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### **Report of the President about the period 2014 to 2015**

Good morning Ladies and gentlemen!

Today is the first day of real works, and allows me please to start with my report about what happened and was done during the last year.

From my point of view my main interest was to make this conference possible, and we did, concerning this, quite a lot of organizational work, what about my Secretary General Nelleke Swinkels-van de Vorst will report intensively about.

Short time after our last conference in Slovakia I took the opportunity to meet again Military Bishop František Rábek in Vienna during the Enquête, organized by the Austrian Institute for Religion and Peace, to say a last time “thank You” and “Hope to meet you again”!

As already mentioned we passed a marvellous time in the Carpathians, and worked hard about the results of history namely, what did we learn 100 years after the Great War.

First time we had a participant from Australia with us, what we appreciated, knowing that it is difficult to go from one end of the world to the other!

It was at the end of our conference in Slovakia I had the pleasure of announcing that the conference of 2015 – 50 years of AMI – will take place in Santiago de Compostela, hosted by our Spanish friends, and, I announced that the conference 2016 likely would take place in the United States.

Unfortunately today I have to inform you that, although all people involved in the first preliminary work, did their best, it was not possible to ensure the AMI conference in Washington.

Without any support by the US Army it was impossible to design such a big conference.

That means that we are at the moment “homeless” and I kindly invite all delegations to ask in their home countries though it could be possible to host our conference 2016!

As every time we will ask the country hosting us, what their interests are in a possible theme for the conference.

In November 2014 AMI presidium travelled to Rome for meetings with Padre Cerchietti, responsible for the military Ordinariates, the Council for the Laity, the Council for Cultures and the Secretary of State of the Vatican.

We discussed there the last developments concerning the work for becoming an NGO, but even to present the new Vice President of AMI Col Friedrich Aflenzer from Austria.

We even took the opportunity for talks with the Italian Military Bishop ... and its Vicar General concerning goals and work of AMI and the question of contributions possible by Italy. Therefore we are fond that, with 1<sup>st</sup>Lt Davide di Georgio, a representative of Italy takes part in our conference.

In January 2015 again it was possible to meet our German friends during the Holy Mass on the "World Peace Day, January 22, 2015 in Cologne, together with my Vice Presidents, my Secretary General and vice secretary general and an Austrian Delegation.

Already at the end of our last conference it was decided to raise our voice concerning the peace in Europe threatening conflict between the independent state Ukraine and Russia. Having in mind that one of the characters of military conflicts is, that it always tends to the utmost and that it is always soldiers and civilians suffering the most, caused by certain political ideas, AMI sent a press release to all parties and religious responsible personalities to support reconstruction of peace and to end aggression.

(AMI Presidency invites to pray for peace in Ukraine

Considering the on-going violence in the Ukraine but also the encouraging results of the conference in Minsk on Thursday 12, 2015, the Apostolat Militaire International appeals to all concerned as follows: The Executive Committee of the Christian-Catholic Lay movement Apostolat Militaire International (AMI) is extremely concerned over the Ukraine situation. We appeal to all sides to abandon all forms of hostility and to find a just and peaceful solution through dialogue and negotiations which will prove acceptable for all members of the population and which will open ways to a better future).

In March 2015 we travelled once more to Spain and Santiago, for having an inside look to the planned setting of this year's conference and to make clear finally the necessities for the conference. For us it was first time having the opportunity to see Santiago de Compostela and to meet the Apostle Jacob in the Cathedral!

In April 2015 I was invited to take part in a conference in Budapest, Hungary, concerning the questions of immigration and military.

During this extremely interesting one-day's conference I had the opportunity to inform the audience about the goals and work of AMI, to meet His Excellency Archbishop Cardinal Péter Erdő and to meet Military Bishop Biro.

In May 2015, AMI Presidency and Secretary General met each other again during the Military Pilgrimage in Lourdes, France.

At least we were invited in June to assist the solemn inauguration of our former Ecclesiastical Assistant Msg. Dr. Werner Freistetter becoming the new Austrian Military Bishop.

A beautiful day for the Austrian Armed Forces, a beautiful day itself and one of the first extremely hot days we faced during all the summer in Austria.

As last year, we, Nelleke, Jan and me, met again informally in Carinthia to discuss in that peaceful place of Aflitz am See questions of AMI, its work and especially its future.

Future is a key word. As I mentioned we loose now our Ecclesiastical assistant, Werner Freistetter.

On behalf of looking for a new one I wrote a letter to all military bishops and delegations to help find a right candidate, at least at the end of this conference.

The prescribed requirements for this function are:

- Catholic priest
- If possible military
- English and if possible Italian speaking
- Wise
- Open-minded to the military problems, as work, missions and social necessities

That concludes my report. I thank you for your attention!