

Responding Wisely in the Current Climate where Evangelicals are often seen in a Negative Light

GUIDE FOR EEA MEMBERS & FRIENDS

This guide accompanies the statement “European Evangelicals in Public Life”, which we encourage Evangelicals to use in ways that suit their context. This might mean publishing the full text, sending it to politicians or the media, quoting parts of the text or using it as an inspiration for your own national text. There is also a press release to use or that can inspire your own.

Purpose of This Guide

To help Evangelical Alliances, churches, and Christian leaders respond wisely when Evangelicals are portrayed negatively in media or politics, and to offer constructive tools for public engagement.

1. Start with Clarity, Not Defensiveness

When confronted with caricatures, begin by calmly explaining who Evangelicals are.

For example,

“You’ve described Evangelicals in a way I don’t recognise. Let me tell you who we actually are...”

Anchor your explanation in

- the Gospel
- the teaching and example of Jesus
- our respect for and commitment to the Biblethe imago Dei in every human being
- our contribution to society
- the EEA Code of Conduct (https://www.europeanea.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/2026-05_EEA-Code-of-Conduct_EN.pdf) or other foundational document explaining Evangelical principles for public engagement.

Avoid reacting to personalities, political parties, or foreign political dynamics.

2. Distinguish European Evangelicalism from foreign or other relevant media narratives

Offer balanced, factual framing

- Acknowledge that negative media mentions of Evangelicals influence perceptions.
- Clarify that European Evangelicalism is diverse, non-partisan, and shaped by different histories and contexts.
- Avoid simplistic comparisons with other countries.
- Avoid condemning Evangelicals under the critical media spotlight as a whole; focus on principles and **specific behaviours**, not labels or groups.

3. Use Foundational Documents

Encourage members to point to

- [EEA Code of Conduct](#)
- [EEA Approach](#)
- [CNEF's clarifications](#)
- [Italian EA's "War, Conflict, Justice and Peace" discernment document](#)
- Or your own national EA statements on public engagement

These provide credibility and consistency.

4. Emphasise What We Are For

Shift the conversation away from "*Evangelicals oppose X*" toward all the good things the Bible highlights, including

- the Good News of Jesus Christ
- love of God and neighbour
- human dignity
- compassion
- peace
- truth
- justice
- service
- reconciliation
- integrity
- freedom of religion or belief for all
- the flourishing of society

This reframing is powerful and disarming.

5. Respond to Accusations of Extremism

Use calm, factual language. For example,

- *“Evangelicals may hold some views that others may disagree with, but we do not seek to impose them. We promote our ideas publicly, as is the democratic right of all people.”*
- *“Disagreement is not extremism.”*
- *“Our engagement is guided by love, humility, truth, peace, courage, wisdom, and hope.”*
- *“We offer our views through persuasion, service, and democratic participation,”*
- *“We reject coercion, threats, contempt and the misuse of faith for political purposes.”*
- *“Caricaturing Evangelicals as extremists is unhelpful and unfair.”*

6. Address Christian Nationalism Carefully

Avoid naming individuals or countries. Focus on principles.

- Reject coercion, intolerance, or “ends justify the means” politics.
- Reject the political instrumentalisation of Christianity or Evangelicalism.
- Reject the dehumanisation of opponents or minorities.
- Reject xenophobia or racism.
- Reject any demand for absolute loyalty to a leader, party or nation.
- Affirm the dignity of every person.
- Affirm the rule of law, human rights, and checks and balances.
- Affirm the separation of politics and institutional faith

7. Encourage Local Storytelling

Invite members to highlight activities that contribute to society e.g.

- initiatives which help and empower the poor, the foreigner, the marginalised, abused and exploited,.
- Care for older people, the sick or people with disabilities.
- youth and children’s work.
- reconciliation initiatives.
- Work that builds community and mental and emotional well-being.

Share examples of good practice or highlight some of the examples in the EEA statement.

Stories change perceptions more effectively than arguments.

8. Build Relationships Before Crises

Encourage local pastors, churches and organisations to

- meet journalists, politicians, civil servants or police.
- invite public leaders to visit churches and projects.
- build trust long before controversy arises.
- listen as well as speak.

As national Evangelical Alliances, let's meet national public leaders in the media or politics and serve them through providing constructive input, ideally before we raise problems with them.

9. A Pastoral Word to Evangelicals

Remind Evangelicals that

- Our identity is in Christ, not in political battles.
- Our security is in Christ alone.
- Our mission is to share the Good News of Jesus, make disciples and to be a faithful presence in society.
- Our tone and behaviour must always reflect the character of Jesus.
- We are Good News People.

MEDIA Q&A SHEET

(For Evangelical spokespersons, journalists, and public leaders.)

1. Why is the EEA issuing this statement now?

Public perceptions of “Evangelicals” in Europe are increasingly shaped by media narratives from outside Europe and by the misuse of the term for political purposes. This has led to confusion and, at times, unfair portrayals. We wish to give a clear explanation of who European Evangelicals are and how we engage in public life. We invite the media and politicians to get to know us and to refrain from unhelpful and untrue descriptions of Evangelicals. Other more theological explanations of Evangelicals exist elsewhere. This text is an introduction to Europe’s Evangelicals, challenging some of the caricatures and inviting public figures to get to know us.

2. Is this statement about politics in another country?

No. The statement does not comment on any political figure or party, inside or outside Europe. It addresses *European* realities and clarifies misunderstandings that arise when context specific (including foreign) narratives are applied generally to European Evangelicals.

3. Are European Evangelicals politically aligned with any party or ideology?

No. Individual European Evangelicals vote for and participate in many different political parties. As the European Evangelical Alliance community of national alliances, organisations and churches, we are strictly non-partisan regarding party politics. We do not seek political privilege. Our engagement is guided by principles such as love, humility, truth, peace, courage, wisdom, and hope.

4. Why do some people describe Evangelicals as “extremists”?

A small number of radical voices in Europe and elsewhere label Evangelicals as extremists when they disagree with certain beliefs. Disagreement, however, is not extremism. European Evangelicals do not seek to impose their views on others. We support a tolerant, civil public square where all worldviews may be expressed freely and respectfully.

5. What do European Evangelicals believe?

We are united by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the call to love God and neighbour. We are rooted in biblical foundations and especially committed to the life, example, and teaching of Jesus. We believe that every person is made in the image of God. We believe that faith should be expressed in worship, witness, service, justice, compassion and hope. We celebrate the diversity of the global and European Church.

6. What issues do Evangelicals care about?

Because every person is made in the image of God, Evangelicals care about the unborn and the elderly, migrants and refugees, the poor, exploited and marginalized, and all who suffer. We cherish marriage,

family, and healthy relationships that support human flourishing. We also care about the world God created. So, caring for the environment is also important to us.

7. What contribution do Evangelicals make to society?

Across Europe, Evangelicals feed the hungry, provide healthcare, shelter the homeless, assist refugees, empower the poor, fight corruption, strengthen reconciliation, build community, defend human rights and so much more. This work is done quietly and faithfully, often far beyond what you would expect from our numbers.

8. What is the EEA's position on "Christian nationalism"?

The term is used in many ways. When it refers to coercion, dominance, or "the ends justify the means," the vast majority of European Evangelicals reject it. Faith must never be instrumentalised for nationalist, xenophobic, or militaristic purposes. The Bible must never be used to justify actions that contradict the ways of Jesus.

9. Do Evangelicals want to influence politics?

Evangelicals participate in democracy as citizens, just like everyone else. We contribute ideas, serve our communities, and advocate for human dignity. We do not seek dominance or special treatment. We believe in a civil public square where all voices — including ours — can be heard respectfully.

10. What should journalists and policymakers know about Evangelicals?

We invite them to engage directly with national Evangelical Alliances and local churches. Many misconceptions disappear when people get to know people and see the practical work Evangelicals do in their communities. We ask for fair representation and the avoidance of caricatures.

11. What is your message to Evangelicals across Europe?

Continue praying, serving, and contributing to the common good. Be a faithful presence in every sphere of society. Share the love and hope of Jesus with all. Let us be confident Good News People.

Safe Phrases & Phrases to Avoid

(For interviews, panels, press calls, and written statements)

1. OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES FOR SPOKESPERSONS

- Stay **calm, factual, and positive**.
- Use **Jesus-centred, human-dignity-centred** language.
- Assume every sentence may be quoted out of context — choose wording accordingly.
- Always bring the conversation back to **identity, contribution, and principles**.
- Avoid reactive language — speak from **conviction, not defensiveness**.
- Keep the focus on your locality, nation or **Europe**, not other regions.
- **Never imply that all Christians should support a particular politician or party**
- **Avoid commenting critically** on individual politicians or parties rather than specific policies and actions unless the situation is serious. You may feel compelled to critique a politician or party for specific activity which dramatically oppose biblical values and good government. But only do so after careful prayer and reflection with a range of other leaders.

2. SAFE PHRASES

These are robust, non-political, and cannot be weaponised.

Identity & Beliefs

- *“European Evangelicals are united by the Gospel and the call to love God and neighbour.”*
- *“We are rooted in biblical foundations and especially in the life, example, and teaching of Jesus.”*
- *“Evangelicals are Good News People — committed to compassion, integrity, and hope.”*
- *“We celebrate the diversity of the global and European Church.”*

Public Perception

- *“There is sometimes confusion about the term ‘Evangelical’ in Europe.”*
- *“Public perceptions are often shaped by narratives from outside Europe.”*
- *“We want to clarify who European Evangelicals actually are.”*

Human Dignity

- *“Since we believe every person is made in the image of God, we care deeply for all people.”*

- *“Our concerns include the unborn, the elderly, migrants, refugees, the poor, and the marginalised.”*
- *“We defend freedom of religion or belief, not only for ourselves, but for all people”.*
- *“This is not a political ideology — it is a consistent ethic of human dignity.”*

Political Engagement

- *“Evangelicals in Europe vote for and participate in many different political parties.”*
- *“As a community, we are strictly non-partisan.”*
- *“We believe in a civil, tolerant public square where all voices can be heard respectfully.”*
- *“Disagreement is not extremism.”*

Christian Nationalism / Misuse of Faith

- *“Faith must never be instrumentalised for nationalistic, or coercive purposes.”*
- *“The Bible must never be used to justify actions that contradict the ways and teachings of Jesus.”*
- *“We reject any approach that dehumanises others or demands absolute loyalty.”*
- *“We reject the fusion of Christianity with one political ideology.”*

Contribution to Society

- *“Evangelicals contribute far beyond their numbers through service, compassion, and community work.”*
- *“Across Europe, Evangelicals feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, assist refugees, defend human rights and much more.”*

Tone & Conduct

- *“We seek to engage public life with love, humility, truth, peace, courage, wisdom, and hope.”*
- *“These are the standards we hold ourselves to, even when we fall short.”*

3. PHRASES TO AVOID

These can be misquoted, politicised, or misunderstood.

Avoid short political labels

- **✗** *“We support conservative values / progressive values.”*
- **✗** *“We promote Christian values.”*

Without explanation, these phrase can be misused to imply a certain party political agenda.

Avoid references to specific countries or leaders

- **✗** “Unlike Evangelicals in the US...”
- **✗** “This is not like what politician X is doing.”
- **✗** “We reject what is happening in country Y.”

Keep your church, national EA or the EEA out of foreign political debates.

Avoid defensive or reactive framing

- **✗** “We are not extremists.”
- **✗** “The media is attacking us.”
- **✗** “People misunderstand us on purpose.”

Always reframe positively instead.

Avoid absolutist language

- **✗** “Evangelicals never...”
- **✗** “Evangelicals always...”

Acknowledge diversity and imperfection.

Avoid language that sounds like political mobilisation

- **✗** “We must take back our country.”
- **✗** “We need to fight for our rights.”
- **✗** “We must stand against the government.”

These phrases can be associated with extremism.

Avoid theological shorthand that can be misinterpreted

- **✗** “We stand for truth.” (Too easily misquoted as moral superiority.)
- **✗** “We defend Christian Europe.” (Can be linked to exclusionary nationalism.)

Avoid culture-war framing

- **✗** “We are under attack.”
- **✗** “Society is turning against Christians.”
- **✗** “We must resist secularism.”

(These kinds of statements escalate tension and feed negative narratives.)

4. RECOMMENDED BRIDGING PHRASES

Use phrases like these to steer the conversation back to safe ground.

- *“Let me bring this back to who European Evangelicals actually are...”*
- *“What matters most to us is the example and teaching of Jesus. We try to be true to this.”*
- *“Our focus is on sharing the Gospel, serving our neighbours and contributing to society.”*
- *“We believe in a respectful civil public square.”*
- *“Our concern is always the dignity of every human being.”*
- *“We want to be a faithful presence in society, not a political bloc.”*
- *“We respect pluralism and a diversity of opinions, even while we honour the Christian roots of much of European civilisation.”*
- *“The EEA Code of Conduct guides how we engage in public life.”* (Or refer to your own document that guides you).
- *“Evangelicals support biblical values which belong neither to the Right or Left of the party-political spectrum”.*

5. IF ASKED ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS

These lines deescalate and protect the EEA, your national EA or church.

On extremism accusations

- *“Holding views that others disagree with does not make anyone extreme.”*
- *“Evangelicals do not seek to impose their beliefs on others. We share our ideas, we may promote them robustly. But that is not imposition. It is democracy”*

On Christian nationalism

- *“The term is used in many ways. When it is linked to exclusion, coercion or control, we reject it.”*
- *“Faith must never be manipulated as a tool for political power.”*

On foreign political developments linked supposedly to Evangelicalism

- *“Our nation’s / European Evangelicalism has its own history, context, and diversity.”*
- *“We do not comment on political dynamics in other countries.”*

On LGBTQI+ or abortion debates

- *“Evangelicals may hold views that others do not like, but we always seek to treat every person with dignity and respect. We do not seek to impose our views on society.”*

- *“Our approach is guided by compassion, humility, example and teaching of Jesus.”*

Of course, there is a time to explain exactly what we believe about matters of life and sexuality. But, the present EEA statement and proposed interaction with the media or politicians is about counteracting caricatures and suspicion. Therefore, we recommend steering away from discussion on the issues themselves because of the danger that this will be the only thing a journalist will report.

6. CLOSING MESSAGE FOR SPOKESPERSONS

End every interview with a positive, unifying line. For example,

“European Evangelicals are Good News People — committed to compassion, integrity, and the flourishing of our societies.”

SHORT VIDEO SCRIPT (90 seconds)

(For EEA President/General Secretary or national EA leaders. Calm, warm, hopeful.)

[Opening shot simple, warm background. Speaker looks directly into camera.]

Speaker Across Europe, the word “Evangelical” is often misunderstood. Sometimes it’s shaped by media stories from outside Europe. Sometimes it’s used as a political label. And sometimes it’s associated with views that do not reflect who we are.

So let me say clearly **European Evangelicals are Good News People.**

We are united by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the call to love God and neighbour. We are rooted in biblical foundations and especially committed to the life, example, and teaching of Jesus.

Because every person is made in the image of God, we care deeply for the unborn and the elderly, for migrants and refugees, for the poor, the marginalised, and the exploited. Across Europe, Evangelicals feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, assist refugees, fight corruption, and defend human rights — quietly, faithfully, and far beyond our numbers.

When it comes to politics, we are strictly non-partisan. Evangelicals vote for and participate in many different political parties. We do not seek privilege. We believe in a public square where all voices can be heard respectfully.

And we reject any misuse of Christianity for political, nationalistic, or coercive purposes. Faith must never be a tool for control. The Bible must never be used to justify actions that contradict the ways of Jesus.

Our hope is simple that Europe will see Evangelicals for who we truly are — people committed to love, humility, truth, peace, courage, wisdom, and hope.

We invite journalists, policymakers, and neighbours to get to know us, to visit our churches and charities, and to see the good we seek to do.

European Evangelicals are Good News People — serving our societies with compassion, integrity, and hope.

[Fade out.]