

CEC Thematic Reference Group Peacebuilding & Reconciliation 8-9 February 2016, Brussels

Draft Minutes

Roll Call

Rev Dr Cedersjö, Björn - Christian Council in Sweden, Uniting Church in Sweden, Church of Sweden
Rev Dr Fischl, Vilmos - Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary
OKRin i.R. Heider-Rottwilm, Antje - Church and Peace
Dr McMaster, Johnston - The Methodist Church in Ireland/Irish Council of Churches
Rev Canon Nathaniel, Leslie - Church of England
Rev Rytkönen, Aaro - Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
Ms Tsavdaridou, Catherine - Ecumenical Patriarchate
Fr Huttunen, Heikki – Conference of European Churches

Apologies

Mr Birkeland, Tor Kristian - Church of Norway, Christian Council of Norway
Rev Pafilis, Maximos - Church of Greece
Rev Röselaers, Joost - Remonstrant Brotherhood

Guest

Ms Skaiaa, Marianne - Church of Norway, Christian Council of Norway

The purpose of the TRG meeting was to expand the thinking of the first meeting in September 2015. Europe was to be the first priority. The importance of using case studies was reaffirmed. Developing the capacity for dialogue among the churches of Europe was also affirmed as an action point. A working paper by Leslie Nathaniel on *An Initial Introduction through a Concept of Responding to Conflict* was discussed. The paper provided a framework for the TRG's work, which was to include a Christian and theological approach.

The question was raised; how do we build mutual security? Do churches have an alternative way of addressing security?

Engagement: TRG Main tasks

1. Strengthening the churches Peacebuilding praxis
2. Profiling justice and peace within CEC
 - 2.1. Building capacity for inter - church dialogue
3. Developing programmes/projects on the following themes:
 - Peacebuilding and Reconciliation
 - Nationalism
 - Ethno-nationalism

- Ethnicity/identity
- Mutual security
- Militarism
- Interfaith engagement
- Churches responding to conflict and healing of memories
- Collect case studies on engagement with Peacebuilding and Reconciliation

Agreed that implementing all of the above was essential.

4. Monitor the European scene on all of these issues

Presentation on CEC TRG Human Rights

CEC staff member outlined main issues from previous minutes of CEC's TRG on Human Rights. It was agreed to hold joint consultation with Human Rights TRG at appropriate moments and to see where collaboration was possible. Minutes of meetings to be shared between the two TRG. The Peacebuilding and Reconciliation TRG to contribute to the Human Rights Manual.

European Parliament resolutions on Mutual Defence Clause and Arms Export

Antje Heider-Rottwilm introduced the two Resolutions and a possible response from CEC. Discussion highlighted the role of CEC in monitoring these developments and that member churches could be encouraged to look critically at their respective government responses and engage national authorities in dialogue.

Antje Heider-Rottwilm, Aaro Rytönen and Leslie Nathaniel will work on a response to the European Parliament Resolutions and present a paper for the upcoming meeting of CEC Presidents on 23 February 2016. It will be a single page response using language appropriate for communication within member churches and the European institutions.

Porvoo Communion of Churches: Key to Interfaith engagement

The consultation document *Porvoo Communication of Churches – Keys to Interfaith Engagement* is the outcome of the work between European Anglicans and Nordic Lutherans in the European context. It can be used in a variety of ways by churches and groups. It was agreed to send the document to the CEC Board in June for approval, as it is considered a valuable tool for churches in their work on peace and reconciliation. Also to include on the CEC web site some introductory paragraphs, and the link to the original document. It was agreed that Interfaith and Reconciliation should be the dominant theme for the next TRG meeting in September 2016 and that this is a work in progress.

Proposed Conference on First World War

The conference did not take place in 2014 and 2016 also proved difficult. The CEC Assembly would be held in 2018, again making a conference the two preceding years difficult. It was agreed to propose a conference for 2019 with the twin focus on the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and the current global and European situation. The legacies of Paris continue into the present, there are lessons to be learned and symbolic actions could be a significant part of the conference. It was agreed that there was potential for a significant peace conference in 2019. Johnston McMaster will write a short piece on the background and consequences of the Paris Peace Conference.

Assembly 2018

The Assembly will meet in the summer of 2018. As yet there are no formal invitations. The Assembly will have a thematic approach which hopefully will provide inspiration for the churches' work beyond the Assembly. Theme may be decided at the CEC Board meeting in November 2016. Agreed that potential theme might be around the future of Europe in the geopolitical context, the recovery of faith in the public square and the role of religion and ethics in relation to public issues along with the recovering confidence to sing the song of faith publicly.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting was scheduled to take place **20 - 21 September 2016** in Brussels. The meeting will start on Tuesday 20 September at 1.00pm and will finish on Wednesday 21 September by 1.00pm.