

Conference of European Churches (CEC)

Thematic Reference Group Peacebuilding & Reconciliation

Proposed Peace Conference in 2019

Introduction

The envisaged CEC conference on the commemoration of World War I did not, for various reasons, materialise in 2014 and 2016 as was originally planned.

The CEC Thematic Reference Group Peacebuilding & Reconciliation agreed that there was still enormous potential for a significant peace conference in 2019 with a twin focus on the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and the current global and European situation.

There are important lessons to be learned. Our discussions have led us to recognise that we cannot ignore the past, but are responsible for how we remember it. Our memories have a profound impact on the present and furthermore shape future actions and our common life in the Europe of the 21st century.

The proposed 2019 CEC Peace Conference will reflect on the past as well as provide greater understanding for the context in which we live today. Reconciliation for peace as desired and as experienced in the different churches of CEC can then become the leitmotif for CEC in its wider engagement in society.

Historically CEC's calling has also been one of reconciliation and peacebuilding. It has ably demonstrated this during the time of the iron curtain. In recent times there is an increasing sense of insecurity and a loss of identity in different regions of Europe. The context is fragile and CEC is once again called to respond appropriately to the challenges to peace and security in Europe, demonstrating its common Christian voice.

Background and consequences of the Paris Peace Conference 1919

The First World War resulted in the end of a world order. The map of Europe was redrawn as was much of the map of the world. Much of the world came to Paris in 1919 to try and construct a new world order, and after the most destructive war in history, to perhaps grasp a second chance to end war. High hopes were to be disappointed as much of the promise of Paris was unfulfilled. The Paris Peace Conference met in the shadow of unspeakable human loss.

A key theme, introduced largely by US President Woodrow Wilson, was the right of small nations to self-determination. The European sense of mission to civilise the world had collapsed, as had four of the six imperial powers, the remaining two, France and Great

Britain, coming to an end by the late 1950's or early 1960's. In Russia there had been the 1917 Revolution, no one yet knowing what would replace tsarism. The Ottoman Empire with its Middle East provinces and little bits of Europe was within the last years of its total collapse. Imperial Prussia-Germany was now a Republic. Old nations were re-emerging and new ones were struggling to be born. The Paris Conference had a thankless task, trying to recreate the international order and build peace without a road map.

The Conference was dominated by the United States of America and the European Allies, and a major impact was the humiliation of Germany through the imposition of a penal peace. Germany's old enemy, France, may have drawn immense satisfaction from the Treaty of Versailles, but within twenty years the world was at war again. Parisian hopes were unfilled because there was a failure to integrate the losers in peacebuilding. Russia was excluded, perhaps because the Allies did not want to recognise its survival and the direction it appeared to be taking. It was not to anyone's benefit that Russia developed in isolation after the Peace Conference.

The League of Nations was formed in Paris with the hope that an international body could secure and sustain world peace. This was the centrepiece of Paris, but Russia was excluded and though enthusiastically backed by President Wilson, the United States opted out of the League, having its own expansionist agenda.

The Paris Peace Conference 1919 gave mandates to France and Great Britain for the Middle East region. There was a crucial question as to how the former Ottoman provinces were to be governed. The Mandates were to be operated under the League but France and Great Britain ignored the League and carved up the region between them, shaping borders to their own purposes and imposing borders in the largely Arab region. Artificial States were created such as Syria, Lebanon, Trans-Jordan and Iraq. Later Saudi Arabia was constructed. Egypt was to be independent but the British remained until 1956. Palestine had the Balfour Declaration, promising Jews and Arabs different things with no attempt made as to how to resolve two competing nationalisms. Thanks to imperial borders, artificially created countries and double-think promises, it is not surprising that the 'explosive future' is still being played out in the Middle East. The conference at Paris was all about the spoils of war, not least because most of the world's petroleum lay under Muslim - inhabited soil. Paris was about mandatory empire!

Ethno-nationalism has never gone away and there is a resurgence in today's Europe. The Middle East carved out by two Western powers and currently the tinder box of the world, continues to experience Western intervention, but a West powerless to enable a resolution of its complex problems. The displaced of Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and of other regions and countries are now fleeing to Europe and experience degrees of resistance to their arrival. Tackling migration from the Middle East will need collective wisdom, honest conversations. There will need to be transparent and sincere decision making of arms

exports to the region. Without changes to the current status quo the situation in the Middle East has the capacity to greatly weaken the European Union, a problem much greater than the Euro crisis.

The Paris Peace Conference 1919 has left many legacies. Much of its promise was unfulfilled. Its most destructive legacy has been the Middle East region and peace in today's world may largely depend on peace in the Middle East. In so far as it has a religious dimension, it involves the Abrahamic faiths, and there is a growing tension between Christianity and Islam, politically and media driven. Paris has bequeathed European politics and Churches with multiple and complex challenges and peace agendas.

CEC Peace Conference Objectives 2019

We cannot ignore the past, but are responsible for how we remember it. Our memories have a profound impact on the present and furthermore shape future actions. Therefore the Conference:

- Will explore the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 in its centenary year, to identify its legacies and to learn some hard lessons from our European and global past.
- Will identify the current threats to peace in Europe and the world and articulate the challenges presented by the global experiences of the 21st century.
- Will draw inspiration from CEC's role/work, since its creation, as an ecumenical instrument engaged with peacebuilding, healing of memories and reconciliation.
- Will robustly reflect theologically and ethically on the past and contemporary world and identify a theological praxis that can enable CEC and its Member Churches to faithfully engage in transformation, healing and reconciliation.
- Will develop appropriate resources for use by Member Churches and partners, so that there is greater recognition of our common Christian life in the Europe of the 21st century.

Shaping the CEC Peace Conference 2019

The Paris Peace Conference 1919 has left many legacies, not least in the Middle East region. Europe was involved 100 years ago and remains connected for good or ill for what happens in this region. European churches share the history of Europe and also have a role to play in the peace building processes within the global order and also with responsibilities and helping to shape more ethical foreign policies.

The Churches prophetic vocation is often to be a community of criticism, resistance and reform. Its role is driven and shaped by core prophetic faith values of justice, freedom, compassion and peace. Psalm 85 holds these values as integrated and indivisible, each needing the other and at times in tension with each other.

“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself... and has given us the ministry of reconciliation...”. In the vision of St Paul reconciliation and peacebuilding are a participation in God’s mission in and for the world. Jesus declared the peacemakers the children of God, a Jewish way of describing the most God-like people. The Churches, therefore, are called to witness to and to the practice of peace. The Churches are also part of civil society and therefore engaged with public issues, such as, politics, international affairs, economics, globalization, environmental healing and human flourishing. Reconciliation and peace are therefore not private and individualistic pursuits. The witness to and the practice of peace is public and peace witness is public theology in action. As responsible actors in civil society the Churches do their theology and peacebuilding in the public arena. This is the response of God’s action to Christ, the living out of public theology and being responsible actors in civil society and in the international order.

A public Church accepts its share of responsibility for the spiritual wellbeing of its adherents and for the common good and wellbeing of society. It has a critical voice when necessary, envisioning an alternative world when required, and it articulates a hope-filled voice. It is local, European and global in its engagement.

The Conference will look back and will look forward. It will reflect on what happened in Paris a century ago as leaders try to recreate the world order. The Conference will also engage with the changing world order under way in the 21st century and in learning lessons from the past seek to avoid the mistakes and failures of the past as well as shape a contemporary strategy for the building of a new vision. Paris did produce many crucial themes with contemporary resonance. A number of these themes and, including challenges facing Member Churches will provide the focus for the Churches engaging with the challenges of peace in the 21st century.

The following themes might offer a useful approach to the conference marking the centenary of the Paris Peace Conference 1919:

1. Paris 1919: Recreating The International Order?

Much of the world came to Paris in 1919 to try and construct a new world order, after the most destructive war in history. Did Paris succeed, to what extent was it a thankless task or was much of the promise of Paris unfulfilled? It was to recreate the international order but whose order? What are the legacies of Paris that remain? (keynote address)

2. The West's Legacy in the Middle East

The legacy of the Paris mandate is still with us in the Middle East with the crisis in Syria and Iraq and other regions and countries and the continuing volatile reality of Israel

Palestine. What responsibility does the Atlantic West have for the past, present and future? (seminar)

3. Populism, Sustainability and Economics

Much of the 1919 Conference was about economics, which still dominate our concerns and efforts for peacebuilding. But can we construct just economics within the life of the world? Just economics are needed to address the ongoing challenges of economic migration, in order to create a more just world and healthy environment. What responses are required to increasing populism and the growth of new forms of nationalism? (seminar)

4. Threats to Global Peace and Learning from the Dark 20th Century

In our struggle now to avoid war and build peace in Europe, have we, as Europeans, moved too quickly from the 20th Century without beginning to make sense of it? Have we really understood the dark 20th Century and learned painful lessons from it? What has been the role of the Conference of European Churches in peacebuilding and reconciliation since its creation, 60 years ago? (keynote address)

5. Europe's Peace Vocation in the Coming World Order

The world order is changing. There is a current dynamic described as Easternisation as power and wealth moves from West to East, China in particular as the emerging super power. In the realignment of power blocs what is Europe's role in the coming world order? Has Europe a distinctive peace vocation and what might it look like? What is the Churches' role in helping to shape the peace vocation? Security has become an obsession in the 21st century and it seems to be a militarised form of security. Can this truly be described as peace? (peace forum)

6. The Abrahamic Religions and the Dialogue of Peace

Much conflict in the world has a religious dimension but religion also has resources, deep resources for peacebuilding. No one religion by itself can build peace but peace in the world may depend mainly on peace between the Abrahamic traditions. This is especially true in a world where there are growing tensions between Christianity and Islam. An enhanced and sustained dialogue of peace between the Abrahamic traditions is an imperative of our time. (seminar)

7. Women and Peacebuilding

Women's role in peacebuilding has not been recognised adequately. In a world where patriarchy dominates, men are considered to be the peacebuilders and to have the necessary capabilities for peacebuilding. Women nevertheless had and have an

important role in the prevention and resolution of conflict, peace negotiation, peacebuilding, peace keeping, humanitarian responses and post-conflict reconstruction. It is important that an equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security be recognised. (seminar)

8. The Public Role of European Churches in Peacebuilding and International Affairs

Today there is serious thought being given to the role of religion in international diplomacy and affairs as well as its role in local and global peacemaking and peacebuilding. What does this change of direction mean for religion in international affairs? The Conference of European Churches and its Member Churches have a vocation to be active participants in God's mission of peacebuilding and reconciliation. The Conference of European Churches has also the public role of articulating a moral vision of peace. How can this public role be carried out? What actions are necessary or are called for? How can churches mobilise for peace work? (keynote address)

CEC Peace Conference 2019 Methodology

The conference will be exploring international and political experiences and challenges and then move towards robust theological reflection and action. This is about engaging theological reflection in context. The underpinning assumption is that God has not abandoned the world even with all its wars and violence. After naming the historical and current global challenges and the struggle for justice and peace we engage with theological reflection to apply theological ethics and identify actions.

Some of the above themes will be keynote presentations with others being processed in seminars.

CEC Peace Conference 2019 Outcomes

- Participants would be more critically aware of the legacy of the past and the legacy impact on contemporary relationships within Europe and the world.
- The capacity for participants to reflect theologically and ethically on a dark past and the major challenges within 21st century Europe and the world would be enhanced.
- CEC and Member Churches would be empowered to be mobilised and to become more actively engaged in a public role of positive peace building in contemporary Europe, especially through the proposed *Peace Task Force of the Conference of European Churches*.

Conference of European Churches

CEC Peace Conference 2019

Day 1 Naming the Past

ARRIVALS

Afternoon Optional: Experiencing the palace of Versailles where the Treaty of Versailles was signed on 28 June 1919.

19.00 – 20.00 Opening of the Conference

Words of Welcome by the President of CEC

(Role of the ecumenical movement in peace; CEC Peace Task Force)

Greetings by:

Political figure: Timmermans? / or ask President to indicate French politician

Opening keynote address 'Paris 1919: Recreating The International Order?' Much of the world came to Paris in 1919 to try and construct a new world order, after the most destructive war in history. Did Paris succeed, to what extent was it a thankless task or was much of the promise of Paris unfulfilled? It was to recreate the international order but whose order? What are the legacies of Paris that remain?

To be invited: Prof. Margaret MacMillan (Johnston to send the contacts to Charlie), etc. Ask Johnston (Charlie to).

Perhaps a response by Sven Gigold or other politician?

20.00 – Dinner

Day 2 Understanding the Present

9.00 – 10.30 ***Seminar 1 'The West's Legacy in the Middle East'***. The legacy of the Paris mandate is still with us in the Middle East with the crisis in Syria and Iraq and other regions and countries and the continuing volatile reality of Israel Palestine. What responsibility does the Atlantic West have for the past, present and future?

Speaker: Send invitation to MECC, ask speaker to include reference to arms trade

Seminar 2 'Populism, Sustainability and Economics'. Much of the 1919 Conference was about economics, which still dominate our concerns and efforts for peacebuilding. But can we construct just economics within the life of the world? Just economics are needed to address the ongoing challenges of economic migration, in order to create a more just world and healthy environment. What responses are required to increasing populism and the growth of new forms of nationalism?

Speaker: From Bread for the World

10.30 – 11.15

Break

11.15 – 12.45

Seminar 2 and Seminar 1

12.45 – 14.30

Lunch

14.30 – 15.30

Keynote Address 'Threats to Global Peace and Learning from the Dark 20th Century'. In our struggle now to avoid war and build peace in Europe, have we, as Europeans, moved too quickly from the 20th Century without beginning to make sense of it? Have we really understood the dark 20th Century and learned painful lessons from it? What has been the role of the Conference of European Churches in peacebuilding and reconciliation since its creation, 60 years ago?

Merge with

Keynote address 'The Public Role of European Churches in Peacebuilding and International Affairs'. Today there is serious thought being given to the role of religion in international diplomacy and affairs as well as its role in local and global peacemaking and peacebuilding. What does this change of direction mean for religion in international affairs? The Conference of European Churches and its Member Churches have a vocation to be active participants in God's mission of peacebuilding and reconciliation. The Conference of European Churches has also the public role of articulating a moral vision of peace. How can this public role be carried out? What actions are necessary or are called for? How can churches mobilise for peace work?

Speaker: Prof. Fernando Enns

Discussion (30 min)

- 15.30 – 15.45 Break
- 15.45 – 17.00 ***Peace Forum 'Europe's Peace Vocation and the Role of Security and Peace'*** The world order is changing. There is a current dynamic described as Easternisation as power and wealth moves from West to East, China in particular as the emerging super power. In the realignment of power blocs what is Europe's role in the coming world order? Has Europe a distinctive peace vocation and what might it look like? What is the Churches' role in helping to shape the peace vocation? Security has become an obsession in the 21st century and it seems to be a militarised form of security. Can this truly be described as peace?
- Speakers: Prof. Jan Öberg, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark http://www.oldsite.transnational.org/About/j_oberg.html
- Antje Heider-Rottwilm, OKRin.i.R., Church and Peace
- In another room (open forum)
- 19.00 Cocktail and Dinner, concert close by the venue or around.

Day 3 Visioning the Future

- 9.00 – 10.30 ***Keynote address 'The Abrahamic Religions and the Dialogue of Peace'***
Much conflict in the world has a religious dimension but religion also has resources, deep resources for peacebuilding. No one religion by itself can build peace but peace in the world may depend mainly on peace between the Abrahamic traditions. This is especially true in a world where there are growing tensions between Christianity and Islam. An enhanced and sustained dialogue of peace between the Abrahamic traditions is an imperative of our time.
- Speaker: Archbishop Anastasios of Albania
- 10.30 – 11.15 Break
- 11.15 – 12.45 Seminar 4

Seminar 4 'Women and Peacebuilding'. Women's role in peacebuilding has not been recognised adequately. In a world where patriarchy dominates, men are considered to be the peacebuilders and to have the necessary capabilities for peacebuilding. Women nevertheless had and have an important role in the prevention and resolution of conflict, peace negotiation, peacebuilding, peace keeping, humanitarian responses and post-conflict reconstruction. It is important that an equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security be recognised.

Speaker: Carin Gardbring, Church of Sweden

Seminar 3 'Young people in mediation of conflict'

Speakers: Celina Falk, Church of Sweden, Iain McLarty, Church of Scotland

12.45 – 14.30

Lunch

14.30 – 15.30

Keynote address 'The winds of freedom in the new independent states of Europe: From the Baltics to the Balkans'

Speaker: Prof. Mart Laar, Estonia? (Fr Heikki to contact him). Other options of speakers who can refer to Central and Eastern Europe?

15.30 -

16.00

Coffee Break

16.00 – 17.00

Creating a CEC 2019 Paris Peace Treaty

A century ago, the Paris Peace conference produced a series of treaties. Perhaps the best known was the Treaty of Versailles. Could we create a CEC 2019 Paris Peace Treaty? This session will involve a series of small groups with each group invited to come up with one action point, which would encourage and help the Churches to be peacebuilders in the 21st century.

Microphone goes around the room, amongst the groups.

Internal: The League of Nations agreed at Versailles was constitutionally framed in the language of Covenant. This was set out in a series of pledges. These were also included in the text of the Versailles Treaty 1919. The language of Covenant is recognisable in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, which can resonate with the attempts in the Peace Conference to produce a CEC 2019 Treaty of

Versailles. What pledges, commitments and action points would this contain? The use of the initial imagery of the Treaty of Versailles with its language of Covenant and pledges does not suggest that there is anything legally binding in relation to CEC. This is rather an imaginative attempt to create positive outcomes and action points from the Conference.

18:00 ***The way forward*** (Summarising what the listeners group produced and presenting the next steps for CEC)

Speaker: CEC General Secretary

19.00 - Closing dinner

CEC Peace Conference 2019 Resources

The CEC Peace Conference 2019 should be viewed in conjunction with the ***Peace Task of the Conference of European Churches*** to be established. The two CEC projects are integral and require a designated resource person within the CEC General Secretariat. This would ensure not only coherence but the enhancement of delivery and implementation as well as crucial planning for both projects.

An ideal location for the Conference would be Paris in 2019. The conference provides the opportunity for collaboration with the Member Churches in France. This collaboration would include the sourcing of funding, the provision of conference location and active involvement with the local logistics in making the conference possible.