

DATE: 10.03.2014

**LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
(Translation)**

From: Thierry BONAVENTURA

**+41 71 227 6040 (Tel.)
+41 79 12 80 189 (Mobile)
bonaventura@ccee.eu**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Europe's children speak to Pope Francis Little Vasile's story continues

Within the framework of a conference on *A European and Christian Moldova* little Vasile, ambassador of children on the margins of Europe, will tell his story and that of his meeting with Pope Francis on 4 September last year.

Following an initiative of the Council of European Episcopal Conferences (CCEE) aimed at paying tribute to Pope Francis through the voices of European children, little Vasile, an orphan from Moldova, wrote to Pope Francis.

“Dear Pope Francis, my sister told me that I have to call you “Pope” because you are an important person, but I don’t know what “Pope” means and so I call you father. ... Now my mum is no longer here, because evil people harmed her. ...Pope Francis, please can you send me your photo, so that I can put it up where I sleep and so that I can say I have a father, too? ...”

Vasile did not know then that rather than just a photo he would soon be meeting the Holy Father in person: a meeting which changed the life of this little Orthodox Moldovan.

Vasile's testimony will take place during the Conference *A European and Christian Moldova. The commitment after the Vilnius Agreement between Moldova and the European Union*, promoted by *Mission Moldova*, a movement of people, values, ideas, and programmes in accordance with gospel principles and the Catholic Church's social doctrine in support of Moldova. There will be a video presentation of Vasile's story produced by the Turin Associazione Enzo B. at 1800 on Friday 14 March. *Mission Moldova's* Conference begins at 0900 on Saturday 15 March. Both events will take place at Trieste's [Impact Hub](#) (Via di Cavana 14).

The Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe (CCEE) encompasses the current 33 European Bishops' Conferences, represented by their Presidents, the Archbishops of Luxembourg, of the Principality of Monaco, the Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus and the Bishop of Chişinău (Moldova Rep.), the Eparchial Bishop of Mukachevo and the Apostolic Administrator of Estonia. The current President is Cardinal Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, Primate of Hungary; the Vice-Presidents are Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, Archbishop of Genoa, and Mgr Józef Michalik, Archbishop of Przemyśl (Poland). The General Secretary is Mgr Duarte da Cunha. The Secretariat is based at St Gallen (Switzerland). www.ccee.eu

The Conference will also see the launch of the Moldovan-Italian edition of *I Bambini dell'Europa parlano a Papa Francesco* [*Europe's Children Speak to Pope Francis*]. The Italian-English and Portuguese-English editions are available from CCEE priced 5 Euros per copy (+ postage and packing). Copies can be ordered through the website www.ccee.eu

Attached is the **Dossier** about the meeting in Italian and English with an interview with the director of the *Casa-Famiglia Regina Pacis* where Vasile lives, along with information about the reasons behind the Conference, the situation of the Church in Moldova, and the life of little Vasile.

In addition, the dossier contains the full text of Vasile's letter to Pope Francis along with biographical information and information about the work of the Catholic Church in Moldova.