

## **STATEMENT OF RCH - UPON JOINING THE EUROPEAN UNION -**

1 May 2004 is a historical date for the Hungarian nation. Hungary became a member of the European Union.

Knowing the hopes, expectations and fears, the Synod of the Reformed Church in Hungary turns to its congregations asking for the Spirit to show the way: let us pray together for common sense, for it to bring us happiness and not false illusions!

In the midst of these expectations we, who have been redeemed by and have found God, declare that we wish to live in real freedom in the community of people. This freedom brings us together with all of our Hungarian brothers living beyond our borders, and creates communities between people and nations.

We, as the peoples of Europe, proclaim reconciliation during this process of unification, recounting the great deeds of God and recalling his truth.

We have just joined a community that is a community of both values and interests. Our mission and obligation as part of the Reformed church is to keep our own heritage bearing fruit. We want to preach the good news of the Gospel, sharing our experience with everyone as to the meaning of the strength of Christ's truth. This truth is God's peace with man and the opportunity for man to be at peace with others. This is what Christians feed from and what the church survives on. It leads to conversion and releases us from the burden of sin, making us free for God and fellow beings.

We stand up for those in economically, politically and socially disadvantaged situations. We want to protect God's creation from selfish and destructive powers. We advocate the reduction of social differences, respect for the family and parents, the right of future generations to live, dignity for the elderly and respect for their lives' work.

We want to work in peace with the Christian churches in the European Union.

Jesus Christ links us with the people of the Old Testament too. We expect the Preamble to the European Constitution to contain references to the roots of Christianity. Although Europe is based on Christian traditions, we are well aware that other traditions have also shaped European culture. These we respect.

We continue to reject the attempts made to justify differences of opinion between certain nations on religious grounds. These efforts have no place in either Europe or anywhere else in the world. We shall always defend the minorities which live in undeservedly disadvantaged situations and danger or oppression.

With thanks to God we want to remain loyal to our national identity. We will always be proud of the history and cultural wealth of our people, and we bear a particular responsibility for our Hungarian brothers who remain beyond the European Union border.

13 June 2004 will see the first European Parliament elections in Hungary.

The Synod encourages and urges the members of our church to take part in this election and to do so with the knowledge that their chosen delegate must represent our Christian and national values. We are aware that the EU is in need of renewal; it must reconsider its role, meaning and operation. The accession of the new member states to the EU will have an impact on the lives of all citizens living here. Believers must not distance themselves from this process.

Let the teaching of the Word guide us in our decision: "...lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace". (Ep. 4:1/b-3.)

Budapest, 6 May 2004