**DRAFT**

**Assembly Planning Committee Minutes**

**Volos, Greece**

**2-4 October 2017**

1. **October**

13:30-16:00 Session I - Opening prayer by Metropolitan Emmanuel

1. **Welcome, Roll Call**

**Assembly Planning Committee:**

Ms Satu **Koikkalainen**, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland

Rev. Canon Dr Leslie **Nathaniel,** Church of England (APC Moderator)

H.E. Archbishop Dr Yeznik **Petrosyan,** Armenian Apostolic Church

Rev. Helle **Rosenkvist**, Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark

OKR Klaus **Rieth,** Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg

Ms Elena **Timofticiuc,** Romanian Orthodox Church

Ms Catherine **Tsavdaridou,** Ecumenical Patriarchate

**Apologies:**

*Ms Nan* ***Braunschweiger,*** *Church of Scotland*

*Mr Michael* ***Bubik****, Evangelical Church A.C. in Austria*

*Very Rev Archimandrite Ignatios* ***Sotiriadis****, Orthodox Church of Greece*

**Guests:**

H.E. Metropolitan **Emmanuel of France**, Ecumenical Patriarchate (CEC Vice-President)

Mr Andreas Henriksen **Aarflot**, Church of Norway (CEC Governing Board)

Rev. Dr Patrick Roger **Schnabel**, Berliner Missionswerk

**Staff:**

Very Reverend Protopresbyter Heikki Theodoros **Huttunen**, General Secretary

Mr Szabolcs **Lörincz**, Assembly Coordinator

Mr Danilo **Mihajlovic**, Local Coordinator

Mr Henrik **Hansson**, Communications Coordinator

1. **Host**

This APC meeting was hosted by the Theological Academy in Volos. Metropolitan Emmanuel opened the meeting with prayer. The meeting was graced already during the first session by His Emmenince Metropolitan Ignatius of Demetrias. This was an important moment for the APC and there was a short discussion on the context and ministry of the church in Volos.

1. **Approval of the Agenda**

The Agenda of the meeting was approved.

1. **Approval of the last minutes of the APC**

The Minutes were approved.

1. **Legal Issues**

In connection with the legal issues facing CEC, the following 3 areas of difficulty were highlighted by Dr Patrick:

* The text is not identical to the Budapest text as follows:
  1. The Preamble is not identical;
  2. The text in the Budapest version concerning international organisations is different to the current text.
* The need to bring the Constitution in line with Belgian law:
  1. A Belgian legal advisor (aisbl) was needed and was hired to look into the difficulties;
  2. A Belgian notary has already approved the current French text of the constitution. One reason for this could be that there were very few legal experts in this specific area of law.
  3. Legal difficulties concerning the “Proxy” status. In Belgian civil law there is no “Proxy” status.
* Some parts of the current constitution are legally correct but have not been followed up, such as the annual Assemblies (no Assembly took place, only churches “voted”).

The proposal was to sort out the problems in these 3 areas, discuss the minimum constitutional amendments required to make CEC a fit for purpose organisation in Belgium at the next Governing Board meeting with concrete proposals. Although this was essentially about fine-tuning the current constitution, the amendments are quite extensive. It does not necessarily involve a large scale constitutional debate at the assembly. However, member churches need to have the full information circulated in accordance with the Standing Orders.

Metropolitan Emmanuel noted that the Presidency did not touch this issue yet. The points are clear, but we should also be clear that all these amendments are only about bringing the constitution in line with Belgium law.

Proposal agreed by APC.

**16:30-19:00 Session II**

1. **Information sent to Member Churches, Other participants**

An **update was provided by the Assembly Coordinator** about the invitation letters sent to Member Churches, to NCCs, to Organizations in Partnerships. APC had not seen this correspondence earlier. There was a general discussion in which the following was pointed out:

* That one should be careful of imbalance between the number of delegates and the 500 overall participants.
* The question of regional balance for MC advisors needs to be addressed.
* In all that one now does, the CEC office needs to be aware that communication had been already sent in this matter.
* The Church of Norway has already selected a balanced delegation.
* The Budapest decision of “small assembly” appears now facing difficulties. The size of Assemblies will need further reflection next time.
* The decision about MC advisors should be made by GB as part of APC proposal.
* One should consider that similar size churches should perhaps have similar No. of advisors.

The Assembly Coordinator then presented a report on how the organizing team functioned. He introduced staff members of various working teams with an overview on the work plan. Dates of the different meetings were mentioned: Brussels organizing team meeting (04/09); Participant team meeting in Novi Sad (29/08-30/08); Youth working team in Novi Sad (30/08-01/09); upcoming meetings of the Communication team (19/10-20/10); Infrastructure/Programme teams 15/10-16/10.

APC took note of this information.

**The Local Coordinator** presented his report: Contracts with Hotels have been signed and a good price reduction achieved (ca. 25.000 EUR). 100 phones will be provided by MTS Telekom Serbia. A local organizing team was set up with enthusiastic, energetic youth people. Efforts have been made to include local churches in the Sunday services. However, not all churches responded positively.

In discussion it was pointed out that:

* The lack of interest and co-operation of the other local churches was a problem.
* That a visit to these churches in Novi Sad by the APC Moderator and the General Secretary could help to resolve the situation.

APC took note of the update and expressed thanks to the Assembly Coordinator and Local Coordinator for their activities.

Evening prayer by Kirchenrat Klaus Rieth

**3 October**

09:00-10:45 Session III – Morning prayer by Archbishop Yeznik

1. **Assembly programme and design**

The Moderator presented the updated programme and timeline for the Assembly. The following points were noted:

* A Credentials Committee was no more needed, since according to the legal advisers most of what is required would have been already clarified and checked in advance.
* The report from the Presidency and the General Secretary could be put into an earlier slot of the assembly programme.
* The two readings suggested for constitutional amendments in the programme are in order.
* The confessional balance of the two keynote speakers was discussed, since both were from Lutheran tradition.
* The reason for the choice of the particular young speaker for the keynote address was not clear. The problem with the choice was the person’s lack of attendance at any of the hub group meetings.
* Regards the Moderators for the Assembly itself, the General Secretary mentioned that the following names were being considered: Archbishop Vercammen (Old Catholic); a personality from the Orthodox leadership; and Mrs Beate Fagerli from the Church of Norway. In the discussion that followed, some of the members felt that Andreas Aarflot should be included in the list of names to be considered by the Nominations panel of the Governing Board. He definitely belongs to the category *youth*, has been on the Governing Board and knows how CEC works. This would be even symbolically an important development. Similarly, Archbishop Yeznik noted that Katherina Zorba should also be included in the list of persons being considered for the role of Assembly Moderator and deputy Moderators or for another slot, such as a Bible Study. Normally, the APC should have a role in making such suggestions to the Governing Board and the nominations panel.
* There was concern regarding who will be running the workshops. There was general agreement that the workshops need to be forward-looking and linked to the 3 assembly thematic blocks and the future work of CEC. Workshops should furthermore reflect the work in TRGs as well. It would be important for the moderators of the different TRGs to be consulted, since they have also been working intensively in delivering CEC’s mandate.
* On another note the Fr Heikki mentioned that shortages in staff are limiting CEC in its programmatic work.
* In terms of the number of workshops there was more debate, since in some cases there was overlap. Most members felt that a reduction of the workshops to between 12 and 14 may help. It would be worth considering.

11:00-12:30 Session IV

1. **Appointment of the APC Vice-Moderator**

* On the suggestion of the APC Moderator, Ms Catherine **Tsavdaridou,** Ecumenical Patriarchate, was unanimously elected as the APC-Vice Moderator

1. **Initial discussions on an Assembly Conference Logo**

Henrik Hansson (CEC Communications) presented an initial proposal for an assembly logo for discussions. This was prepared in collaboration with the Romanian agency, High Contrast. The following points were made in this connection:

* The term *15th General Assembly* needs to be avoided, since the legal situation in Belgium is different. Therefore one needs to stick to the Governing Board decision to just say 2018 General Assembly, Novi Sad.
* The Logo needed to be clear that we are a Christian organisation. The colours were good, but the cross was used in a kind of apologetic way. This was not a confident cross.
* The words of Witness-Justice-Hospitality could be incorporated, but any logo should incorporate the overarching theme ***you shall be my witnesses*. I**f possible with the strapline ***Witness-Justice-Hospitality***.
* A local artist may be useful. The CEC communication section has tried to do this without any response from the particular person suggested.
* The CEC logo of the boat is a good reflection for the refugee crisis.
* The Logo used in Trondheim could help in moving the matter forward.

**APC consensus: go with the ecumenical logo, but with the overarching theme at least on it.**

1. **Subsidies, report from Nan and Elena from the Subsidy Core Group**

The members of the core group presented the Subsidy Guidelines.

It was pointed out that the Governing Board had set up a fund for subsidies in the Assembly Budget that cannot be exceeded. It must be taken into consideration in subsidy allocation.

It was decided that the APC Moderator and the Subsidy Core Group finalise the guidelines for subsidies and present it to the Governing Board for approval.

1. **Update about the Youth Event**

Satu Koikkalainen presented details concerning the Youth Programme. APC observed:

* That in terms of the programme, it was good that there would be a message from the youth already on the 2nd day. This was a good sign.
* There should be more coordination to ensure that Member Churches also get the opportunity to nominate Youth Advisors.

1. **Updated lists on participants**

The format and status of the participant lists were presented by the Assembly Coordinator (10 nominations had so far been received from delegates). The lists contained the different participant categories.

14:00-16:00 Session V

1. **Finances, Assembly Budget**

The Assembly Coordinator presented the Assembly Budget that has been approved by the Budget Committee. In terms of the assembly costs, there were some important discussions, since surprise was expressed at the increase of costs of this assembly compared to the one in Budapest.

It was also pointed out that one should be careful, since not always planned revenues were received as anticipated.

The Assembly Coordinator mentioned that nothing can be excluded, but according to the promises so far received he does not expect major deviations. Work has been done to follow-up the fundraising discussions with the Government of Serbia and Vojvodina. The Diocese of Backa is involved in helping to realise the financial support from the Serbian authorities.

APC takes note of all these points.

1. **ECEN proposal for environmental-friendly Assembly**

APC notes that this needs to be taken to the GB for a decision. In any case one can only do what is locally possible and here the Local Committee has an important voice.

1. **Update about publications**

The Communications lead person in CEC, Henrik Hansson presented the ideas being considered for the publication Budapest to Novi Sad. It was pointed out that:

* This publication was an important Assembly document. It would be important to follow the last publication in terms of design and content. The APC Moderator would need to make a contribution on behalf of the APC.
* Some felt that it would be better to have a longer and more substantial publication.

1. **Publication regarding Member Churches**

The Publication of Member Churches would be completed. Mariana presented to the APC all the information currently obtained and requested all APC members to be pro-active in providing her with information about their churches to update or amend all that has so far been done. It was also agreed that the Assembly Coordinator obtain relevant information from the CEC Office of official numbers by Member Churches and sent it to Mariana.

1. **APC members participation at the Assembly**

APC emphasised that it was already agreed that each members of the Committee should be present at the Assembly with the different roles already identified.

1. **Timing, deadlines for the next period**

APC pointed out that the Assembly Agenda as per the Assembly design in item 7 of these minutes along with the approved Constitution will need to be sent to all member churches immediately after the Governing Board meeting in November. An appropriate letter from the CEC General Secretary finalised with the insight of the Governing Board Legal Advisor Andreas Aaarflot and the APC Moderator will need to be sent to all member churches along with the Assembly Agenda and the approved CEC Constitution.

The issue of the fine tuning of the constitution with appropriate constitutional amendments and the Rules of Procedure for the Assembly will be discussed at the November Governing Board meeting after which the APC will be in a position to discuss the matter further at its December meeting in Stuttgart.

1. **Translations**

The constitution will be available in French, English, Russian and German.

1. **Next APC meetings**

* Stuttgart, December 3-5, until lunch time on 5th.
* Brussels, February 18-20, until lunch time on 20th (location needs some further clarification).

The meeting closed with Evening prayer by Fr Leslie Nathaniel