Of the 21 contributions 16 are submitted by international organizations. Casanova suggests, that the emergence of modern global civil society requires a paradigm shift with respect to the public role of the churches, as compared to the national status of established churches. In the framework of the European Union global civil society is the arena for public action of the churches, and the traditional church–state relation is becoming an anachronism. On the other hand, Casanova suggests that a transnational orientation of churches or religious institutions reinforces their identity as a universal religion and motivates them to assume public roles in a global context.

In this respect churches show an affirmative attitude towards the modern globalization process and a shift in emphasis from national to global issues. CEC, LCF and COMECE, as well as many international and ecumenical church councils and associations, are excellent examples of the proactive way of international networking in which churches implement this shift in paradigm.

However, the strategies of the contributing churches are not unambiguous in this respect. First of all, we can observe that of the five national contributions four are submitted by churches with a more or less established church–state relation in their country. As members of CEC—or in the case of the Deutsche Bischofskonferenz as part of the Roman Catholic Church—these churches endorse in principle the international contributions of CEC and COMECE.

21 ELCD speaks of “Greek-Roman philosophy, the Mosaic Faith, Christianity, Islam and modern non-religious humanistic philosophy” as making up the spiritual foundation of Europe (ELCD 2003).
22 See Table 1, p. 20.
submitting their own contributions, however, they stress the importance of also communicating a national point of view\textsuperscript{25} or of bringing into the discussion their established public status on a national level.\textsuperscript{26} This could be interpreted as an indication that established churches do not necessarily consider their traditional national status an anachronism, but find it still relevant even in a globalizing civil society and an ever tightening European integration. This interpretation could find support by the demand to include the text of Declaration No. 11 annexed to the Treaty of Amsterdam in the Constitutional Treaty. This demand is not just expressed in national contributions,\textsuperscript{27} but also by the internationally oriented CEC and COMECE.\textsuperscript{28} Davie suggests, however, that in reality even churches with a strong history of establishment in the national state have in fact become organizations in civil society, where the voluntary aspect of membership and participation is much stronger than the legal or political status.\textsuperscript{29} In the light of this observation the nationally oriented contributions and the demand for the inclusion of Declaration No. 11 can equally well be understood as hedging the role of the churches in national civil society against the intrusion of European legislation. This would imply the demand to respect the principle of subsidiarity on a fundamental level, but also the involvement of churches in providing e.g. social and welfare services, which in some countries may be the only way to maintaining the national level of welfare provision.

The world-affirming, inclusive and globally oriented adaptation strategies which mark the majority of the contributions of the churches and church alliances, hold the potential to provide access to the political arena of the European Union. They demonstrate the compatibility of the churches with the secular institutions of the EU and with the other players on the political scene. The national status of established churches and their history of political and social involvement nationally already offer some evidence of such compatibility, but the paradigm shift between national and European governance requires more than national experience. After all, in many national contexts inclusiveness and global outlook are not prerequisites for legitimate political power and social involvement.

\textsuperscript{25} The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland, e.g., calls particular attention for a constructive cooperation with its neighbour Russia (ELCF 2002).
\textsuperscript{26} This is most obvious in the contribution of the Greek Orthodox Church (SSEG 2002).
\textsuperscript{29} Davie 2001b, 276.
whereas on a European level they are indispensable. Beside compatibility there must also be sufficiently pressing motives for having to involve churches and religious institutions in the area of politics and governance. Churches bring up such motives from the two societal dimensions they are most involved in, the social and spiritual dimension.

Within the social dimension the wide-ranging involvement of the churches in the provision of social services, welfare, health care and education in Europe offers one angle from which to approach their possible entitlement to involvement in political dialogue. The EU has already recognized the need for involvement of civil society at large in European governance and has established structured channels of dialogue with e.g. the social partners.30 The diverse role of the churches in civil society can justify a claim for structured dialogue equally well. The churches have a record of speaking out for the weakest in society, not only locally but also worldwide. They serve society on all different levels, from local services to individuals through regional and national involvement up to international social action, e.g. through their European diaconal organizations Caritas Europa and Eurodiaconia. Churches widely apply the principle of subsidiarity, which in essence is a Roman Catholic contribution to EU governance. Their work on a grass-root level is clearly visible to the citizens and instils trust, especially compared to the intransparent bureaucracy of the EU institutions. Churches can also boast a large membership, almost 75% of the European population, comparing favourably with the representation of e.g. the social partners. Hence, the social presence and activity of the churches speaks much in favour of involving them also in the political processes of the EU.

Entitlement to participation in the political dialogue with the European Union is also approached from the angle of the spiritual dimension of Europe. Most of the churches are agreed that the historical role of the Christian churches in the development of European culture and civilization has been momentous. The concept of the centrality of the human individual, the sacredness of human life and human dignity, the ethical foundations of Western society and legislation, as well as the model for modern Western democracy are claimed as specifically Christian contributions to the development of present-day Europe.31

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churches also boast on having accumulated considerable expertise in questions of ethics and values, which are needed in order to set the European integration and EU policies and actions in a broader perspective.  

Based on these arguments the churches seek to reinforce and intensify their public role in Europe by expanding beyond their significant role in civil society to the political arena of the European polity. Although informal consultation and lobbying has taken place ever since the first steps of European integration, churches now demand to be given an officially endorsed and clearly defined place in the structure of European governance. The realization of a system of structured dialogue with the European Union would be a significant step towards the deprivatization of religious institutions, increasing their potential influence in European politics and providing a legal mechanism to restrain their possible privatization in the future. This does not mean, that religious beliefs or religious authority could re-enter the European political scene, which would factually mean a return to pre-modernism. At best, the dialogue could cover social and ethical issues, to which churches and religious communities can offer their expertise, and of which they are stakeholders.

A second demand, to which I referred already earlier, is the inclusion of Declaration No. 11 of the Amsterdam Treaty in the constitutional text. This demand shows that for the churches the national level of public religion is still relevant. The number of state churches and established churches has constantly decreased and the public role, power and privileges have undergone fundamental changes. Yet, Christian churches are still very dominant social or political actors in many EU member states, where historical developments have led to a high degree of permeation and cross-fertilization between religious, social and political dimensions and institutions, such as in Greece and in the Nordic countries. Even if the religious institutions succeeded to secure a satisfying political status in the European Union, such status would not make the nationally attained status superfluous. Therefore Declaration No. 11 is taken up as a guarantee that the EU will be powerless to trim down or control the public role of the churches in countries where such role is still significant at the moment.

A third demand related to the public status of religious communities is that the right to religious freedom should be incorporated in the Constitution, not only

32 CEC 2002a.
in its individual dimension, but also in its corporate and institutional dimensions. Unlike the earlier two demands, which secure the public status of religious institutions by allowing them to cross the boundaries of the spiritual dimension or by letting the spiritual dimension penetrate and blend with secular dimensions, this demand takes as its starting point the inviolability of the autonomy of religion and religious institutions. Churches do not pursue a relationship with political institutions on equal terms, but appealing to the sacredness of their mission they insist that secular authorities should have no say whatsoever in matters of organization or public practice, and that they should not be in the position to curtail the freedom of religious institutions beyond the constraints of existing national law and the framework of fundamental rights.

From the analysis so far we can conclude that churches raise legitimate reasons for public involvement in the European Union. They question the absolute autonomy of secular and religious subsystems in society and call for a sensible level of interaction and blending between them in order to arrive at a coherent and responsible European model. In this respect churches have an unmatched, if not unique, contribution to make through their social involvement and their contribution to the ethical foundation of Europe. Churches have accepted the necessary shift in paradigm from the role of state church to that of actor in civil society based on voluntary allegiance and participation. They accept the implications of modernity and argue their case employing secular political rationale and largely, though not entirely, refraining from introducing religious arguments or sacred authority.

7.3. Deprivatization of religious belief

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and of Communism in Eastern Europe, there has been an ideological vacuum in Europe. Communism in the East and the threat of the Cold War in the West lost their force, and no ideological framework has been able to replace them as yet. There is unambiguous evidence that the European Union is determined to fill the ideological gap through the process of European integration, of which the grandiloquent rhetoric of the introduction to

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33 See Chapter 4, pp. 37–40.
the Laeken Declaration and the Preamble of the Constitutional Treaty testify. However, as an economic endeavour it can hardly be expected to inspire European citizens in the face of the emergence of economic world powers such as China. As a social project the enlargement to the East has raised serious questions as to its desirability and benefit for the EU-15 countries. As a peace project the end of the Cold War and the advent of asymmetric forms of global warfare and terrorism to the Western world have stripped it of its credibility. As a political project the fast growing, intransparent bureaucracy and the perceived concentration of power to Brussels has put off citizens and raised the level of criticism among them. Therefore, the European Union must employ other ideological means to try to recapture the enthusiasm of its citizens for the ever intensifying and expanding project of integration.\(^{34}\) In the absence of a meaningful secular ideology, there is space for the return of religion to the public sphere both as the provider of meaning and of a normative foundation and as a mobilizing social or political force. Based on his research Casanova concludes that religion tends to find that space and fill it.\(^{35}\)

The contributions to the Forum on the future of Europe indeed testify that churches recognize the ideological deficit of the European Union and, in response, engage in attempts to bring religious beliefs and world views back into the European public sphere. In their argumentation the churches employ two different approaches to the religious dimension. The first one is the functional approach, which looks at religion as a social phenomenon or system, made up of structures, symbols, rituals, conventions and actions. This approach \textit{per se} does not constitute a serious problem for the secular space in which the debate takes place, since it is descriptive in nature, and because functionally religion and religious belief can be explicated and analyzed using purely secular language and rationale, e.g. in sociological or psychological terms. As we have seen in the previous subchapter, the public role of religious institutions is approached virtually entirely this way.

The first functional aspect of religious belief which the churches bring into the debate is the spiritual heritage of Europe.\(^{36}\) It is based on historical facts concerning the significant and long-standing influence of the Christian faith in Europe. Although the European Convention in its proposal for a Preamble of the

\(^{34}\) CEC 2002a.  
\(^{35}\) Casanova 1994, 227.  
Constitutional Treaty seeks to dismiss the unique role of Christianity altogether, this must be interpreted as an ideological choice, symptomatic of the underlying secularization paradigm. In the context of the European debate the term spiritual heritage is used by the churches to cover in particular the ethical and social teaching of the Christian Church, including the concepts of human dignity, human rights, social justice, fair governance, and other values derived from them. CEC asserts that these values are embedded in the Christian Gospel, whereas COMECE credits the social teaching of the Catholic Church for them. However, that does not suggest *a priori* that these roots are unique. Churches also remember to mention that in their own activities they exemplify and promote these values through international solidarity and cooperation, social involvement, and the fight against social exclusion and xenophobia.

The inclusion of the spiritual heritage as a religious, and more specifically a Christian, project both in the debate on the future of Europe and in the final text of the Constitutional Treaty can serve a number of purposes. It bears witness to the positive and constructive impact of Christianity in the history and development of Europe and, by extrapolation, implies its usefulness for the future of Europe. It also provides a logical argument for the prevalence of the Christian faith to other religions and to non-religious ideologies and philosophies. This prevalence is repeatedly expressed in the wording used in the contributions of the churches to denote religious and philosophical communities, and which persists despite the inclusiveness to which the churches formally subscribe. A third purpose for including the spiritual heritage is the support that such an inclusion can lend to the claims made with respect to the formal status and role of the churches in the future European Union, based on their experience and expertise in social and ethical questions, their historical achievements, and their future potential.

The second functional aspect of religious belief brought into the debate is the potential of religion to provide meaning. People in Western Europe lack a common ideology, and the *grand idée* of European integration by itself has failed to inspire the citizens until now. The Great Narrative of Christianity or other

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37 CEC 2002a.
38 COMECE 2002.
39 See the reference to "other sources of inspiration" (CEC 2002a).
40 LCF 2002 and ELCF 2002.
41 See the remarks in the previous subchapter.
Religious elements are indeed powerful communicators of meaning and identity. I mentioned in Chapter 6 how even modern national constitutions readily borrow religious rhetoric or symbolism to ‘constitute’ the nation and strengthen its collective identity. The concept of civil religion, used by Robert Bellah in his analysis of the situation in the USA, describes a kind of public religion which is universal and transcendent, but at the same time is 'owned' by the nation. The Transcendent of civil religion—the spirit of the nation—is not necessarily identical to any god of the major religions, but can be identified as such by the individual. In other words, civil religion is largely compatible with the major world religions, but also with many secular world views. It is doubtful, however, whether a European civil religion is a viable option. One major problem is the almost polemic form of secularism—*laïcité*—which exerts a strong influence in a number of European countries, not only in France, and which rejects every form of religion or religious reference in the public sphere. The other is the historical burden of religious conflicts and competition in Europe. With the accession of Islamic Turkey to the EU pending, the sensitivity and caution of European decision makers with respect to potential religious conflicts is, of course, extremely high.

Beside the provision of meaning and identity, religion also constitutes a powerful motivating force that can energize and activate individuals and groups to all kinds of social or political action. Casanova's study gives a variety of examples of this in different national and denominational contexts, including social action and the defence of moral and traditional values. Considering the increasing significance of voluntary participation in the social and political dimensions of

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44 See Section II of Casanova's study (Casanova 1994, 69–207).
European civil society, the need for an effective way to motivate citizens is quite apparent. Within the framework of religious communities voluntary involvement is well-established, and the churches take pride in this. A public religious dimension in the European Union might unleash similar involvement in the service of the EU.

The second approach of the churches to the spiritual dimension is the substantive approach, dealing with the content of religion, the sacred and transcendent which is the object of religious belief and practice. This approach is extremely problematic from a secular point of view because it brings a sacred rationale with an inherently normative dimension directly into the debate, based on entirely different premises than the rationale applied in secular dimensions and subsystems of society. Particularly in the political debate on the future of Europe and on questions of EU governance the introduction of an ultimate transcendent authority and of normative values and objectives attributed to this authority contain the potential to jeopardize the democratic and secular principles on which the European Union is being built. Therefore the two are fundamentally incompatible. The functional differentiation and autonomization of modern society implies that societal subsystems must rely primarily, if not fully, on their own internal logic and procedures of legitimation. This principle of "functional rationalization" is independent of the question of secularization as such.

From the perspective of the churches, however, the introduction of religious ideas and meanings into the debate is inescapable. In the previous subchapter I argued that a secular and inclusive approach to the debate on the future of Europe is a precondition for constructive and credible participation in the realization and governance of European integration. It is equally true that elimination of the substance of religion from the debate altogether inevitably deprives religious communities from their unique raison d'être both as representatives of the religious community and as distinct actors in the social and political field. Ultimately, it also robs religion from its functional potential to motivate and mobilize people through the communication of meaning and identity.

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The demand for a reference to God in the Constitutional Treaty has received much attention and raised heated debate since the publication of the Laeken Declaration. From the media one easily gets the impression that it is the main contribution churches have made to the debate on the future of Europe. In the contributions to the Forum, however, this demand is raised only a few times. The principle reason given for such reference is the need to make public power accountable to a higher authority. 47 Basically, this means that churches want to secure a line of accountability in addition to that embedded in the democratic representation.

The most probable reason for this lies in the democratic deficit of the European Union. Churches express their concern about the intransparency of EU institutions and are sceptical regarding the development of democratic European governance. 48 The reference to God implies that there is a higher authority whose control and supervision cannot be circumvented. However, the effectiveness of such reference is depending entirely on the extent to which such accountability can actually be enforced. In practice, this requires mediation by religious authorities, primarily the churches and religious communities in Europe. Thus, it provides them with an additional mandate to be involved in the political scene of Europe. This spiritual mandate is not dependent on existing structures of dialogue stipulated by the European Constitution or endorsed by the EU institutions, but opens the door for counselling in matters of ethics and social justice on the churches’ own initiative. The main devices that churches propose for the implementation of such prophetic role, is the benchmarking of European governance and integration based on commonly agreed values, which churches consider as God-given and therefore ultimately authoritative. 49 In that prophetic role, the Catholic Church gives special emphasis to the defence of the freedom of the individual, including the fundamental freedom to invoke God. 50 The latter echoes concerns about the practical implementation of religious freedom in the European polity, based on the example of the French laïcité.

There is an obvious drawback to the inclusion of a divine reference in the Constitution. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark draws attention to the potential abuse of religious power demonstrated all too frequently throughout

49 CEC 2002a.
European history. The same concern is also raised in the Laeken Declaration in connection with the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001. The churches which call for a reference to God in the Constitution do not touch upon this question at all.

There are three exceptions to the general vision of public religion in the European Union as described in this chapter. The Quakers do not incorporate any religious dimension into their vision for Europe. They are in agreement with the demand that the European Union in its legislation should respect existing forms of national church–state relationships without prejudice. In this context, however, QCEA is emphatic in claiming that such a provision should mention faith communities instead of churches in order to guarantee inclusion of all religions without making unnecessary distinctions through the use of predisposed terminology. QCEA is also unhappy about churches being mentioned as a specific actor within organized civil society with which a structured dialogue should be maintained. In its contribution on the democratic life of the Union it requests that the constitutional text avoid the impression that the dialogue with churches would receive greater weight than that with other actors in society. QCEA does not question the public role of religious institutions and communities as such, but sees them as an integral part of organized civil society in the same way NGOs and social partners are. Religious communities are entitled to participate in the various subsystems of society, but only on a basis of equality with other participants and according to the rules of the subsystem in question. To bring religion itself into the autonomous sphere of politics is in sharp conflict with the vision of QCEA, which emphasizes a strongly privatized religious dimension of "that of God in everyone".

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark is essentially in agreement with QCEA, although it gives more credit to the contributions of churches and religious communities to the service of society. ELCD has no objections against them being explicitly mentioned, but it should be recognized that they share the task of serving society with non-confessional organizations. ELCD ascribes virtually no meaning to the religious dimension apart from the distinct

50 COMECE 2002 and 2003b.
51 ELCD 2003.
52 European Council 2001, 2.
53 QCEA 2003d.
54 QCEA 2002.
achievement of Christianity of introducing the notion of the dignity of the individual into Western civilization. Appealing to the purely secular nature of the European Union the Danish Church concludes that churches and religious communities are entitled to maintain their national status without having to make compromises to the EU, but that on a European level the religious dimension may not penetrate the autonomous sphere of politics.\textsuperscript{55}

The approach of the Free Church Council of Finland is quite different from QCEA and ELCD. The churches it represents are conservative in their theological outlook but have a history of being marginalized, not so much by developments of secularization and modernization as by their low membership in comparison to the established Lutheran and Orthodox Churches in Finland. For the member churches of FCCF religion is largely a matter to be practised in private and in the confines of the religious community. Only the Salvation Army has adopted a clear public role in society as a provider of social services on a grass-root level, but this does not reflect in the contribution of FCCF. Its main concern is that guarantees be given in the Constitutional Treaty that the autonomy of the religious dimension is respected in the form of institutional religious freedom for all churches, also those in a minority position. For the FCCF the privatization of religion is a deliberate choice. The public significance and role of majority and established churches is seen as a potential threat to the religious freedom of minority churches, and the FCCF would like this problem to be resolved. Nonetheless, somewhat in contradiction with this view is the request to include references to the Christian heritage of Europe and to God in the Constitution. This may be a reflection of fears that in addition to established churches also secular European authorities may threaten the freedom of minority churches to live out their faith in line with their own beliefs.\textsuperscript{56} The argument raised by COMECE that a reference to God in the Constitution relativates human power, may well be implied here.\textsuperscript{57}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[55] ELCD 2003.
\item[56] FCCF 2003.
\item[57] COMECE 2003b.
\end{footnotes}
7.4. Religion as a constitutive element in the European Constitution

The European Union envisages a model of governance, illustrated in Figure 9, which relies on three elements for its legitimation and identity-building.\textsuperscript{58}

Figure 9. Legitimacy, accountability and identity model of the European Union.

The first element is that of democratic representation. In Western national democracies this is a most crucial element of legitimation, as it implements all three dimensions of legitimacy as defined by Beetham: conformation to established rules, justification of the rules by reference to shared beliefs, and evidence of consent.\textsuperscript{59} The situation for a non-national polity like the European Union is quite different, since the prerequisites to fulfil the conditions for the second and third dimension are not necessarily present. Belief and trust in the European integration the way it is implemented by the present bureaucracy within the European institutions is not very high, neither is there much evidence of consent on the part of European citizens on a grass-root level. The term democratic deficit points precisely at this problem. The decision by 15 of the EU-

\textsuperscript{58} The model is constructed on the basis of the White paper on European governance (European Commission 2001) and the Laeken Declaration (European Council 2001).
25 countries not to organize a referendum on the ratification of the Constitutional Treaty is just one symptom of the crisis that the democratic legitimacy of the European Union is going through at the moment.\textsuperscript{60}

The second element invoked by the European Union is organized civil society. Its active involvement in European politics, proposed in the White Paper on European Governance, is geared at helping citizens to identify with the Union, providing more open and transparent ways of being involved in European politics, and showing commitment to the principle of subsidiarity.\textsuperscript{61} It is instrumental in promoting cognitive, self-assigning identity and in providing positive opportunities for the expression of consent to the authority of the EU, the third dimension in Beetham's legitimacy model.\textsuperscript{62}

In order to satisfy Beetham's second dimension of legitimacy\textsuperscript{63} the European Union raises the question of values as a third element, making them one of the foundations of the European integration project and the main cohesive element in the formation of a collective European identity. For this reason the EU calls itself a community of values. Common values can be a strong collective factor compensating for possible political and cultural differences, as the meta-contrast principle explains.\textsuperscript{64} What the actual values are which comprise the foundation of the EU and which build the European community is not the major issue. Different situations and contexts bring different values to the surface. The most important is, that Europeans can identify both on a cognitive and affective level with the European Union through commonly shared and treasured values.

There is strong scepticism among the churches concerning the sufficiency of the model of European governance, presented above, to provide the European Union with durable cohesion, cognitive and affective identity, and legitimacy in the Weberian sense of Legitimitätsglaube.\textsuperscript{65} In addition to the political and social dimension they express the need to include the spiritual dimension of Europe as a significant area through which the basis for legitimacy of the EU can be expanded and reinforced and through which a strong and genuine collective European identity can be developed, both as a cognitive, self-assigning and especially

\textsuperscript{59} Beetham 1991, 15–16.
\textsuperscript{60} COSAC 2006.
\textsuperscript{61} European Commission 2001, 14–17, 30.
\textsuperscript{62} Beetham 1991, 16.
\textsuperscript{63} Beetham 1991, 15.
\textsuperscript{64} Fuchs & Schlenker 2006, 10.
affective identity.\textsuperscript{66} This model is depicted in Figure 10. In principle, it involves the churches and faith communities in an inclusive manner as actors in both the social and spiritual dimension, i.e. through their engagement in organized civil society and as the provider of religion. In addition, most churches also want to include a transcendental element, which is called Transcendent,\textsuperscript{67} God,\textsuperscript{68} or ultimate otherness.\textsuperscript{69} As mentioned earlier, The Danish Church and the Quakers oppose the inclusion of the spiritual dimension in the public sphere and do not subscribe to this model.

Figure 10. Legitimacy, accountability and identity model of European churches.

Through their social involvement in civil society the churches lay claims on a democratic mandate. Their mandate to represent EU citizens is not attained through democratic election, but by taking up the responsibility of speaking up for society, especially for the voiceless, the vulnerable and the socially excluded.

\textsuperscript{67} COMECE 2002.
\textsuperscript{69} COMECE 2002.
citizens. Through their active engagement in all levels of society from local grass-root level upwards churches can do so in an all-inclusive way, taking into account the needs and issues at the different levels. Through membership, volunteer employment and the extension of social services they connect with the vast majority of the European population in different degrees of intensity. This is one way in which identification and a relation of trust between citizens and the churches is established.

Churches also provide meaning and purpose through their spiritual ministry. From the point of view of identification special significance must be attached to the role of the churches as mediators between the sacred and the people and as carriers and preservers of the religious memory of Europe. Even though the statistics of churchgoing are low compared to membership figures, the value ascribed to the ministry of the churches and to what they represent is relatively high. Points of contact and identification are generally established in connection with rites of passage and life crises. The impact of such encounters is generally higher than their frequency would lead us to believe.\(^70\)

The mediating role of the churches between sacred and secular also comprises the area of ethics. They proclaim a value foundation for society based on their religious teaching and claim a spiritual mandate in promoting those values and holding society—both individuals and institutions, including political decision makers—accountable. The concurrence of the European Union to recognize those values and consent to a procedure of scrutiny and dialogue by the religious communities can contribute to the legitimacy of the EU by backing up the rule of European law and the procedures of European government by a commonly accepted frame of reference. Churches raise as a precondition for such legitimation the coherent and consistent permeation of the value foundation into the whole area of European governance, including the objectives, policies and actions of the EU.

A fourth issue is that religious rhetoric is more powerful to inspire, motivate and create community than secular rhetoric, as also the totalitarian ideological regimes in 20\(^{th}\) century Europe have discovered. Religious or quasi-religious language, symbolism and ritual are crucial assets in the building of a collective identity for the European Union. The majority of the citizens in the

\(^70\) Davie 2000, 59–60.
Union are familiar with the Christian heritage of Europe and with the language, symbols and rituals that stem from it. Drawing from this arsenal of religious devices that already have an *a priori* positive meaning for many citizens, the EU can tackle its democratic deficit and reduce the distance between citizens and EU institutions. They are bound to be much more effective than the political rhetoric of ancient Greece in answering the central questions of European identity: a common origin, a common election, common values, and a common destiny.\footnote{Bogdandy 2004, 4–12.}

Hence, it follows that churches consider themselves in a key position to offer a major contribution to the *Legitimitätsgläube* of the European Union and to the promotion of European identity. Based on the democratic and spiritual mandates which they claim and on the values which they share with the European Union, they trade off a number of concessions from the EU which in turn secure their own position and provide them with a solid legitimacy in the new European polity. These are the recognition of the spiritual, foremost Christian heritage of Europe and of the God to whom Europe owes it, and the recognition of the autonomy and special status of the churches in the EU and its member states. This system of mutual legitimation is, in fact, a delicate balance. Failure to recognize the spiritual dimension and the privileged position of the religious communities altogether deprives the European Union of valuable allies in constituting the European Union, its identity and its confirmatory and programmatic legitimacy. Opinions certainly differ as to whether the EU can afford to jeopardize that alliance.
8. REFLECTIONS ON A SOUL FOR EUROPE

In this study I have looked at the contributions of European churches to the Forum of the Convention on the future of Europe, looking for their specific areas of interest, the objectives they pursue, and the arguments they employed. The Forum was a public space in the internet, particularly designed to encourage open and transparent dialogue with the Convention during the drafting process of the Constitutional Treaty of the European Union. Churches took part in the public dialogue mainly through international and ecumenical alliances and the transnational Roman Catholic Church. In addition to the main players on the scene, the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community (COMECE), also nationally established and national and international minority churches took part in the debate. Together the contributing organizations represent the vast majority of the Christian population in the European Union.

I embarked on this study with no more than a clearly delineated range of data. For lack of a predefined theoretical framework or hypothesis my research approach was mainly a blend of inductive and abductive inference. This forced me to look at the data as a whole, analyzing all that was quantitatively and contextually relevant, and distilling the themes for my theoretical considerations only after the overall image had been drawn. The sophisticated analytical and graphical capabilities of ATLAS.ti, the CAQDAS software I used for the analysis, proved very powerful in revealing the significant themes and mapping their complicated interrelationships. The main areas of concern of the churches, as found in the contributions, were the value foundation of the European Union and the social dimension of Europe. These are obvious themes for the churches based on their experience, expertise and involvement in spiritual, ethical and social matters. In their contributions the churches seek to ensure that the values of the European Union and its social dimension are aligned with the convictions of the churches, that they consistently permeate all objective, policies and actions, and that they are given legally binding status in the European Constitution.

When looking for a theoretical framework for the interpretation of the data, the questions of values and social dimension had to be considered as only secondary. The reason is that the involvement of the churches with values and social issues in the European Union has been going on for decades and can hardly
be expected to end once the Constitutional Treaty has been ratified. This implies that these themes must be viewed as historical processes, looking at one actor, one country or region, one social sector, or one subset of values at a time. It also requires the study of different types of data, including e.g. empirical data on social involvement of churches in different countries. This is done in other studies.¹ The Forum of the European Convention, however, provides only a one-time shot—a still image instead of a motion picture—in the long process of church involvement in the European integration. Limiting my study to the debate in the Forum requires focusing on questions that have specific relevance in the historical context defined by the Laeken Declaration and the intended Draft for a Constitutional Treaty, and that can be studied meaningfully without having to draw heavily on other data. This naturally led to the choice of the relationship between churches and the Constitution, or more generally between religion and the European Union. The themes of public religion, with special emphasis on formal or legal aspects, and of legitimacy, both of the European Union as a polity and of religion and the churches, were a logical choice. Identity as an important factor in creating and corroborating legitimacy, was taken in as a secondary theme.

The result of this study is a model which depicts how churches introduce the spiritual dimension as an inseparable component of the European Union alongside the economic, political and social dimensions. It presents the ways in which the spiritual dimension moves from the private sphere, to which secularists have banished it, to the area of civil society and seeks to permeate the other dimensions through common denominators such as social and ethical issues. It shows how churches have accepted the new paradigm that involvement in global civil society requires, and pursue active and formally recognized roles in the social and political, and to some extent even in the economic, dimensions of European society. The model demonstrates the potential that the Constitutional Treaty has for the consolidation of a more legitimate role of churches in society and politics and for the guarantee of immunity and autonomy of religious communities. It also shows the potential that religion offers within the framework of a European Constitution for the creation of a collective European identity and for the corroboration of the legitimacy of the European polity.

¹ See e.g. WREP 2005 and 2007.
In my analysis I deviated from the general practice of abductive inference by strictly limiting myself to the data that I had originally committed myself to. This I did on purpose, as I was more interested in constructing a model or hypothesis fitting the premises of a Master's thesis than in conclusively proving or disproving it. My research and the conclusions I have reached can therefore only be seen as the first step in a larger framework, which brings in larger sets of data and a wider variety of research methods to verify, refute or refine the model. Let me suggest some prospective ways ahead.

Future research on this question could look individually at the main actors on the European scene, CEC and COMECE, use data from official publications, conference proceedings, communications with member churches and with EU institutions, press releases, as well as interviews. As for the Roman Catholic Church, the role of the Vatican should also be considered in parallel with that of COMECE. In this case the focus could be narrowed down from the beginning and the time span drastically increased, at least including the German Presidency of the European Union in 2007, when special efforts were made to resolve the constitutional stalemate and when the question of whether or not to include religious references in the Constitution were taken up with renewed vigour.

As this study indicates, nationally established churches are interesting objects of special case studies. A special focus of such studies could be the way in which established churches embrace the change in paradigm from the historical national setting to the new global setting in Europe's civil society, and the impact that such a change has for their national policies. The Lutheran churches in Denmark and Finland and the Greek Orthodox Church provide very different perspectives, based on their national history and status, their theological background and a number of other factors. Comparative studies could be made between the Nordic countries and Greece, or even between Finland and Denmark, considering the difference in position revealed in this study.

Minority churches are generally speaking involved very little or not at all in European political debate, with the obvious exception of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The contribution of the Free Church Council of Finland suggests, that also minority churches have a stake in the European project, especially with respect to aspects and practices of religious freedom in a strictly secular Europe.
A different angle to the question of public religion and the role of the churches in the European Union is given by representatives and initiatives of the European Union. An initiative which coincided temporally with my research is Romani Prodi’s Reflection Group on the Spiritual and Cultural Dimension of Europe. Its proceedings and reports provide a picture of religion in Europe which counterbalances that provided by the contributions of the churches.\(^2\)

The debate on a Constitution for Europe did not end with the disbanding of the Convention. Especially after the rejection of the Draft Treaty by France and the Netherlands it regained momentum and churches continued to be actively involved. In the public media the churches' interests were described mainly as a Christian Constitution and a reference to God in the Preamble. The ongoing activities of the churches in lobbying for the Constitution is an interesting focus of research. It could look in particular at strategies of adaptation, i.e. how churches reshape their demands, their argumentation and their tactics as the debate proceeds. On the other hand, a study of media coverage and interpretation would provide an entirely different, but very interesting angle at the question of public religion in Europe.

A decade after Jacques Delors formulated his quest for a soul for Europe, what signals do the contributions of the churches to the Forum of the European Convention give with respect to the existence, nature and vigour of such a soul? The first signal is a shared recognition of the need for a soul between the churches and the European Union. The use of terminology such as spiritual heritage and spiritual dimension testify of the growing awareness also among EU institutions of the need to expand the dimensional basis of the Union once more. From the point of view of the European Union it may signal the existence of a vacuum or the quest for meaning, whereas for the churches it is a more or less well-defined area of religiously inspired values and meanings, which translate into social action, ethical guidelines and principles of governance. Churches would like the transcendent source and the historical roots of the spiritual dimension to be recognized, but within the framework of a secular European Union they must be content with a broader basis including other religions and non-religious convictions. This broadens the basis for consent among European citizens but at the cost of homogeneity, identity and cohesion. Despite the obvious compromises

\(^2\) European Commission 2007a.
that churches have to make within the new public sphere of the European polity and of the European civil society, churches are determined to make their contributions to the growth, strengthening and well-being of the European soul by religious and ethical proclamation, by social action implementing the essence of their proclamation and conviction for the good of society and its marginalized, and by cooperating with political decision makers to ensure the development of Europe into a more humane and meaningful global society.

Although secularists continue to offer 'free-from-religion' alternatives, the significance of religion for a large part of the European population and its overwhelming potential to instil meaning and identity as compared to economic prospects or humanist ideals is likely to ensure that the soul for Europe will have a religious dimension in the years and decades to come. Although that religious dimension is not likely to be expressed in the Constitutional Treaty in overtly religious terms, it is embedded in the values it proclaims, the human rights it secures and the recognition of the special status of religious communities.
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APPENDIX 1. ABBREVIATIONS

CEC: Conference of European Churches
CEI: Churches and European Integration
CEU: Churches and European Union
COMECE: Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community
CPCE: Community of Protestant Churches in Europe
CSC: Church and State Commission (of the Conference of European Churches)
DBK: Deutsche Bischofskonferenz (German Conference of Bishops)
ECSC: European Coal and Steal Community
EKD: Evangelische Kirche Deutschland (Evangelical Church in Germany)
ELCD: Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark
ELCF: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland
EU: European Union
EU-15: 15-member European Union (until April 2004)
EU-25: 25-member European Union (May 2004 – December 2006)
FCCF: Free Church Council of Finland
IGC: Intergovernmental Conference
LCF: Leuenberg Church Fellowship
NGO: Non-governmental organization
SSEG: Saint Synode de l'Eglise de Grèce (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece)
QCEA: Quaker Council for European Affairs
WREP: Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective
APPENDIX 2. EU TERMINOLOGY

EU Institutions

European Commission (Commission): The politically independent institution that represents and upholds the interests of the European Union as a whole.

European Council (Council): Meeting of heads of State and government (i.e. presidents and/or prime ministers) of all the member states, plus the President of the European Commission. Not to be confused with the Council of Europe, which is not an EU institution. The term Council is also used for the Council of the European Union (Council of Ministers).

European Parliament: Assembly of the representatives of the EU citizens, elected by direct universal suffrage, distributed between member states by reference to their population.

European Union (EU, Union): Political and legal body, established by the Treaty on European Union in Maastricht in 1992 in perpetuation of the European integration project commenced in 1951 as the ECSC.

Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC): A conference at which the EU member states' governments come together to amend the European Union treaties.

Treaties and other EU documents


Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC Treaty): Treaty signed in Paris in 1951, the first in the project of European integration. It expired on 23 July 2002.

Treaty of Amsterdam: Treaty adopted in Amsterdam in 1997, amending provisions of earlier Treaties. Annexed were a number of non-binding Declarations, of which No. 11 dealt with the respect for the national status of churches and religious communities.


Miscellaneous EU terminology

Cohesion: The pursuit of social inclusion for every European citizen, referring especially to the fight against poverty, unemployment and discrimination.

Convention on the Future of Europe (European Convention, Convention): Convention convened by the European Council in Laeken in 2001 in order to examine some key questions on the future of the Union, enter into an open and public dialogue with civil society on the issue, and draft the text for a Constitutional.

Democratic deficit: The perception that the European Union and its political institutions suffer from a lack of democracy and are inaccessible to the ordinary citizen because of their complexity.

Social partners: Employers and workers organizations.

Subsidiarity: Principle of governance intended to ensure that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen. Specifically, it is the principle whereby the Union does not take action (except in the areas which fall within its exclusive competence) unless it is more effective than action taken at national, regional or local level.

(Source: Europa Glossary 2007)