

**FINAL statement**

***Six Countries Participated in «The Black Sea Youth Agora»***

The International Forum of Catholic Action promoted «The Black Sea Youth Agora that took place on 23-27 August in Romania.

30 young people and priests from Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Italy met in Bucharest and Constanta to strive «for a peaceful and multifaceted culture of encounter in our hearts».

The goal of the Agorà is: “to facilitate the encounter of young people from a part of the world and to offer an appropriate space in which young people may dare to speak and share their dreams as catholic young people who are living in the Black Sea region” - Codruța Fernea, IFCA Youth Coordination responsible, noticed.

The meeting program involved presenting history and contemporary state of the Churches and of the participating countries and exploring young people’s needs and opportunities for their self-realization in ecclesial and social life.

The foremost expectations from the Church voiced by youth were the following: spiritual and moral life support, promotion of identity and common good, education, meeting people, moral life and financial support. Besides, young people outlined areas of activity in which they expected to be supported by Catholic Action. The Forum participants highlighted the necessity of such meetings and expressed their readiness to spread gained experience in their own countries.

The guests were welcomed by H.E. MgrCornel Damian - Auxiliary Bishop of the Roman-Catholic Archdiocese of Bucharest and H.E. Mgr Mihai Frățilă, Bishop of the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Bucharest, who expressed their joy over organizing the international meeting «The Black Sea Agora».

H. E. Mgr Domenico Sigalini, Bishop of Palestrina, Italy and former ecclesiastic assistant of ICA and IFCA, shared with the participants his reflections based upon the Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation «Evangelii Gaudium». He emphasized: «The Church’s task is to create communities, to share the Eucharist. If society has become a jungle and living together has ended up in cheating and abuse, may those who act so be damned». While discussing in groups the raised issues, the participants addressed the bishop with the questions which are pressing for their own countries.

The youth joined the Agorà organizational tasks by conducting its prayer and integrative parts as well as by presentation of the dynamics of the Black Sea Region made by one of the participants, an expert in the field - Monica del Vecchio from Italy.

Combining prayer and communication, academic approach and integrative and educational actions, as well as common for bishops, priests, and youth discussions was aimed at initiating

cooperation between the countries bordering on the Black Sea, discerning areas of work with youth in ecclesiastical and social settings, and forming protagonists who will spread faith among young people and will create the future on the Christian basis.

Despite of cultural and linguistic distinctions, all the participants felt a very close interconnection, openness and friendship which in the future, as the organizers expected, will grow into cooperation. The Agorà is to be continued in further meetings.

«The Black Sea Agora» took place in the Monastery of the Carmelite Brothers in Snagov - Bucharest with a day in Costanta hosted by fr. Geronimus, parish priest of St. Antony that presented the Black Sea region as land of martyrs in the first centuries inviting to pray for the martyrs of today.

Mariya Kokhanovska – Ukraine Delegation

Youth Affairs Commission of UGCC