



## Call for Papers

### *Christian and Christian Democratic Approaches to International Politics*

Scientific Institute for CDA

&

Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies

Contemporary international politics is increasingly shaped by competing visions of order. Europe is likewise confronted with the challenge of acting as a unified bloc in a context of growing geopolitical rivalry, a situation that calls for a well-considered approach to international relations. Against the background of the significant role that Christian democracy has played in the politics of many countries in Europe and beyond, this conference explores Christian and Christian democratic approaches to international politics, situating them within the broader and increasingly contested landscape of Christian-inspired visions of international order in today's world.

Competing visions of Christian international politics are becoming more prominent in the public sphere. These range from the various shades of Orthodoxy mobilised around Russia's war in Ukraine to the Christian nationalism animating many right-wing populist movements, in both evangelical and Catholic variants. All these openly clash with the appeals for peace, justice and international law advanced by the current Papacy as much as previous ones, but also with the traditional supranationalism associated with European Christian democracy. Such divides extend beyond the Western world and are also reflected in developments across parts of the Global South.

Against this background, the conference pursues two complementary goals that possess both practical and academic relevance. On the one hand, it seeks to provide a rigorous mapping of the variety of such approaches and of their sources, motivations and goals. On the other hand, it seeks to better understand what is distinctive about the Christian democratic approach to international politics and how Christian democratic ideas and principles—such as human dignity, subsidiarity, moderation, moral responsibility, and international cooperation—can contribute to both International Relations theory and foreign policy today.

Despite its major historical influence on European politics and diplomacy—and its relevance in various regions of the Global South—Christian democracy remains largely absent from academic literature on international relations and theories of international relations. More broadly, academic and policy conversations on International Relations and the ongoing transformation of international order have often neglected both the role of religion and the

diversity of Christian-inspired approaches across different global contexts. The conference aims to start filling this gap.

### **Topics**

We welcome contributions with a more practical or theoretical focus. For possible topics, see below:

- Christianity/Christian democracy and IR theory
- Christian democracy, international law and institutions
- Christian-inspired visions of international order: convergence and conflict
- Christian nationalism, supranationalism, and global governance
- Religious narratives, war, peace and reconciliation in contemporary international politics
- Christian and Christian-democratic approaches in the Global South: varieties, conflicts, and transnational connections
- European integration and Christian democratic thought
- Human dignity, justice, and global governance

### **Audience**

The conference is aimed at policymakers, politicians, journalists, scholars and students in fields such as Political Science, History, Theology, Political Philosophy, International Relations, and European Studies.

### **Submission guidelines**

- Abstract (300–500 words)
- Include name, affiliation, and short bio
- Deadline: August 20, 2026

After the conference, selected papers may be included in an edited volume.

### **Academic committee**

Dr. Simon Polinder, Postdoctoral Researcher, Utrecht University, the Netherlands

Dr. Federico Ottavio Reho, Strategic Coordinator and Senior Research Officer at the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, Brussels, Belgium.

### **Submissions and inquiries:**

Dr. Simon Polinder: [s.polinder@uu.nl](mailto:s.polinder@uu.nl)

### **Funding and accommodation:**

The organization provides meals and refreshments for participants. Some funding is also available for travel and accommodation.

### **Date and location**

December 3 & 4, 2026

Academy Building, Utrecht University, the Netherlands

*This Conference receives financial support from the European Parliament. Sole liability rests with the organisers, the European Parliament is not responsible for the activity*