

Conference of European Churches  
Ecumenical Centre  
rue Joseph II, 174,  
BE-1000 Brussels

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### **Response to the Draft CEC Strategic Plan from the ECCB**

Dear sisters and brothers,

As Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, we want to express our thanks for the opportunity to examine the draft CEC Strategic Plan, for the work that has gone into its creation, and for the dedication and commitment of so many in the work which the plan represents.

It is a wide-ranging and ambitious plan that seeks to engage with a broad and comprehensive sweep of the life of European churches and European society. We have the feeling, however, that its very comprehensiveness somewhat blunts its effect as a plan. It is not clear in this plan where exactly the priorities lie, where the energies of CEC ought most firmly to be committed, and what might be regarded as worthwhile when resources permit, but which needs to be set aside when they do not. We feel a strategic plan ought to be more strategic – as well, perhaps, as having in many cases more measurable outcomes.

That said, there does seem to be at least one priority that it is possible to discern, one with whose vital importance we have no hesitation in agreeing: that is the issue that is variously described in the Draft Plan in terms of xenophobia, universal rights, education, diversity, and so on. Indeed, we feel that there is an argument to say that the work described under the following six headings might well be expressed under one:

- building peace and reconciliation in Europe
- supporting interreligious dialogue
- educating on diversity and plurality
- being church together with migrant and minority churches
- promoting human rights and freedom of religion or belief as essential for justice and human societies
- defending the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers with CCME, according to our agreement.

These six work areas do, of course, have different emphases and perhaps also modus operandi, but if there was to be found a way to bring this work together into a coherent whole (perhaps as a

commission or a department) then this area of work would have the prominence we are sure it deserves – and the Plan as a whole would have a clearly delineated priority within it. It might also help individual churches notice the connections and encourage work with these areas to be done in a more coordinated way, which would be to the benefit of all the various parts and of our continent.

We do not wish ourselves to go beyond this in arguing the relative merits of different sections of the Plan, but we would like to think that there is to be a clear priority established so that resources are allocated to the areas of work deemed as most important – and not spread so thinly that they are insufficient for the tasks in hand.

We would like to end by repeating our thanks for the work of all those who give of themselves and their talents and their time to make this work happen. The churches in Europe would be much poorer without it.

Yours in Christ,



Oliver Engelhardt  
Secretary for Ecumenical and International Relations