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## THE SECULARISATION IN EUROPE FROM LITHUANIAN PERSPECTIVE

### INTRODUCTION

On May 9, 1950 Robert Shuman, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France presented the project for economic union of France and Federal Republic of Germany – European Coal and Steel Community. “Two politicians, on both banks of Rheine, Robert Shuman and Conrad Adenauer, who enacted brave political decisions, were Christian Democrats. This fact had a real impact on the things that happened.”<sup>1</sup> Great Italian politician, distinguished by a holy way of life (his canonization process is being conducted at present), former Prime Minister Alcide De Gaspari with them gave the rise to the birth of European Union. His merit to the unity of European nations is unquestionable. Nowadays EU unites 27 states with over 500 million of inhabitants. It is a new Union of nations that the world history has not seen yet. Member states develop common foreign policy, a common economical zone has become a reality, and the states are getting more and more integrated, at the same time still preserving their sovereignty. EU is the most

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<sup>1</sup> *Let us live in accordance to Christian values*, the interview with Polis Kolovalis, Emilija Pundziutė-Gallois, <http://zurnalasateitis.lt.tst.bernardinai.lt/siandien.php?straipsnis=203> [accessed: 25.01.2012].

vivid example of globalisation in the 21st century; from political and economical approach such globalization is inevitable. The establishing of a free society in the family of nations is even more important than economic links. In it people can be united by the same spirit, the same objectives: striving for the good, freedom, and economic welfare in the same cultural space, where any person could feel spiritual freedom, live freely, create, express *thoughts*, and choose a religious faith or disbelief.

Even in this global world the comprehension of the world, love for all the humanity starts with a person's mother tongue, history, customs and traditions of their homeland. We can better perceive the problems of the world and be better citizens of Europe or the world when we foster, observe and analyse the human culture, art, religions, trying to develop spirituality of our society.

#### I. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN EUROPE AND IN THE GLOBALISED WORLD

Christianity has been spread all over the world and got its confesors in all corners of the Earth. It consolidates people of all nations in one spirit of faith. The Catholic Church can be regarded as a global institution as well because it has got the same content of faith, one centralised authority, and the same instruments of salvation (sacraments and Gospel). The very word "*Catholic Church*" (*καθολικὴ Ἐκκλησία* in Greek) means "universal Church". The Church is universal by its vocation. Before Ascension to Heaven the Christ ordered his disciples: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations my pupils; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28: 19). "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mk 16:15). Thus, on one hand, the Gospel forms a human being faithful to his nation and at the same time open to the cultural heritage of other nations in the spirit of love, appreciating the uniqueness of other human beings, their customs. While analyzing the earthly life of Christ, we can notice that Christian faith stimulates patriotism. The most beautiful example of love to one's native land can be seen in Christ's lamentation over Jerusalem: "not a single stone will be left on another" (Lk 21:6). Jesus first came to save the lost sheep of Israel and

said that “the children should be fed first, because it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the house-dogs” (Mk 7:27). Mary was extolling God’s help to Israel in *The Magnificat*: “He has come to the help of Israel, his servant” (Lk 1:54).

In the speculations of theologians new emphasis can be heard: to be a Catholic means to foster the idea that every person, every nation is created by God, we all are equal before God and that is why we all are brothers and sisters. The roots of faith of European nations are in the common Christian spirit of Europe<sup>2</sup>. That is why the Church encourages each nation to preserve its cultural heritage, traditions and knowledge of its history. Here is a fruitful soil for theologians to spread faith in the national context of culture as John Paul II said “inculturizzazione della fede”. The whole teaching of John Paul II was based on that logic. The Holy Father showed great respect to local national customs while paying visits to other countries, sending greetings *Urbi et Orbi* in almost all languages of the world, not limiting the discourse to Latin, Italian or English. The Church fosters the freedom expectations of all nations. The Church counters globalization with fight for social progress, freedom of nations, human rights and racial equality. It invites all people of good will into solidarity with the poor, into the fight for social justice and human dignity. The Holy See supports the expansion of EU and promotes solidarity: “If our continent wishes to renew its own face, it should positively respond to this demand. Europe cannot retreat in oneself. It must show interest to the rest of the world, fully comprehending that other countries and other continents await from it courageous initiatives able to propose suitable means for development of the poorest countries and

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<sup>2</sup> Giuseppe Petrilli, Professor and the President of International European Movement, the General Secretary of European Union of Christian Democrat at the conference “The Common Christian Roots of the European Nations” gave the following description: „Ma è anche più vivo che mai nella Chiesa contemporanea il sentimento di una visione universale che non le consente legami esclusivi con alcuna area geografica e con alcuna tradizione storica, quali che ne siano i titoli di nobiltà“ (*The Church nowadays, as vividly never before feels its universal vision that does not allow it to be exclusively attached to a certain geographic space and historic tradition unless they spring from values of generosity*). See: *Le radici comuni cristiane della fede nello spirito europeo*, in: *The Common Cristian Roots of the European Nations. An International Colloquium in the Vatican*, Florence 1982, vol. II, p. 1288.

improvement of their social structure, thus creating a more just and more brotherly world.”<sup>3</sup> Summing up, among many activities of the Church we can see “a third factor in common action for the unity of Europe: a better mutual understanding and deeper allying of different cultures and nations due to closer contacts between persons.”<sup>4</sup> John Paul II supported the idea that if the Christians were united, they could unite Europe from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural<sup>5</sup>.

Globalisation as such does not interfere with evangelisation but globalisation that has been established by a person without any conscience, without faith, seeking only materialistic values, might provoke socio-economic conflicts between nations and groups. Pope emeritus Benedict XVI used to emphasize that “Conflicts relating to economic domination, gain from the resources of energy, water or raw materials aggravate the work to those who on all levels try to establish a just and responsible world. We need a big hope which would enable all humans to enjoy the common welfare, and not to allocate luxury to minority and poverty to the majority.”<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, globalisation is not consistent with social welfare of nations and it menaces national identity. Instead of conclusion we refer to the memorandum, signed by the Conference of Rectors of Lithuanian Universities together with the Conference of Lithuanian Bishops in 2003, which says “that acknowl-

<sup>3</sup> John Paul II, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, No. 111.

<sup>4</sup> Mons. I. Tokarczuk, *Prospettive di azione comune per l'unità dell'Europa nel pluralismo*, in: *The Common Cristian Roots of the European Nations. An International Colloquium in the Vatican*, Florence 1982, vol. I, p. 260.

<sup>5</sup> John Paul II, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, No. 110 („European Union is still expanding. For a shorter or longer time all nations sharing the same heritage are invited to take part in this process. It would be appreciated if the expansion would go in the spirit of respect to all, by taking into consideration historic and cultural peculiarities, national identities and a rich contribution of new members. The principles of subsidiary and solidarity have to be implemented more carefully.“)

<sup>6</sup> *Il Papa contro la globalizzazione “Una nebbia che avvolge le nazioni”*, <http://www.repubblica.it/2007/12/sezioni/esteri/benedettoxvi-18/messa-epifania/messa-epifania.html> [accessed: 25.01.2012] („I conflitti per la supremazia economica e l'accaparramento delle risorse energetiche, idriche e delle materie prime, rendono difficile il lavoro di quanti, ad ogni livello, si sforzano di costruire un mondo giusto e solidale. C'è bisogno - ha proseguito - di una speranza più grande, che permetta di preferire il bene comune di tutti al lusso di pochi e alla miseria di molti.“)

edging the Christian origins of European Universities, the autonomy and academic freedom as their identity established through centuries, danger of globalisation processes to national and cultural identity, the Conferences agree that education is a universal value determining the future of the state, therefore the conditions must be established which would enable every member of the society to improve as a personality irrespective of their property or social status, nationality or religion<sup>7</sup>. It can be stated that globalization is more menacing to nationalism than to religion. It cannot be considered as the main source and basis for secularization. The Church teaches that Christianity does not aim to fight globalization unless it overshadows spiritual firsts and does harm to social equality.

## II. SECULARISATION IN EUROPE

The International Words' Dictionary gives three definitions of "secularisation": 1. „transference of something belonging to the Church or clergymen to disposition of laity; 2. conversion of a clergyman into laity; 3. liberation of activity, creativity, and mentality of ecclesiastic influence"<sup>8</sup>.

Soviet times impoverished the Catholic Church in Lithuania: some of the churches were closed, religious institutions, such as *Caritas*, Catechetical and Family centres were destroyed, and Christian literature was forbidden. Every third priest was exiled to Siberia or killed. The Church somehow managed to survive only in two Soviet republics: Lithuania and the Ukraine were like islands of free thought. The Greek Catholic Church, however, had to function in the underground. Rarefied forces of priests and Catholic intellectuals disturbed the capacity of Church to effectively overcome the challenges of the society. It was the consequence of occupation and not of secularisation. Bishops, theologians and ordinary faithful supported the attempts to achieve the freedom. Resistance occurred under different forms: from active armed

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.lcn.lt/b\\_dokumentai/Lietuvos\\_vyskupu\\_rastai/LVK-lurk\\_memorandumas\\_20060208.html](http://www.lcn.lt/b_dokumentai/Lietuvos_vyskupu_rastai/LVK-lurk_memorandumas_20060208.html) [http://www.lurk.lt/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=149&Itemid=43](http://www.lurk.lt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=149&Itemid=43) [accessed: 25.01.2012]

<sup>8</sup> *The Dictionary of International Words*, Vilnius 1985, p. 440.

confrontation to cultural opposition. The Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania was issued from 1972 to 1990. This underground issue uninterruptedly released information to foreign countries about the complicated situation of the faithful in the Soviet Union. National movements won; the people who erected crosses and prayed broke the Berlin Wall. It is the example of most wonderful theology of suffering: the inherent spirit of human freedom always wins.

In Western world, however, the material wellbeing and political liberalism found other ways to undermine faith in the consciousness of many people. In wider sense, secularisation manifests itself by life without faith, without God, though some people secretly acknowledge the existence of deity or of some higher being. One should distinguish between a personal decision not to believe and a wider choice to ignore the idea of God, deleting the expressions of Christian culture from the society. Left wing intellectuals are afraid of the impact of Catholic Church in public life, despite the fact that its voice is heard only on a certain issues (social equality) when the public laws deny the Decalogue. France, Holland and partly UK can be taken as the examples of secularized societies; they do against nature in the field of family legislation.

You can find a variety of forms and ways of secularisation starting with creation of a family without the Sacrament of marriage and ending with refusal to appreciate Christian heritage in EU Treaties.

Right after his election as a Pope Karol Wojtyła said: “Open wide all doors to Christ. Open to His saving power the state borders, economic and political systems, broad fields of culture and the development of civilization. Do not be shy to talk to people about Christ. He is the only One who has got the words of life.”<sup>9</sup> John Paul II was anxious about the desire of politicians to push Christian spirit beyond the limits of the society, allowing it to remain in a privately secret corner of human life. Both he and his successor Benedict XVI condemned secularized

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<sup>9</sup> *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. I, Città el Vaticano 1978, p. 38: „Aprite, anzi spalancate le porte a Cristo. Alla sua salvatrice potestà aprite i confini degli Stati, i sistemi economici come quelli politici, i vasti campi della cultura, della civiltà, dello sviluppo. Non abbiate paura di parlare all'uomo di Cristo. Lui solo ha le parole di vita“.

Western society for promotion of abortions and euthanasia, “Europe will have to reflect on this loss.”<sup>10</sup>

Democratically elected politicians, both in EU and national parliaments, represent their electorate and depend on it. As the electorate is either under strong influence of secularization or simply indifferent to any political issues, it often elects similarly apathetic politicians. In this context, pastoral anxiety of Catholic Church leaders about secularized consciousness of humanity is really timely, opportune and reasonable.

In 2003, the Bishops from the present and future EU member states repeatedly invited those who prepared the Agreement of EU Constitution to mention Christianity in the Preamble of the Agreement. The petition of Bishops included the following arguments: a) such reference could show the international connections relevant for the future of the whole Europe; b) by accepting the relevance of the tradition of Christianity, the significance of other religions and philosophical traditions is also emphasized; c) reference to Christianity does not denote the priority of one religion; d) it does not abolish the separation principle of the Church and the state; g) the neutrality of EU institutions shall not be alleviated, and e) European historic truth of two thousand years shall be maintained. The Bishops were pleased that “today’s Europe has become a continent where citizens of different beliefs share the living and collaborate feeling their ultimate responsibility against God and acknowledging their transient existence to achieve the common welfare”<sup>11</sup>. European Bishops addressed the leaders of EU in the Assembly: „Our conference expects that the Intergovernmental Conference will be successful and we do hope that the Constitutional meeting will not forget and will clearly state the imperative to mention Christian roots of Europe in the Preamble of EU Constitution“.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Giovanni Paolo II, *I dieci comandamenti*, a cura di Domenico del Rio, Milano 1992, p. 84: „L’Europa dovrà meditare su questa sconfitta.“

<sup>11</sup> On the position of European Bishops, cf. The Conference of Lithuanian Bishops’ news 06/11/2003. Conference of Lithuanian Bishops information. European Bishops: Christianity – the force of European unity.//lvk.lcn.lt/naujienos/34 [accessed: 25.01.2012]

<sup>12</sup> CCEE Assembly, 2003. //www.eubusiness.com/afp/031006105046.c4t0ydr3 [accessed: 01.12.2011]

Designing the logo of EU, a neutral, secular symbol was created: twelve yellow stars in a blue setting. The authors tried to avoid any religious symbols in order Constitution could assume a secular character. Without any doubt, EU Treaties do not define the identity of EU nations. Usually, the constitutions establish the basic values unifying people and nations. To tell the truth Part 3 of Article 14 of EU Charter of Fundamental Rights defends the parents' right to educate children in established schools in accordance to their outlook: „The right to establish an educational institution taking into consideration the principles of democracy and the rights of parents to guarantee the education to their children according to their religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions, national laws, regulating the use of such freedom and right“. However, it seemed to be unsatisfactory.

EU Constitution was signed in Rome on October 29, 2004 by the representatives of EU states. It had to become the main legislative document for the union of states in force throughout the whole territory of the EU, and determining EU political, legislative and economic basis. Lithuanian Parliament was the first among all member states to ratify the Treaty on the Approval of the EU Constitution (November 11, 2004). The ratification process got stuck in France and the Netherlands when referendum voted against the Constitution. Without unanimous ratification, this main EU document had to be rejected; instead of it, the Lisbon Treaty came into force in 2009.

### III. SECULARISATION IN LITHUANIA AS A LEGAL STATE

The main characteristics of a legal state are as follows: separation of legislative, executive and legal power, democratic Constitution being in force, democratic elections, pluralistic society and opposition functioning in frames of the Constitution, and protection of human rights in all spheres of life. Democracy shows its power when it succeeds in ensuring the security to all people, regardless their religious confession, avoids preferential treatment of the followers of one exclusive religion, and summons up all the faithful and atheists alike for consolidated teamwork for the common good and the welfare of the state. The society



is the most fortunate when the Church and the state harmoniously agree and collaborate in various spheres of life: protection of art monuments, archives, and cherishing of traditions.

Lithuania is a legal state and its laws respect the freedom of conscience and religion, allowing free functioning of the Church. Freedom of religion involves the right to participate in worship ceremonies and, what is more, to educate their children according to their beliefs, and to publicly express their religious attitudes without any fear of persecution. Freedom of Church warrants the right of each denomination to administer its affairs according to their canon laws, providing it does not violate the state laws. The freedom to confess any religion or to be an atheist is guaranteed by the Article 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. It illustrates the principal attitude of the state towards religious communities and complements Article 43 of the Constitution which guarantees the freedom of conscience (free personal choice of one's beliefs, religion and the ways of its practice). It follows that each citizen and especially the civil servants must respect all human rights, religious rights included. The main provisions of Article 43 of the Constitution are as follows: "The state recognizes traditional Churches and religious organisations in Lithuania; other Churches and religious organisations are recognized if they have support in the society and their doctrine and observances do not contradict the law and morality." The term „churches and other religious organisations“ cover not just Christian confessions called churches but also non-Christian traditional religions existing in Lithuania.

Article 5 of the Law on the Religious Communities says: 1) "The state recognizes nine traditional religious communities of Lithuania, constituting the part of Lithuanian historical, spiritual and social heritage: Roman Catholics, Evangelic Lutherans, Evangelic Reformats, Orthodox, Old Believers, Jewish, Muslims Sunnites and Karaites."<sup>13</sup> „The state provides support to re-establish these former religious institutions which existed till occupation and to rebuild praying houses.

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<sup>13</sup> The Law of Religious Communities //The State News, No. 89-1985, 05.10.1995.

Lithuanian language has also to be cherished and historical culture monuments have to be preserved”<sup>14</sup>.

2) Churches and other religious organisations recognized by the state have the rights of a legal entity. This constitutional base determines a different legal status of traditional churches and religious organisations in comparison with other churches and religious organisations. It means that „with no restrictions for guaranteed rights, traditional churches and religious organisations may have such guaranteed rights by law which are not possessed by non-traditional churches or religious organisations“<sup>15</sup>.

3) Churches and religious organisations are free to declare their doctrine, perform services, and establish buildings of worship, charity organisations and schools for education of their clergymen. Religion of legal confessions can be taught at state schools upon the request of parents and religious broadcasts of such confessions can be prepared on mass media supported by state regularly.

4) Churches and religious organisations independently manage their affairs in accordance to their canons and statutes.

5) The status of churches and religious organisations is determined by an agreement or law.

6) Preaching of the doctrine of churches and religious organisations, other religious activity, and buildings of worship cannot serve the purposes which are contrary to the Constitution and laws.

7) There is no state religion in Lithuania<sup>16</sup>.

The second part of Article 43 of Lithuanian Constitution says that state recognition of “traditional” churches and religious organisations provides the rights of juridical person which cannot be denied and which are overviewed here basically.

Although no one confession has any exceptional rights but the Catholic Church, as a predominant one, collaborates with governmental

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<sup>14</sup> Cfr. Restitution Act of Catholic Church in Lithuania. 1283// The State News. No. 6, Vilnius 1990.

<sup>15</sup> The Comment of Lithuanian Constitution, 1. Society and State, Vilnius 2000, p. 371.

<sup>16</sup> On the analysis of Art. 43 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, see: <http://tm.infolex.lt/religija/1.htm> [accessed: 25.01.2012]; Cfr. Birmontienė Toma, Lithuanian Constitutional Law, Vilnius 2001, p. 617 .

institutions on a larger scale. Republic of Lithuania recognizes religion as publicly significant phenomenon, but leaves it in private life sphere. Since 1990 Lithuania has enacted different acts and laws regulating the functioning of Churches and other religious communities in the frames of a legal state. The Law No I-1057 on Religious Communities and associations was passed on October 10, 1995. After signing the Agreement of the Holy See and Lithuania on the Legal Aspects of Relationship between the Catholic Church and the State (05/05/2000), the model of cohesive collaboration between the Church and the state has come into force. The secularized consciousness, however, tends to criticize even such a positive model, though the assertion that the Catholic Church in Lithuania enjoys too many rights is far from reality.

Secularization is a spontaneous phenomenon, which is difficult to stop. Specific manifestations of secularization can be noticed, e.g. withdrawal of lay people from the Church, decreasing number of seminarians, avoidance to wear religious signs in public, increased number of divorces, and clergymen retreating from priesthood. God bestowed humans with a free will to believe or not to believe, thus secularization is becoming more and more inevitable in a modern democratic society as well as in the past, in any epoch and place. We need more sociological studies in order to measure the present degree and depth of secularisation. Though I dare to mention one obvious outcome of secularization, i.e. the rate of divorces; if in pre-war Lithuania one married couple out of 100 got separated, today about 60% of families divorce. The Church treats the family with special love, assists them when they face with problems and does not ostracize those who failed in family life.

Under the influence of secularized and godless thinking, certain members of Parliament are busy to pass the laws that contradict the natural law. They promote partnership instead of a traditional family and argue for the opportunity to adopt children for the partners of the same gender. This hardly imaginable process is on the way. Equal appreciation of a genuine love and a sterile search for pleasures means direct contradiction to the principles family logic. A legal state preserves its 'neutrality' in religious issues and does not interfere with moral position of the Church; the Church does not attempt to impose its principles until the adopted laws do not trespass the limits of decency.

Until now the provisions of Lithuanian Constitution apropos family, citizens' rights and duties were sane and reasonable<sup>17</sup>. The Government of the Lithuanian Republic has been implementing decent family policy. Only the last resolution of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania (September 28, 2011) concerning the concept of a family and its composition provoked the discussion and aroused distrust about the Constitutional Court itself<sup>18</sup>. A legal state does not deliberately incite the process of secularisation and the theologians have the freedom in frames of laws to work, create, and spread 'civilization of love' in the society. What the society and the state are like, will depend on the consciousness of people: will they establish 'civilization of love' or will they run from God and seek the civilization of death? We might say that the present model of the relationship between the state and the Church in Lithuania does not do any harm to the faith and democratic altitudes

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<sup>17</sup> Article 38 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania: The family is the basis of a society and the state.

The state protects and supports the family, maternity, paternity and childhood.

Marriage is contracted by a free agreement of a man and a woman.

The state keeps records of marriage, birth, and death. The state also recognizes ecclesiastic registration of the marriage.

The spouses enjoy equal rights in the family.

The right and the duty of parents is to raise up their children to be honest people and loyal citizens, to maintain them until full age.

The duty of children is to respect parents, to take care of them in their old age and spare their inheritance.

Article 39: The state fosters families growing and educating children at home, provides them with support according to the laws [...]

<sup>18</sup> "The Constitutional Court stated that a family – a shared living of a man and a woman – can be established not only in the form of a marriage but take other forms; thus the family should not be associated with marriage. This is the main element of the decision of the Constitutional Court but in the whole decision it is very clearly stated that a family is a man, a woman, their children, their adopted children or a single woman with children, a man with children, etc. The Constitutional Court referred to a man and a woman saying that a shared living of a man and a woman with their inner relations, and appropriate content has to be called a family irrespective of the stamp mark." The Constitutional Court: a family cannot be derived only from a marriage... [www.lrkt.lt/APublikacijos\\_20111004a.html](http://www.lrkt.lt/APublikacijos_20111004a.html) [accessed: 25.01.2012]. Ref. The Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania Concerning the Decision No. x-1569 of the Parliament of Lithuania "concerning the approval of state family policy concept" regulations of the approved state family policy concept corresponding the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania.

yet, and does not influence the development of secularisation. We only need to decidedly countervail against those who plot by legal means to misrepresent the traditional concept of a family, to depreciate life by legalizing euthanasia or other experiments.

A legal state, its institutions and politicians do not intend to restrict religious practices of the faithful, do not prohibit to create Christian culture, but on the contrary take care of the welfare of the citizens, allow them to form their personal beliefs or lead a secular way of life.

Today the secularization has reached its supreme degree, i.e. 'running away from God', due to different reasons. One of reasons lies inside the man. In the XXI c. the human rights and the concept of a legal state has been universally accepted. All countries attempt to secure human rights and basic freedoms. It has become genuinely important not to insult followers of any faith or non-believers, to observe the laws. The Christians should distinguish themselves by loyalty to their state and contribute to the creation of a harmonious and well-functioning society.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The EU is created by self-determination of free nations and free people. Different Christian denominations and communities have made their contribution to the establishment of the EU as well. It may become a reliable union of nations, if the grand states do not trample the principles of solidarity. EU will be as much stronger and needed for small nations. The commitment of EU leaders to respect national diversity and identity, the structure of religious communities is determined by laws. Establishment of the EU has been the biggest process of globalization in the world. This process is inevitable and it is not evil in itself unless the principle of solidarity is violated by unfair trade dealings or by other instruments of exploitation. The very globalisation is not the cause of secularisation process. New challenges of secularization and globalization involve Christian response, a step towards unity.

EU needs constant improvement not only in the economic but also in cultural direction. Its citizens should feel that they share common cultural heritage, i.e. Christianity. Being a union of legal states it does not interdict individuals to practice publicly and communally their chosen religion. The risk arises when public institutions start misrepresenting the traditional concept of a family; similar attempts create favourable conditions for different forms of secularization, e.g. promotion of anti-Christian and anti-ecclesiastical values, imposition to the majority of the opinion of minority, violation of democratic principles, etc. Such artificial secularization induces turmoil and disunity in the society. Europe shall degrade if the EU adopts the laws, promoting “culture of death”.

Secularisation is felt all over the world. It is an attempt “to run away from God”, avoidance to manifest one’s religious identity. The religiosity of an individual or a nation, however, can never be overpowered. We only need to watch wakefully and work slowing down the secularisation process. Europe misses politicians with Christian mind – personalities<sup>19</sup>. Theologians should analyse the reasons of secularisation in order to provide the Church leaders with conclusions and proposals. In Europe secularisation had reached the highest level, after Marxism-Leninism took power in Russia and Nazism got rooted in Germany.

From Christian perspective we can say that the thing the world needs most of all is the witnessing of theologians that God dwells inside us. Holiness is the fullness of humanism able to ‘melt’ any form of secularization. All lay Christians and clergymen renewed in the Holy Spirit and being in the unity with ecclesiastical hierarchy can do a lot of good in a modern society. The Pope and Bishops should be the models of fatherly generosity and inspire all priests to pay more attention to pastoral care, prayer, and studies, to encourage them to be more compassion-

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<sup>19</sup> S. J. Kirschbaum, *The Christian in Politics*, in: *The Common Cristian Roots of the European Nations. An International Colloquium in the Vatican*, Florence 1982, vol. II, p. 1143: “The art of politics is as complex today a sis the society we live in. It requires knowledge, reflexion and wisdom. The same awaits the Christian in politics, all the more so because of the historical ideal he represents”.

ate and helpful to the poor. It has been strongly emphasized by Pope Francis. Only the living Church can make the mankind turn to Christ.

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#### SEKULARYZACJA W EUROPIE Z LITEWSKIEJ PERSPEKTYWY

##### Streszczenie

Patrząc z litewskiej perspektywy na dokonujący się w Europie postęp procesów sekularyzacyjnych można sformułować przynajmniej kilka generalnych uwag. Przede wszystkim nie powinno się zapominać, że u początków europejskich procesów integracyjnych stali politycy będący chrześcijańskimi demokratami, a sam proces integracji był wspierany przez Stolicę Apostolską. Jednocześnie jednak Kościół konsekwentnie ostrzegał (i nadal ostrzega), że niemożliwe jest zbudowanie prawdziwej jedności Starego Kontynentu bez odwołania do chrześcijańskich korzeni kultury jego narodów i bez poszanowania praw wpisanych w naturę człowieka. Przejęty w praktyce sposób realizacji idei integracyjnych ignoruje jednak niektóre z ważnych ostrzeżeń formułowanych przez Kościół. Ułatwia to postęp procesów sekularyzacyjnych, a na gruncie prawa litewskiego objawia się m. in. postulatami zmian w przepisach dotyczących małżeństwa pojmowanego jako trwały związek kobiety i mężczyzny. Dla Kościoła jest to niewątpliwe wyzwanie i trzeba uznać, że będzie on

zdolny do przeciwstawienia się takim tendencjom tylko pod warunkiem wiarygodności dawanego przezeń świadectwa. Trzeba jednak podkreślić, że realizacja postulatów oderwania przepisów prawnych od zasad wpisanych w naturę człowieka zagraża również społeczeństwu i to bez względu na przekonania światopoglądowe jego członków.

*Tłumaczenie: Piotr Stanisław*

**Słowa kluczowe:** sekularyzacja, chrześcijaństwo w Europie, Litwa, małżeństwo, integracja europejska

**Key words:** secularization, Christianity in Europe, Lithuania, marriage, European integration