

Eva Fernández Mateo IFCA Secretariat Coordinator

First meeting in Rome of the 2023-2026 Secretariat

Press release – Rome, 3 March 2023



Eva Fernández Mateo, President of the Accion Catolica General (ACG) of Spain, is the new Coordinator of the Secretariat of the International Forum of Catholic Action, the body that brings together the world's Catholic Action associations. She was chosen during the first meeting of the Secretariat that will lead the IFCA in the four-year period 2023-2026 held in Rome a few days ago.

The Secretariat is made up of the national leaders of the seven countries elected during the General Assembly last November: Argentina, Burundi, Philippines, Italy, Mexico, Senegal Spain.

This is not the first time a woman has been “in charge” of the Fiac, which was set up in 1987 as a space for meeting, connecting and promoting Catholic Action at an international level and which today has 25 member countries and 43 observer countries. The first was Beatriz Buzzetti Thomson, AC Argentina National President, who led the Fiac from 1997 to 2004, followed by Paola Bignardi, AC Italy National President, from 2004 to 2008.

Eva Fernández Mateo, 40, from the archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela (Spain), holds a degree in Nursing and has developed her professional career in different medical areas since 1998. Married, she was appointed president of the Accion Catolica General in 2018 and was confirmed in 2022 by the Spanish Bishops' Conference.

The new coordinator will be joined with specific tasks by the National President of Italian Catholic Action, Giuseppe Notarstefano, and the National President of Catholic Action Argentina, Claudia Carbajal de Inzaurraga. The General Ecclesiastical Assistant of FIAC, H.E. Mgr. Eduardo Garcia, Bishop of San Justo (Argentina) also appointed a deputy assistant, Fr. José Antonio Cano Cano, assistant of the Spanish Accion Catolica General.

At its first meeting, the Secretariat outlined some of the objectives of the International Catholic Action Forum for the new four-year period. In the context of Catholic Action's active participation in the work of the Synod in all countries, responding to Pope Francis' invitation to be more and

more a “gymnasium of synodality”, it is necessary to foster and intensify the commitment at the continental level, promote the formation and participation of children, young, adults and assistant priests through the IFCA Coordinations by age and prepare for the Jubilee of

2025 by going to the roots of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and at the same time looking to the future for a Church ever closer to people.

“Today,” emphasised Eva Fernández Mateo, “we are called to joyfully proclaim the love and mercy of the Lord. We know that at this moment in history **it is essential to listen to all men and women in their yearnings**, anxieties and hopes and thus respond to all the needs of our world. We must make co-responsibility a reality in each of our communities. This is why we want to continue to offer ourselves as an instrument at the service of each local Church and each parish and continue to accompany the laity to realise God’s dream for the world’.

Among the first appointments, in addition to those at national and continental level, is participation in the World Youth Day in Lisbon in August 2023.

DIDASCALIA GROUP PHOTO: from left, the National President of Italian Catholic Action, Giuseppe Notarstefano; the National President of Argentine Catholic Action, Claudia Carbajal de Inzaurraga; Fiac Coordinator Eva Fernández Mateo; the General Ecclesiastical Assistant of FIAC, Bishop Eduardo Garcia, Bishop of San Justo (Argentina).