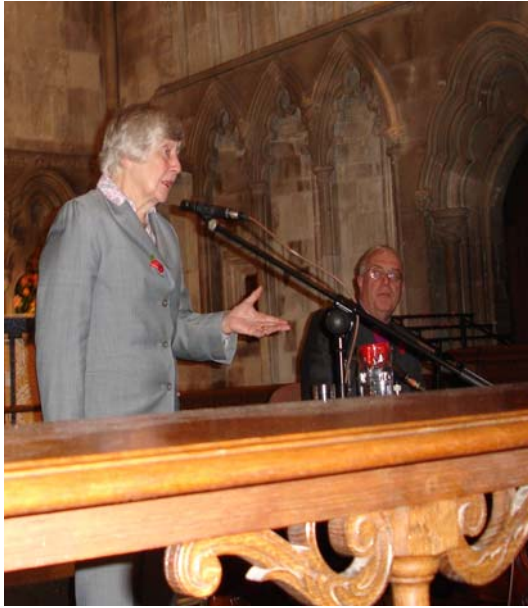


Shirley Williams in Europe debate at the Abbey



Millions of people across Europe can now look to a future of peace, security and prosperity, thanks to the work of the European Union. This was the message from Baroness Shirley Williams to a public meeting in St Albans Abbey last week

Speaking at a meeting organised by the Diocesan Europe Group, Lady Williams said:

“The EU has brought freedom and democracy to millions more people than any other country in the world. It has achieved this without a single gun being fired.

She added: “To join the EU, countries must not only accept the political and economic obligations of membership, but must also ensure that their institutions can guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect and protection for minorities.”

Lady Williams who is a former MP for Hitchin, also urged the churches to work together on the values which the EU upholds. In particular she underlined the importance of the dialogue of faith groups with Muslim communities. She saw this as helping in the long term to bridge the divide between secular states and their Muslim communities.

The St Albans Europe Group was established several years ago to support and develop diocesan and parish links in ecumenical and social partnerships with churches across Europe and to raise awareness of the work being done by European churches within the institutions of the EU and the Council of Europe.