



PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

A Conference of Central and Eastern European
Churches

“Our Commission travels to Warsaw to be with the churches in Central and Eastern Europe, to listen to them, learn about their reality and help them chart a course forward in the protection of children and vulnerable people”

*Cardinal Seán Patrick O'Malley OFM Cap
President*



About the conference

Our Common Mission of Safeguarding God's Children is the theme of an international conference gathering representatives of Episcopal Conferences and professionals working in the field of child and youth protection in nearly **20 countries of Central and Eastern Europe**.

Over three days, Church leaders and safeguarding delegates will look at the response to the crisis of the sexual abuse of minors by different churches, gauging the impact of the regional context.

Conference presentations will take in **prevention, intervention (reporting abuse and implementation of existing procedures - *Vos estis lux mundi*) and showcase practices already adopted and in use in other parts of the Church.**

The aim of the conference is the exchange of experiences and the networking of people involved in the field of the protection of minors to establish closer collaboration and resource sharing in a dialectic of mutual learning.

Participants include bishops, major superiors of men's and women's religious congregations, and lay people working in the area of protection of minors representing the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic Church from Poland, Albania, Croatia, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Kosovo

Commission President Cardinal Seán O' Malley: "I want to begin by acknowledging and thanking survivors of sexual abuse by clergy who continue to come forward and share their experience. It is because of their courage that others can be spared from experiencing this horror. There is no place or group of people that is immune to being impacted by this crime and sin. It has tragically infiltrated the Church in all countries and all cultures. As leaders we must be recognized as people committed and accountable, always and everywhere, to the safety of the children entrusted to our pastoral care. The journey of learning will be ongoing throughout our lives. Conversion to a culture of safeguarding is an urgent priority".

Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki, President of the Polish Catholic Bishops Conference (KEP): "I am delighted that Poland is hosting the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and representatives of the local Churches of Central and Eastern Europe, which are involved in offering assistance to victims of sexual abuse and prevention that serves to achieve a safe environment for children. I hope that this meeting will allow us to look not only at the difficulties we face today, but also to exchange experiences and best practices and that it will mark the

beginning of a future collaboration, which will result in common actions in our part of Europe."

Our common mission of safeguarding God's children —will be held in Warsaw Poland from September 19th to 22nd. It is a joint initiative of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors and the Polish Bishops' Conference in cooperation with the St. Joseph Foundation

More information is available at the conference website **www.safechildren.eu** now online in English, Italian and polish

#OurCommonMission; #safeguarding; #SafeChurch