

## **Short report on the Church of Norway's' preparation for the WCC Assembly**

### **Participation**

The Church of Norway (CoN) will send four delegates to the Assembly, led by the Presiding bishop, Helga Haugland Byfuglien. In addition advisors and observers (Church Leaders) from CoN, The Christian Council of Norway, the Norwegian Church Aid and other church related organisations and theological faculties, will participate. A guess is that 20 – 30 Norwegians will be present in Busan.

### **Expectations**

We have high expectations for this Assembly, due to the constructive changes in the WCC that has been going on for the last years. The Central Committee and the new General Secretary's efforts to modernize the WCC into a more efficient and economically sound organisation, are very promising and future-oriented. We expect that the proposed changes in the organisational structure will be adopted in Busan. We also appreciate the openness in the planning process, and the WCC is inviting non-member churches and ecumenical partners to play a visible role during the Assembly. We are curious about how the Korean context and the participation of different evangelical groups, will affect the Assembly. It is a challenge to strengthen the WCC's self-understanding and define its specific role and added value in the Ecumenical Movement, and at the same time be inclusive and humble, acknowledging that Global Church is much more than the WCC. The many so called 'ecumenical conversations' during the Assembly will hopefully give us the opportunity to discuss different challenges related to ecumenism in a 'changing landscape' and the role of the WCC as a fellowship of Member Churches, and as a significant ecumenical organisation in the years to come. After the Peace Convocation in Jamaica, we had expected that the concept of 'Just Peace' would be more evident in the Busan. We had hoped for an ecumenical statement, but we admit that this was too ambitious, and we are looking forward to further discussions on 'Justice' and 'Peace' in the plenary sessions and more concrete and contextually in the many different Workshops and Side Events. We also expect to gain new insights and to strengthen networks and connect and with people working on similar topic as we do in Norway. At last, but not least, we expect that the spiritual life, the Bible studies and cultural events will inspire us to bring back home faith, hope and lots of ideas and resources that we can use to vitalise the spiritual life in our own congregations.

### **Formal preparation and pre assemblies**

The Synod of the Church of Norway will meet in April and discuss our expectations and contributions to the both the CEC and WCC assemblies. This is a unique opportunity. The Synod will hopefully get more knowledge about ecumenical cooperation and higher awareness of the fact that CoN belongs to the global ecumenical family. A Nordic-Baltic Pre Assembly will take place in Norway 2. – 3. April. Representatives from the CoN will also attend the Pre Assembly for Special Ministries in Geneva in April, and we will be present at all the different Pre Assemblies in Busan.

### **Documents**

The following documents are translated in to Norwegian and will be presented at our Synod Meeting: *The Unity Document*, *The Church – Towards a Common Vision* and *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*. The other main documents will of course also be read and discussed in different councils and meetings, for instance in our Commission on Theology and the Commission on International Affairs. We also plan to translate *Pilgrimage to Busan*- the resource material for local congregations.

### **Work-shops and Side Events**

Norway is responsible for two workshops in Busan: *Walking Together in Hope in Palestine and Israel* (EAPPI) and *The Sámi Church Life and the Work on Reconciliation*. We also plan a Side Event on inter-religious dialogue, sharing our experiences on religious extremism.

**Examples of some other concerns:** The concept on Just Peace – the road after Jamaica, Climate Justice and Economic Globalisation, Gender Justice, Power and leadership in the churches, Inter-religious dialogue as a tool for peace and reconciliation in the Middle East.