

## **COMECE on Covid-19 vaccines: “vulnerable people and health workers should come first”**

COMECE, 22-10-2020

*“Future Covid-19 vaccines should be available, affordable and accessible, especially for elderly people, ill persons and health workers”*. This is one of the messages sent to the EU and its Member States by the Assembly of the COMECE Working Group on Ethics, which gathered in video conference on Thursday 1 October 2020 to exchange on the “Ethical challenges of Europe in times of the Covid-19 pandemic”.

The experts delegated by the EU Bishops’ Conferences to the Assembly of the COMECE Working Group on Ethics analysed the current EU Health Policy and its possible future developments.

The Assembly highlighted the importance to *“strengthen the cooperation between the EU and its Member States in the field of health, ensuring affordability, sustainability and security of medical and pharmaceutical supply, and building strategic resilience”*.

In this context, the COMECE Working Group supports the European Vaccine Strategy and the development of new potential Covid-19 vaccines, specifying that these should be *“ethically produced [and] available, affordable and accessible especially for elderly people, ill persons and health workers”*.

The current situation is impacting every aspect of our lives, also mentally, physically and spiritually. According to the experts, *“the pandemic has undoubtedly affected all of us, putting a strain on every sector of society and the economy”*. In this regard, the Working Group also underlined the right of spiritual care for patients and health workers.

Finally, the experts exchanged on the situation of elderly people in the European Union who are severely affected by the current circumstances, particularly due to a lack of sustainable policies. The experts also contributed to the drafting process of the upcoming COMECE reflection paper on “Care for elderly people”.