



INTERNATIONALE ALTKATHOLISCHE  
BISCHOFSKONFERENZ  
DER UTRECHTER UNION

## **Communiqué of the International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference | Prague, 2024**

The IBC took place in Prague on 17th – 20th June 2024. At the beginning of the conference there were joint consultations with the Anglican bishops in Europe. One important topic was an exchange on the question of how the European churches deal with the war in Ukraine, including help for refugees and the CEC programme “Pathways to Peace.”

The conference heard reports from the member churches of the Union of Utrecht and from the churches with whom they are in communion. The newly elected Swiss bishop, Frank Bangerter, took part in the conference for the first time.

The bishop of Haarlem, Dirk Jan Schoon, was elected as the new delegate for the Old Catholic Church in Croatia, succeeding retired bishop Heinz Lederleitner. The new members of the IBC Office are the newly elected bishop Frank Bangerter (Secretary) and Leading Bishop Andrzej Gontarek (Assessor).

Furthermore, members were designated for the new group which will coordinate the joint path with the Mar-Thoma Church. Bishop Joseph Mar Ivanios from Mumbai took part in person and informed the bishops about the current situation of Christians in India.

The main theological emphasis of this conference was the challenge of finding a theological answer to the question of why we as the Union of Utrecht wish to join the group of churches who have signed the “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification”. For this purpose, Professor Stephan von Twardowski (Methodist) and Professor Peter-Ben Smit (Old Catholic) were invited as introductory speakers. There was also a lively exchange on the topic “Church, environment and sustainability”.

In addition to the daily prayers, which were prepared by the various member churches, there were Eucharist services in St. Lawrence's Cathedral.

The next session will take place in June 2025 in the Netherlands.

*Prague,  
21<sup>st</sup> June, 2024*