

# DIOCESE IN EUROPE

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THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

The Bishop in Europe:  
**The Right Reverend Dr. Robert Innes**  
The Suffragan Bishop in Europe:  
**The Right Reverend David Hamid**



## ARCHEACON OF GIBRALTAR AND ARCHDEACON OF ITALY AND MALTA

### Statement from the Bishops

The Diocese in Europe is the 42<sup>nd</sup> Diocese of the Church of England. We are by far the biggest in terms of land area, as we range across over 42 countries in a territory approximately matching that covered by the Council of Europe, as well as Morocco. We currently attract unprecedented interest within the Church of England, as we are that part of the Church that specifically maintains links with continental Europe at a time of political uncertainty between the UK and the rest of Europe. Along with that, we have been in the fortunate position of being able to recruit some very high calibre lay and ordained staff.

To help oversee our vast territory we have two bishops, the Diocesan Bishop Robert Innes who is based in Brussels, and the Suffragan Bishop David Hamid who is based in London. We have a diocesan office within Church House Westminster. We maintain strong connections with staff in the National Church Institutions. Importantly, and unlike English dioceses, our chaplaincies pay for their own clergy, and the diocese has relatively few support staff. Each appointment matters greatly to us.

The diocesan strategy was formulated and approved over the course of 2015. We are emphasising our commitment to building up congregational life, our part in the re-evangelisation of the continent; our commitment to reconciliation at every level; and our particular role in serving the poor, the marginalised and the migrant. This strategy is, we think, widely embedded and owned.

In the last two years we have developed a diocesan Financial Plan to provide proper resourcing for safeguarding, archdeacons and communications. This involves a progressive doubling of parish share (from 5% to 10% of chaplaincy income). The implementation of the Plan has involved intensive negotiation at all levels of the diocese and is now broadly accepted. Parish share collection rates in the diocese have historically been very good.

Our direction of travel is consistent with the national 'Reform and Renewal' agenda and is endorsed and supported by the national church. A recent peer review was highly positive, concluding: 'we should not just affirm but congratulate you on the progress you have made...'. In line with this, we have recently been given funding from the Church Commissioners which significantly helps underpin our diocesan budget and enables secure funding for this post.

The role of an archdeacon in our diocese is significantly different from English dioceses. Parishes (chaplaincies in our terminology) are effectively not bounded in a territorial way. We frequently borrow or lease buildings belonging to other Churches. That means the usual work of administering faculties, and re-organising parishes does not apply. Instead, there is an

emphasis on supporting the clergy, building up congregations and representing our Church and Diocese in the ecumenical, diplomatic and inter-faith scene.

Within much of the territory of the two Archdeaconries, our chaplaincies are widely dispersed and distances are big. The person appointed will therefore need to judge carefully how to maintain pastoral contact and how to schedule and devise appropriate travel.

Our 'overseas' nature gives us a very different character from other English dioceses. Our clergy and their families live within a diocese governed by Church of England norms, but whose communities are international with strong links to local and national cultures. The role of chaplain in this diocese requires a high level of resilience and can put particular pressures on clergy and accompanying spouses, but it is also enriching and energising. Some of our chaplaincies have a large proportion of worshippers from the UK; many are multinational with worshippers attending perhaps because they speak English as a second or third language. In these two Archdeaconries, there are increasing numbers of members from Africa and to a lesser extent Asia. Building these diverse communities is skilled work, and the role of an archdeacon in supporting chaplains and being on hand when conflict arises is vital.

One of the roles of the Archdeacon is to oversee and preside at annual archdeaconry synods. These residential occasions are greatly valued as times of fellowship, shared worship and teaching, and we expect all our clergy to attend them.

As bishops we would want our next Archdeacon to be rooted in prayer, to be a clear and orthodox teacher of the Christian faith, and to have the capacity to provide capable and collaborative leadership to the people of these two Archdeaconries.

If you would like an informal discussion about the role please do contact Andrew Caspari - [andrew.caspari@churchofengland.org](mailto:andrew.caspari@churchofengland.org), our Chief Operating Officer/Diocesan Secretary.

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