

# MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIMATES OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION.

A meeting between the Venerable Primates of the Orthodox Churches of the Middle East and His Excellency the President of the European Union Mr Jose Manuel Barroso took place on the afternoon of the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012 at the Headquarters of the European Council in Brussels.

Their Beatitudes the Patriarchs of Alexandria and All Africa Theodoros II, Theophilos of Jerusalem and Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus, also representing His Beatitude Ignatios Patriarch of Antioch and accompanied by the Euro-parliamentarian Mrs Rodi Kratsa, former Vice-President of the European Parliament, brought up the issue of the turbulent situation prevalent in Syria and generally in the Middle East, asking the Member-States of the European Union to defend the rights of Christians as well as to contribute decisively to the prevalence of peace and security of all citizens without exception of this broader region.

During the meeting the Venerable Primates submitted a joint report relating to the protection and the defense of the rights of Christians.

His Excellency the President of the European Council stressed that Europe is carefully monitoring the developments and is making every effort for peace to prevail in the Middle East, while also noting that he has visited many Arab countries and hears to the anxieties and the problems of the Christian communities.

Referring particularly to the Patriarchate of Alexandria His Excellency Mr. Barroso spoke with praise about the ceaseless two-thousand year history of the "most ancient, in operation, ecclesiastical organization in Africa", as he stated characteristically and was clearly in favour of the democratic reforms which are being promoted by the new President of the Arabic Republic of Egypt, His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Morsi.

In addition, His Beatitude Chrysostomos, Archbishop of Cyprus emphasized the need to institutionalize the meeting between the Primates of the Orthodox Churches of the Middle East with the leadership of the European Council.

It is to be noted that His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa arrived in Brussels on the afternoon of 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012, accompanied by the Very Reverend Archimandrite Panteleimon Arathymos, Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod and the Press Advisor Journalist Mr. Nicholas Katsikas and will continue together with Their Beatitudes the Primates of the Churches of Jerusalem and Cyprus the briefings with top officials of the European institutions, among whom also with the President of the European Council Mr. Herman van Rompuy.