



Communiqué of the International Old Catholic Bishops' Conference | Konstancin, 2026

This year, the International Bishops' Conference (IBC) took place from June 15th to 19th in Konstancin-Jeziorna, Poland. The bishops met at the newly renovated Eduard Herzog House.

Participants

Present were: Archbishop Bernd Wallet (President of the IBC, Utrecht, the Netherlands); Bishop Frank Bangerter (Secretary of the IBC, Switzerland); Bishop Andrzej Gontarek (Assessor of the IBC, Warsaw, Poland); Bishop Dirk Jan Schoon (Haarlem, the Netherlands); Bishop Maria Kubin (Austria); Bishop Henryk Dąbrowski (Suffragan Warsaw, Poland), Bischof Stanisław Bosy (Wrocław, Poland) and Bishop Pavel Stránský (the Czech Republic). Vicar General Anja Goller represented Bishop Matthias Ring (Germany), who was unable to travel due to illness. Bishop Ring joined online for two sessions. The bishops were supported by Rev. Michael van den Bergh (IBC Secretariat), Rev. Ryan Birkman (translator) and Rev. Petr Jan Vinš (translator).

Meeting of Anglican and Old Catholic Bishops in Continental Europe

The annual consultation with Anglican bishops from continental Europe was the start of this week of meeting, dialogue and exchange. They shared news from each other's churches, gave updates on safeguarding and also discussed the increase in the number of young Christians in the churches, experiences of being an intercultural church, and the celebration of the Feast of Creation in Christ (at the beginning of September).

Those present from the Anglican side were: The Rt. Rev. Andrew Norman (Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese in Europe of the Church of England), accompanied by his assistant Mr. Mathias Weikl; The Rt. Rev. Carlos López Lozano (Spain); and The Rt. Rev. Jorge Pina Cabral (Portugal).

Session of the IBC

From Tuesday on, the sessions of the International Old-Catholic Bishops' Conference took place. As it has become a good custom, official representatives of the full communion partners were present. On behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Anglican Communion, The Rt. Rev. Peter Eagles was online present. The Rt. Rev. Mike Klusmeyer joint on behalf of the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, and The Rt. Rev. Dr. Erik Eckerdal was present on behalf of the Archbishop of Uppsala.

At Wednesday the group visited the old town of Warsaw, followed by a sung eucharist in the Polish Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Spirit. After mass the congregation prepared a meal in the crypt of the church.



Topics Discussed and Decisions Made

The bishops addressed a range of topics during their sessions:

- The bishops were delighted to be able to hold this meeting in Poland and would like to thank the Polish Catholic Church for its commitment, efforts and excellent hospitality. It was a great source of joy that virtually the entire Polish episcopate was able to attend the meetings and made valuable contributions to the discussions.
- The bishops took note the request of the Old Catholic Church of Slovakia and its delegate bishop, Pavel Stránský, to support the Slovakian Ombudsman, who asks the Slovakian Government to help smaller churches and denominations to obtain a legal status under Slovakian Law.
- On behalf the Old Catholic Church of Germany, bishop Matthias Ring officially presented the report *“Gewachsene Gemeinschaft”* (tr. *“Growing in Communion”*), which documents the relationship between the Old-Catholic Church of Germany and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD). He asked the bishops to decide whether this report is a matter ‘touching the further maintenance of communion of the Union of Utrecht’. The IBC unanimously decided that this is indeed the case, which means that a formal consultation process will take place. During this consultation, the member churches will be given the opportunity to examine the matter. The IBC will organise a symposium on the theme in april 2027. The bishops will take a final decision at the 2028 IBC.
- The bishops would like to thank Prof. Dr Jerzy Sojka (Evangelical Lutheran theologian) and Dr Łukasz Leonkiewicz (Polish Orthodox theologian) for their introductory remarks and valuable contribution to the reflection on the ecumenical mission of the Union of Utrecht within the wider ecumenical landscape. The bishops will continue to deliberate on this theme to consider what steps can now be taken and what dialogues might take place.
- The bishops welcome the initiative by the Old Catholic Churches of the Czech Republic and Austria to celebrate their 150th anniversary together. Given their shared history, it is fitting to commemorate this occasion together and look to the future.

The next meeting will take place from June 14th to 18th, 2027, in Switzerland.

Amersfoort/Bern, June 19th, 2026