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### Dear praying friends in Europe!

Isaiah 40:31 says: "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

In a world where it is hard to know what is real or unreal, what is true or untrue, it is easy to become discouraged or disillusioned and lose hope. For those who are called to pray, this verse in Isaiah can be the encouragement we need to keep our eyes fixed on Him. God invites us to rise up with Him and to see things from His eternal perspective. In doing so we will renew our strength and not grow weary in our intercessions for our continent.



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### FAKE NEWS

When prayer becomes an intercession we need to know what we are interceding for. It sounds simple but this is one of our greatest challenges in today's society. We are bombarded with information and we often have neither the time nor the ability to check the facts. Even as Christians we can be cocooned in our own cultural, religious or denominational bubble where we only believe what agrees with our own views.

As intercessors for our continent we need to be aware of the realities of what is called a 'post truth' society, where fake news becomes *fact* and what is popular and self satisfying becomes *my truth*.

Jesus himself warns us about the times when it is hard to discern between what is false and what is true. In Matthew 24:4-5 Jesus said: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many."

The good news is that as Christians we have an open heaven and a God who wants to guide and correct us. We can be fervent in prayer but we can also be fervently wrong in our understanding, and we need God's guidance and correction. So what can we do to help us navigate the minefield of information and opinions out there?

**Look outside your bubble:** Try reading different news sources or listening to and talking to people with a different view.

**Simplicity seduces:** It's easy to hide untruth in something that sounds credible,

but making it sound obvious doesn't make it true. Studies have found that using simple language, style or text makes a printed message more acceptable.

**You don't know everything:** Often we are overconfident in our own understanding; admitting that we don't know everything will help us. We tend to be less critical of information that reinforces our assumptions, while dismissing what disagrees with our views.

**Be curious:** The desire to research well will help us to challenge our own ideology and understand our motives for thinking as we do.

**Beware of images:** Remember that photographs and video can be manipulated.

This can all seem self evident, but we really do need to pray that we, and also the society we live in, are not misled by popularism and fake news. As citizens of this continent and world we have a duty not simply to look after our own interests but to find our collective and global responsibility to society.

#### Let us pray for

- The upcoming elections in The Netherlands and France, that integrity would prevail both in the reporting and political expression of the candidates.
- The exposing of fake or manipulated news and the dangers it presents for our democracies..
- All those who are seeking to expose false news when it appears and for protection for them and their families.

#### Please also pray for

- the Maltese presidency as the UK government prepares to invoke Article 50 and for the start of the Brexit negotiations.
- our European leaders as they discuss the 5 alternative pathways for the EU suggested by Jean-Claude Juncker