



Conference of European Churches

Governing Board

Brussels, 22-24 November 2018

CEC Work Plan 2019-2023

Updated 19/11/2018

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1. Member Relations

Growing Conciliar Understanding		
Aims	Objectives	Methods
<p>In the preamble of its Constitution, the Conference of European Churches defines itself as an ecumenical fellowship of churches. Member Churches of CEC are described as pursuing together the path of growing conciliar understanding and seeking growth in a fellowship of faith, hope, and love. Their commitment to mutual respect helps CEC to grow as an inclusive open fellowship of churches, able and willing to both give and receive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC will enhance service to its constituency as an instrument of the Churches for common mission in a changing Europe; committing itself to continuous dialogue among its Members, providing them with a space for giving and receiving the spiritual riches of their different traditions. • New methods will be used by the secretariat to facilitate the interaction among the Member Churches of the Conference, Organisations in Partnership, and National Councils of Churches. The number of Member Churches participating in a CEC programme in 2019-2023 will rise to at least 100. • The theological and ecclesiological foundation will be strengthened and clarified in all CEC programmes. The aim is to avoid the dichotomy of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inter-connectedness of CEC programmes will be enhanced through a common theme for the period until the next General Assembly. Special attention will be given to spelling out the relationship and interaction of the spiritual-theological approach with the socio-political programmes. • Communication by the office with the Member Churches and the Governing Board members with the Member Churches in their region – also others than their own – will be intensified. A most efficient method of communication will be identified with each Member Church, including a “CEC correspondent.” In communication with Member Churches attention will be paid to the possibilities of social media, video, and other new methods.

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	<p>spiritual-political, social-ecclesial and to formulate a holistic ecumenical approach both to social and theological questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An annual or bi-annual meeting of ecumenical officers and/or “CEC correspondents” will be organised. The tradition of Europe secretaries’ meetings (church and society) will be developed towards a “more than Western affluent churches” participation.• Regional events, in close cooperation with Member Churches and National Council of Churches, will be used as method in CEC programmes, in order to take them closer to the local contexts and to involve more Member Churches in the discussions.• The annual meetings of National Council of Churches, coordinated by CEC, strengthens this network in a concrete way, and carries potential for more concrete relation to other programmes.• An instrument for relating more regularly and more comprehensively with Organisations in Partnership will be developed.
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Effective Ecumenical Networking		
Aims	Objectives	Methods
<p>CEC will continue to offer its constituency effective networks with other ecumenical actors, non-governmental organisations, the European Institutions and global partners. The aim of this networking is to make the ecumenical agenda known and to relate the European priorities to global realities.</p> <p>In the Ecumenical sphere, CEC links with its European Catholic partners, the other Regional Ecumenical Organizations, and the World Council of Churches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC will assist its constituency in following and understanding the political developments in the EU and the Council of Europe and participating in the discussions in a relevant way. An important basis for this is provided by CEC's role in the dialogue of the EU with churches, religions and convictions stipulated by Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union Article 17, as well as CEC's position as a recognised International Non-Governmental Organisation in the Council of Europe. • CEC will give a common voice to the churches' concerns vis-a-vis the European Institutions, in close cooperation with the Commission of Bishops' Conferences in the European Union (COMECE), the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), and Member Church representations to the EU and Council of Europe. • CEC will give expression on the European level to the churches' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation with CCEE will be revitalised, identifying common pastoral and social goals. The evaluation of the Charta Oecumenica will be continued. Nationalism will be studied in the 2019 meeting of the CEC-CCEE joint committee. • COMECE remains the main partner in the dialogue and interaction towards the EU Institutions. In light of the results of the 2019 EU elections, and national politics in the member states, a common strategy will be defined with regard to the auspicious development of the Art17 dialogue. • Contacts and cooperation with faith based and other non-governmental organisations will be developed, including inter-religious partners.

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	<p>common witness, in close cooperation with the Council of European Bishops Conferences (CCEE) and confessional and inter-confessional partners, such as CPCE, the Porvoo communion and others.</p>	
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2. Human Rights

NB: The Conference of European Churches holds membership in the European Platform Against Religious Intolerance and Discrimination (EPRID), Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN), European Union Fundamental Rights Platform (EU FRP), and International Non-governmental Organisation Conference at the Council of Europe (INGO).

Internal		
Aims	Objectives	Methods
CEC's Member Churches deepen their understanding of human rights and advance their implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member Churches increases their participation to 50% in CEC's human rights programmes and activities and identify with them (50%).• Finalise the second volume of the Human Rights Training Manual.• CEC continues providing the training of Member Churches in the particular areas of human rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using all communication possibilities to approach all Member Churches about CEC Human Rights documentation and the way how they can use them and monitor the implementation of human rights decisions endorsed by the Governing Board.• CEC continues and further develops its publications programme on human rights and freedom of religion or belief.• Each year, a Summer School on Human Rights is held, rotating through CEC's regions and conferences when relevant.• CEC continues and further develops its 'Standing up for Minority Rights' programme via video method.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC supports its Members in cases of human rights conflicts or violations, especially concerning freedom of religion or belief (25%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Reference Group will assist to CEC in examining all possible human rights violations brought to its attention by affected Member Churches in an appropriate way and suggest the respond to each church
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The human rights dimension is relevant also for other work-areas of CEC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A procedure is introduced to examine human rights links and impacts of CEC's work.
External		
Aims	Objectives	Methods
CEC is perceived as an indispensable human rights advocacy actor by the European Institutions (European Union, Council of Europe, and so on) (25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC actively addresses relevant human rights and freedom of religion or belief violations coming from the Member Churches and its partners vis-à-vis the International organisations and, as appropriate, the public (15%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC will regularly produce résumés of its human rights conferences and bring them to the attention of international organizations and CEC Member Churches
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC is asked to provide expertise on human rights issues, in particular freedom of religion or belief, by institutional and political actors (10%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC is represented at various human rights hearings and conferences of third parties. • CEC is liaising with the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the EU institutions. • CEC contributes to the human rights and freedom of religion or belief

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		<p>dimension of other international fora, such as the World Council of Churches, G20 Interfaith Forum, European Platform Against Religious Intolerance and Discrimination (EPRID), Human Rights and Democracy Network (HRDN), European Union Fundamental Rights Platform (EU FRP), and International Non-Governmental Organisation Conference at the Council of Europe (INGO).</p>
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3. Education: Raising Humanity

“... and when your children ask you ...” Exodus 12:26

The Strategy and Policy Committee report of the 2018 Novi Sad General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches describes the policy area of Hope as follows:

Christians are drawn by hope . . . Theological and other dialogues can help churches articulate and live out . . . a form of bridge-building between people that offers the world a different and joyful model of relating: loving, living, learning.

Education is not mere learning of facts or acquisition of elementary skills but a lifelong process of human development. It is an essential part of cultural evolution and self-understanding. Education concerns values, attitudes, skills and knowledge and is strongly linked to identity and culture. CEC is member of the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations of the Council of Europe and, therefore, has status as an observer in the Steering committee of Practices and Policies of Education (CDPPE). One of the main programs at the moment is the Competences for Democratic Culture program where religions play an important role when it comes to the understanding of diversity and plurality. Through globalisation and migration, society faces a diversity of philosophies and concepts of understanding the world and different cultures. Churches have a key role when it comes to culture, values, and identity. Churches are concerned about the raise of extremism and populist tendencies in Europe. CEC needs to enable Member Churches to face and to discuss these issues in a well-balanced way orientated at the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Aims	Objectives	Methods
CEC participates actively in the discussion about diversity, pluralism in our societies, and in education policies when it comes to religious affairs. CEC is considered as a bridge builder in the European Institutions and governmental institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognise transversal issues (e.g., human rights, social affairs, digitalisation) and make a theological evaluation of such.• Monitoring current developments in the field of intercultural education and dialogue policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop training for policy makers in religious education• Elaborate guidelines• Organise seminars on linked topics with experts• Explore partnership with other non-governmental organisations with religious background

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<p>CEC enables Member Churches to become bridge builders when it comes to intercultural and interreligious dialogue in their country.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make Member Churches aware of the concept of diversity and enable them to become an important stakeholder for politics and for civil society when it comes to intercultural dialogue.• Support for orientation when it comes to interreligious and intercultural dialogue in school education as well as in adult education.• Contribute actively in the European Union and Council of Europe to develop programs and manuals for intercultural dialogue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assisting the meetings of the education department of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg• Get in contact with European religious organisations on the basis of the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations• Use new learning and communication methods (hackathon, webinar, Twitter, YouTube, webinars)• Work in close cooperation with youth organisations and church academies• Optimise the work with organisations in partnership and use their expertise
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4. The Churches Contribution to the Future of Europe

Aims	Objectives	Methods
Offer CEC Member Churches a forum for sharing regional, confessional and cultural diversity for raising churches' concerns about facing current social and political challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Facilitate and highlight churches' contributions in facing current challenges related to particular European policies as well as to broader concerns related to the whole continent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Follow up of the consultation on Future of Europe, including sharing the outcomes of the consultation with CEC Member ChurchesIn cooperation with churches from specific regions in Europe, in particular the United Kingdom and Ireland in follow up to Brexit, central Europe, and the western Balkans, and work on their specific concerns related to current historical situations and developments of the continent.
Facilitating churches' contribution to Future of Europe discussion under the motto: unity in diversity in a dialogue with the European political institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Communicate churches' concerns through appropriate means as, dialogue, high level meetings, expert consultations, events, and so on, with European political institutions.Cooperation with ecumenical partners and with other stakeholders from civil society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enabling and contributing to a dialogue with the European Union.

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5. Economic and Ecological Justice

Aims	Objectives	Methods
<p>Increase engagement of CEC Member Churches in the care for creation and sustainable development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight a particular role for churches and faith based organisations in addressing care for environment, sustainable development, economic and ecological justice in word and prayers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elaborating and deepening theological arguments in the care for creation, eco-theology and environmental ethics. For example, in the work of the European Christian Environmental Network, eco-theology working group, contributions to papers, papers, and so on. Supporting churches in Europe in the follow up of the recommendation of the Second European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu that the period from 1 September to 4 October be dedicated to prayer for the protection of creation and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support churches in the fight against climate change and ecological destruction. Offer a space for sharing, exchange of experience and common projects, continue and further develop partnership and cooperation with the Council of Bishops' Conferences of Europe (CCEE) and the Commission of Bishops' Conferences of the European Union. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating the networking, providing secretariat for European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) and ensuring vitality of the network. Organisation and leadership in preparing biannual ECEN assemblies, and also workshops and seminars.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In action we will undertake and support initiatives aiming at reducing ecological 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organising and providing leadership for ECEN, including joint projects of churches enabling sharing

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	<p>footprint and support work on theological and liturgical resources highlighting our responsibility to care for creation.</p>	<p>of experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the voices from the margins, and hear from those who have first-hand experience of the effects of our over consumption that puts such strain on resources, people, and the environment. • Finalising the Eco-management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) in the Ecumenical Centre in Brussels
<p>Raise the voice of churches in a dialogue with relevant political institutions, especially European Union and United Nations in expressing churches' concerns on ecological challenges, in particular climate change and sustainable development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate at the European level for an alternative and sustainable economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating, organising and engaging CEC Member Churches in dialogue on themes related to economic and ecological justice with the European Union.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and be a strong voice regarding questions related to environmental protection, climate justice and sustainable development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating, organising and engaging CEC Member Churches in dialogue on themes related to economic and ecological justice with the European Union. • Raising a voice of churches at the United Nations level • Presence in United Nations Climate Change Conferences (COPs), cooperation with and engaging CEC Member Churches in countries hosting COPs.
<p>Work together and strengthen effective cooperation with other ecumenical actors, in particular the World Council of Churches, well as CEC Organisations in Partnership, faith based actors and other partners from civil society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure qualified voice of faith based actors in addressing challenge of climate change and ecological destruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to an ecumenical team under the leadership of the World Council of Churches in works on climate change and sustainable development

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6. Employment and Social Affairs

Aims	Objectives	Methods
<p>CEC develops a distinguished theological and social-ethical understanding of social inequality in Europe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CEC establishes a theological ecumenical dialogue about the understanding of social inequality, poverty, equality and diversity of the human being.• CEC analyses, collects and evaluates Member Church social-ethical reasoning and reflections as well as examples of practical reactions regarding social inequality in Europe.• CEC and its Member Churches deepen their knowledge about the economic and social situation in countries and regions in Europe.• CEC monitors the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EU), of the Social Charter (Council of Europe) and on relevant topics, the Sustainable Development Goals (UN).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CEC convenes a CEC-wide theological conference on the theological understanding of social inequality. Out of the conference a focus group will be established to pursue the agreed objectives. Eurodiaconia is an essential and natural partner in this process.

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<p>CEC monitors and contributes to the development, the discussion and the European political decision taking on the changes (or future) of work in Europe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CEC strengthens its Church Action on Labour and Life-network (CALL), which facilitates CEC's work on employment issues.• Through CALL CEC works on the analysis of developments on the labour market, the development of guidelines for policy (advocacy) and will share information and good practice in the engagement for decent and good work.• CEC plays an active role in the European Sunday Alliance and keeps the level of presence achieved in Brussels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CEC gives credit to the work of CALL and the CALL coordination team. A CEC staff member is part of the CALL coordination team. Under the roof of CEC, CALL develops on its own its agreed aims and objectives.• A staff member of CEC is member of the steering committee of the European Sunday Alliance (ESA) and part of the planning and implementation of the projects of the ESA (European conferences, European Parliament Interest Group, social media activities, campaigns).
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7. Science and Technology

Developments in science and technology continue to prompt important ethical, social, and theological questions. Areas like biotechnology, robotics and artificial intelligence, and digitalization increasingly influence how we go about our daily lives and organise our societies. From a Christian perspective, this also impacts our self-understanding as made in the image of God, the dignity of the human, and how we understand the unfolding of Creation. Furthermore, science and technology will shape our future and the present. What is our understanding of the future and how do we evaluate it theologically?

Aims	Objectives	Methods
<p>Understand church and related work relating to contemporary issues in science and technology. Use this to develop CEC perspectives in this area.</p> <p>Bring churches together and enable them to more fully participate in the ethical, social, and theological debates relating to science and technology, including with the European political institutions. Work as well on a grassroots level.</p> <p>Include youth experiences and expertise in this programmatic area as much as possible.</p> <p>Identify transversal issues linked to science and technology (e.g., biotechnology and social affairs, social equality and class issues)</p> <p>Develop CEC work in the area of digitalization, including the relationship with employment and social issues, work-life balance, communicating Christian messages, and more.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey CEC Member Churches through opinion polls, telephone interviews, and other means to understand priority topics and existing work in this area.• Monitor policies outside the church.• Host forums in every CEC region to facilitate dialogue among Member Churches on emerging themes of common concern.• Develop a youth dimension of this work, including an alternative event to a traditional conference structure (e.g., a hackathon, onsite visits with robotics companies, a maker faire)• Identify key partners already working in this area and advance CEC collaboration (e.g., CODEC institute, European Christian Internet Conference, Zygon, OPTIC Network)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation. Conversation through a number of means with our constituency and partners to achieve the aims and objectives above.• Forums. Face-to-face gatherings focused on dialogue and exchange.• Advocacy. Monitoring developments at the European political institutions, participating in advisory groups, attending relevant debates and consultations.• Special Events. One-off youth events, conferences, seminars, and contributions to other church events as they arise.• Ad hoc working groups on individual issues

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose contact persons in member churches or/and the GB on "Science and technology"
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8. Communication

Communication for the Conference of European Churches includes all public communication, including website, social media, newsletters, press releases, event coverage, publications, annual report, branding and promotional material, and so on. Through these means we show the work of CEC and the activities of our members and partners.

To keep work manageable, internal communication directly with the Governing Board and Member Churches, including maintaining databases is handled by administrative colleagues in the secretariat, rather than the Communication Coordinator.

Aims	Objectives	Methods
<p>Through all of our communication efforts we will seek to enhance fellowship among Member Churches for the sake of fulfilling the vision and mission of CEC.</p> <p>Develop a strong network of communicators and journalists supportive of CEC's mission and activities who will participate in our communications work and make it more diverse and far-reaching than possible alone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with existing networks to learn more about CEC members and partners, and to encourage them to participate in CEC communication work. (E.g., European Christian Internet Conference, Lutheran communicators gathering, World Association for Christian Communication). Host joint events in collaboration with these partners.• Host a gathering of communicators in eastern Europe, where our connections and networks need the most attention.• Find regional CEC communication ambassadors to send the CEC communication team information about churches and related organisations in their regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Networking. Bring communicators together through conferences, advisory groups, one-to-one meetings, visits, and so on.• Relationship building. Visit members and partners as much as possible, find people who can help with the flow of information to and from the CEC communications team.• Professional development for all CEC staff to improve the quality of our communications, including using in-house guidelines for press releases and other content.

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Improve the diversity of CEC communication, including more regional, linguistic, and confessional representation. Also intentionally monitor and improve upon the inclusion of women, youth, ethnic and racial minorities, people with disabilities, refugees and others in our public presentation of our activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a communications advisory group of communicators and journalists who can meet once a year to help set the direction for CEC communication, provide professional feedback, and give insight into local contexts.	
Enhance CEC communication through professional development of the communications team, increased outsourcing to professionals, and using more up-to-date ideas and tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify and undertake professional development for the communications team. This might include courses and workshops in video and social media.• Develop and follow guidelines for diversity and representation in CEC communication.	
Update our communications infrastructure and complete branding project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redevelop the website, including an update of our events registration, donation, resources section.• Develop materials with consistent visual identity that help people understand who we are and what we do. This should make us more recognisable and include banners, templates, brochures, and other materials.	

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9. Ecclesiology and Mission

The Church as Communion:

Ecclesiologies of churches with historical longevity in Europe in dialogue with ecclesiologies of 'migrant' churches

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Rom. 12:2

Description

Since the last century, communion has been the hermeneutical framework of reflecting on the nature and mission of the Church. Despite the differences in understanding and applying the concept, the differing views and also divisions over a number of questions captured broadly in the ecumenical discourses on baptism, eucharist, and ministry, the churches ascribing to the hermeneutical framework of communion, have developed a common theological language and share considerable common ground, as testified by the agreement and convergence documents of over more than fifty years of official dialogues. Over the past decades, increased migration in Europe has been admittedly changing the ecclesial landscape: vibrant Evangelical and Pentecostal churches are growing as well as new and charismatic expressions of being Church, whereas ancient Oriental churches are finding a new home in European societies. Not all Christians and churches rooted currently in Europe have the same understanding of Church, not all churches share the same theological vocabulary to address questions of ecclesiology and mission.

In the Strategy and Policy Report of the General Assembly, migration and nationalist populism have been identified as challenges that need to be faced by CEC in the coming years. Although in recent times churches and academic scholarship have been acknowledging that migration has always been part of the Church's history and identity, there are cases where tendencies also within churches foster exclusivist and nationalistic ideas and attitudes. In view of the current reality, CEC is called to provide the forum for its Member Churches to examine their ecclesiologies in dialogue with the ecclesiologies of the 'migrant' churches in Europe, and discuss exclusivist tendencies.

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Aims	Objectives	Methods
A. 40%		
<p>To enhance exchange and strengthen relationships among CEC Member Churches, and facilitate dialogue with non-Member Churches active in Europe.</p> <p>To contribute to the global multilateral dialogue a uniquely informed European perspective on ecclesiology and mission.</p> <p>To develop a common theological language and understanding on questions of ecclesiology and mission.</p>	<p>To examine ecclesiologies of churches with historical longevity in Europe in conversation with ecclesiologies of ‘migrant’ churches.</p> <p>To examine various views on mission and perceptions of proselytism.</p>	<p>Committee on Ecclesiology & Mission.</p> <p>Composition of the Committee: 20 members, a steering group of 6 persons including the moderator, equal representation of male and female, balance of church traditions and European regions, 25% Orthodox participation including young researchers and persons with disability. Include the Secretary for Theology of CPCE, 2 Catholic Consultants, 2 Pentecostal Consultants, 1 representative from the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women, 1 representative from the European youth organisations. Engage ecclesiologists, missiologists, systematic theologians. Consider how to engage the secretaries for theology of the World Christian Communions (European desks).</p>
<p>To analyse historical developments, theological ideas, and ecclesial structures that make churches prone to exclusivist and nationalistic tendencies.</p> <p>To explore what ecumenical theology, and ecclesiology in particular, may offer as an</p>	<p>To understand the past and how it shaped the understanding of being Church and its mission: explore church and nation/state relations by studying the impact of the 30 Years’ War, the communist rule, Ottoman legacies.</p>	<p>Annual meeting of ecumenical officers of the CEC Member Churches for consultation and exchange.</p>

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<p>antidote to overcome divisions with regard to the relationship of church and nation/state.</p>		
		<p>Unity blog featuring a theological reflection of 1000 words monthly on a topic of common concern for the Member Churches, or theological commentary on urgent matters of the continent. Church leaders, ecumenically engaged academics, young scholars addressing cutting-edge questions will be invited to contribute.</p>
		<p>Regional and local consultations, seminars, conferences, panels, study groups in cooperation with the Member Churches.</p>
		<p>Taking stock of global developments in the ecumenical movement, harvesting existing agreements and promoting their reception regionally and locally.</p>
		<p>Cooperation with the World Council of Churches, the Global Christian Forum, and theologians who participate in bilateral dialogues.</p>
<p>To participate in the development of the Network of European Mission Studies, which will be launched at the 2019 Europe</p>	<p>To facilitate collaboration between various mission studies groups, mission organisations, mission practitioners, and individual scholars</p>	<p>Cooperation with the Europe desk of the International Association of Mission Studies and mission organisations active in Europe.</p>

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Conference of the International Association of Mission Studies. (10%)	interested in mission and mission studies and related fields across Europe.	
Concrete projects:		
To enhance exchange and strengthen relationships among CEC Member Churches. (10%)	To celebrate and reflect ecumenically on the Centenary of the 1920 Lambeth Appeal to All Christian People and the Patriarchal and Synodal Encyclical of 1920 'Unto the Churches of Christ everywhere'.	Conference to commemorate the Centenary and reflect on the European churches' commitment to ecumenical work.
To contribute to the 60 th anniversary of CEC (5%).	To invite ecumenical reflection on 'hope' as a theological theme and explore its repercussions for the work of CEC and CEC's role in Europe.	Conference featuring prominent church leaders, distinguished theologians, and emerging scholars.

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10. Interreligious Dialogue

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Rom. 12:2

Description

What happens in a parish when it welcomes refugees who are not Christian? Experiences and approaches of church members differ. Some avoid any conversation or practice that relates to faith in fear of causing disagreements. Some want to convert the newcomers and are not sensitive to their convictions. Some are conflicted about inviting believers of other faiths to the services; this is not always respectful to Christians or those belonging to other religions. Some are skeptical about their engagement with believers of other religions because they fear that it is a betrayal of the gospel. There are those who fear refugees and do not want to have new people in the parish hall, there are those who want to be welcoming but do not know exactly how to behave around people who hold a different faith; there are those who observe that polarisation and radicalisation are growing. These are but few realities that demonstrate the need for churches in Europe to be theologically prepared in order to face a number of challenges as they engage with people of other faiths. The responses to the Charta Œcumenica questionnaire of 2017 show that a number of CEC Member Churches and National Councils of Churches have or are developing resources to respond to the present situation; others do not have the means to do so. The urgent question remains: How do we form a new community in Europe as we welcome new people in our churches and societies who are not necessarily Christian?

CEC has a long history of cooperating with partners from the world religions on a number of questions. Interreligious dialogue has been taking place in many areas of programmatic work, and was underlined anew in the Strategy and Policy Report of the General Assembly. A programme focused on interreligious dialogue will enable CEC to reflect on and respond to the complexities of the current European situation. Migration brings to the fore the urgency of developing such a programme and the necessity for churches in Europe to exchange experiences and expertise that stem from their engagement (in some cases centuries-long) with other religions.

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Aims	Objectives	Methods
(B)		
<p>To apply the commitments of <i>Charta Œcumena</i> and strengthen dialogue with Islam, Judaism, and other religions.</p>	<p>Churches to overcome distorted perceptions of interreligious dialogue.</p>	<p>Network of church officers in Europe working with interfaith matters to exchange experiences, share good practices, and strengthen interfaith work in times of migration. Members of the network should be practitioners bringing their own experience of interfaith work.</p>
<p>To revisit CEC work on developing a Theology of Religions.</p>	<p>Churches to reflect together on interpreting scriptural and other tradition that is used to prohibit dialogue and openness.</p>	<p>Liaising with the Theology of Religions project of the CPCE and other relevant projects in the Member Churches of CEC.</p>
	<p>Churches to identify and use theological and spiritual resources that compel them to inspire respect for other religious traditions.</p>	<p>Cooperation with the WCC Programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation, National Councils of Churches, and the Christian World Communions.</p>
<p>To address fear, and respond to Islamophobia and Antisemitism.</p>	<p>Churches with other faith communities to facilitate learning about other religions and exchange in order to overcome prejudices and fear.</p>	<p>Committee on Interreligious dialogue in Europe. Draw from existing CEC networks including new partners from other faith communities.</p>

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To develop and extend CEC's network of resource persons able to contribute to the dialogue on Article 17 and other EU related projects.	Churches with other faith communities to explore our common task for promoting mutual respect and peace-making.	

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11. Migration and Asylum

The Conference of European Churches and Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) agreement of cooperation of November 2017 stipulates "When CEC work plans are developed for the period 2019-23, the CCME work programme adopted by the CCME General Assembly in Prague 2017 will be taken into account."

CCME would therefore once again like to offer the CEC Governing Board the opportunity to engage with the issues and themes highlighted in the CCME work programme 2018-20. In all activities, the ongoing cooperation with the European ecumenical youth networks will be continued.

Safe Passage		
Aims	Objectives	Methods
<p>The aims in this area include better lifesaving search and rescue operations, legal provision for safe passages – both nationally and Europe-wide as well as an increased number of places available for safe passages. As a first step better communication and networking between churches and Christian organisation active in this field in Europe will be further developed. The practical experiences of Christian actors on the ground will be collected. Advocacy with national governments and European institutions are essential as well as continued information of an interested public and policy makers. This</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of search and rescue as well as reception at Europe's external borders.• Continued advocacy and networking efforts to enable safe and legal access to Europe for those in need of protection, but also for those migrating in search of labour.• Emphasis will be put on family reunification, resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes, humanitarian visa, lifting of visa requirements as well as legal channels for labour migration, the mutual recognition of protection status	

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<p>area has obvious interlinkages with other CEC work, particularly in the area of social issues.</p>	<p>between states and fairer sharing of the responsibility to provide for protection.</p>	
<p>European and International Refugee Protection</p>		
<p>Aims</p>	<p>Objectives</p>	<p>Methods</p>
<p>The aims in this area include improvement or at least damage control in legislation and practice on asylum. As a first step exchange and networking plus common positioning of churches and Christian organisations in Europe will be further developed. The manifold practical experiences of Christian actors on the ground also in this area will be collected. Advocacy with national governments and European institutions are essential as well as continued information of an interested public and policy makers. This area has obvious interlinkages with other CEC work particularly in the area of human rights, in the longer run also tin the area of integrity of creation (environmental displacement)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uphold the right of persons in need of international protection to access a fair, speedy and high quality procedure with adequate reception conditions • Support the search for solidarity in responsibility sharing for refugee protection between different states. • In addition to resettlement, seek to improve asylum procedures through dialogue with relevant authorities on this subject 	
<p>Europe and International Migration</p>		
<p>Aims</p>	<p>Objectives</p>	<p>Methods</p>
<p>The aims in this area include damage control in currently proposed legislation and practice on family reunification (especially for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for a clear, transparent and accessible system of migration to 	

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<p>refugees) and return procedures for person without regular status in Europe. As a first step common positioning of churches and Christian organisations in Europe will be developed. The expert knowledge of Christian actors (e.g. in counselling for families or work in migrant detention) will be brought to the forefront.</p> <p>This area has obvious interlinkages with other CEC work, particularly in the area of human rights.</p>	<p>Europe - based on fundamental rights of migrants with a focus on family unity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special concern will be given to the most vulnerable in international migration, such as undocumented migrants, women and children. 	
<p>Upholding the Dignity of Persons</p>		
<p>Aims</p>	<p>Objectives</p>	<p>Methods</p>
<p>The aims in this area would include a stocktaking on Christian best practices to overcome various forms of discrimination and in particular include an event on challenges articulated by Roma towards churches. This area has obvious interlinkages with other CEC work, particularly in the area of human rights as well unity of the church.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the protection of those groups discriminated against in the context of ethnic, social, racial, religious and gender based exclusion. • Roma discrimination, with particular focus on the role played by churches. • Commitment against racism and xenophobia, particularly when related to migration. 	
<p>Uniting in Diversity</p>		
<p>Aims</p>	<p>Objectives</p>	<p>Methods</p>

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<p>The aims in this area would include a stocktaking and event on the development and future perspectives of processes on “being church together” – these elements will feature prominently in the 3rd edition of the study “mapping migration – mapping churches’ responses”. This area has obvious interlinkages with CEC work, particularly in the area of unity of the church.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and “Being Church Together” will stay on the ecumenical agenda. • Closer cooperation with migrant or minority ethnic churches will be important. • Intensify and enhance the ecumenical cooperation at national and European levels with migrant and minority ethnic churches. 	
<p>Overarching principle: Conversations and cooperation between European churches on migration and displacement</p>		
<p>Aims</p>	<p>Objectives</p>	<p>Methods</p>
<p>The aims in this area include stimulating an ongoing exchange between churches of different geographic background and tradition on the biblical, theological as well as practical understanding and cooperation in addressing asylum and migration.</p> <p>This area has obvious interlinkages with other CEC work, particularly in the area of the future of Europe as well unity of the church.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking to develop a broad consensus among European churches on the role of churches towards migration and refugee protection. • It will include bilateral and multilateral exchanges and visits of solidarity between churches in Europe. • Elements of capacity building and resource sharing will be included in this programme area. 	

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12. Peacebuilding and Reconciliation

Jesus declared peacemakers the children of God. The Churches, therefore, are called to witness and realise peace (shalom) that is more than mere absence of armed conflict. Peace is a gift of God (Jn. 14:27) and at the same time a vocation of Christian life as it is experienced in Christ. Reconciliation and peace, therefore, are not private and individualistic pursuits. The witness to and the practice of peace is public and peace witness is public theology in action. Reconciliation entails building relationships and requires the change and transformation of social structures. The churches and Christian faith have a strong role to play in promoting reconciliation and peace in Europe. The Conference of European Churches has a strong historical foundation in this work that can be built upon to strengthen peace in Europe today.

Aims	Objectives	Methods
<p>Develop an ethical praxis for peacebuilding and reconciliation work that results in concrete action for people of faith actively participating in God’s mission in and for the world.</p> <p>Empower churches to engage as agents of liberation from poverty, hunger, and social oppression.</p> <p>Be non-violent and inclusive witnesses, and advocates for social, restorative, and distributive justice locally and globally.</p> <p>Enhance the theological reflection on just peace and non-violence as first resort, including discussions within Member Churches and with historical Peace churches</p> <p>Proclaim diversity as part of our faith, analyse and dismantle stereotypes that lead to fragmentation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate the development and implementation of education and catechesis as central to the aims of CEC’s peacebuilding and reconciliation work.• Collaborate actively with other faith communities and religious in peacemaking initiatives and processes of peacebuilding.• Challenge and overcome militarism, military consumerism, and all forms of violence.• Link with the ongoing World Council of Churches’ Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace and work on religion and violence. Continue the Healing of Memories programmes between confessions, churches, religious, and ethnic communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a Peace Task Force to act as mediators of peace in the wider European and local context who can actively participate in responding to conflict, peacemaking, and peacebuilding.• Host a Peace Conference in 2019 to identify current threats to peace in Europe, reflect on the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, and reflect theologically and ethically on the past and contemporary world.• Support churches and religious communities including trainings for non-violent methods and de-escalation in their educational programmes

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<p>Work for structures of peace, based on the non-violent resolutions of conflicts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage the development of early warning systems by churches in potential conflict regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build a platform for exchange of information, competences, methods, and expertise at the European level• Express a clear commitment to dialogues and interventions towards the European Parliament, the European Commission, and NATO regarding peacebuilding instead of security management• Strengthen collaboration with OSCE and in public statements underline the role of peacebuilding• Join the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office
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