

Congress of Regional and Local Authorities of the Council of Europe
EUROPEAN CONSERVATIVES & REFORMISTS
VISION AND VALUES

Like most political parties in a pluralist democracy the ECR's vision for the future of Europe is of a peaceful and prosperous continent with sovereign states sharing core values based on a respect for diversity and firmly founded on democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Our vision is founded on respect for the intrinsic worth of individuals and the importance of their own moral responsibility.

The ECR's values are based on the following core beliefs

- Lasting change in Europe can only be achieved through dialogue (never by force)
- There must be equal opportunities for all Europeans
- Enhancing individual, family and national dignity, freedom and choice must guide all we do
- European states and their governments must be servants not masters
- Individual, family and societal responsibility is crucially important

The ECR believes that peace is best secured in Europe when

- All states (whether old/new, small/large or whether or not they participate in inter-governmental organisations) are equal
- The sovereignty of all states within internationally recognised boundaries is accepted
- Co-operation on conflict prevention and resolution is made a key priority
- It is recognised that instability anywhere in Europe is a threat to peace throughout Europe
- European history is used positively to avoid future mistakes rather than to apportion blame
- Migration is limited to whatever a state can realistically accommodate and migrants assimilate into their new society

The ECR believes that prosperity is best achieved in Europe when

- It is recognised that wealth is created by individuals and not the state
- Efforts to increase prosperity are based on free enterprise, free and fair competition, minimum regulation, necessary but limited governance and low taxation
- Societies' needs are met wherever possible by individuals and voluntary bodies co-operating with each other
- Every state does its best to help improve living conditions in developing countries and thus reduce economic reasons for migration

The ECR believes that democracy in Europe is best developed when

- European states share the same democratic values but remain free to design and operate their own democratic structures and institutions
- Emerging democracies are given time to change and offered help rather than criticism
- Political parties are independent organisations rather than state organs
- Political opposition is respected and encouraged
- Decision taking happens as locally as practicable

The ECR believes that human rights in Europe are best protected when

- Human rights are viewed as individual rather than collective
- The human rights of every individual and family are upheld
- The right of free association is respected
- Personal and family privacy is respected
- The rulings of the European Court of Human Rights are implemented

The ECR believes that the rule of law in Europe is best promoted when

- States share the same legal principles but remain free to decide and implement their own legal systems
- The judiciary and their work is totally independent of the executive and legislature
- Nobody is above the law and every individual and state is equal before the law
- Every individual and state has equal access to justice

The ECR believes that European diversity is best respected when

- The history and culture of every state are honoured
- National minorities are respected
- Inter-governmental organisations focus on addressing specific tasks rather trying to integrate

Finally, the ECR believes that it is not the role of political parties to adopt collective policies on matters of personal faith and conscience.