



Conference of European Churches Governing Board

Strasbourg (FR), 15-18 May 2019

General Secretary's Report

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Introduction

The work of the Conference of European Churches has continued actively during the months after the previous Governing Board meeting. Much of it has had to do with receiving and discussing the feedback to the Strategic Plan. Several things have happened in way of preparation for the launching of the Strategic Plan, as well as continuing projects from the previous mandate period. Contacts with ecumenical and NGO partners have been active. The dialogue with the European Institutions has followed the course of the political calendar – conclusion of the old mandate in EU and preparation for the European Elections.

This report includes general facts and observations about CEC's work and the staff reports from each programmatic area.

A. Strategic Plan process

Member Churches, National Councils of Churches and Organisations in Partnership have given feedback on the Strategic Plan proposed by the Governing Board. It has also been possible to discuss the Strategic Plan in meetings with various representatives of the CEC constituency. Based on this feedback, the President and the staff worked to develop the Plan. A new version is submitted for consideration and decision by the Governing Board. The main task of the Board in this meeting is to define the strategic priorities for CEC's work in the period 2019-2023, leading to the next General Assembly. The theme for this period, as decided by the Governing Board, is "Together in Witness and Hope."

The theme reflects the discussions and experience of the 2018 Novi Sad General Assembly. According to evaluations, the strongest dimension of the General Assembly was community, the experience itself, churches from all over Europe coming together to share and to pray together, to meet each other and to encounter Serbia. On the other hand, in our work on the Strategic Plan, we have seen that the programmatic results of the General Assembly did not have enough clarity with regard to lead CEC's programmes and priorities in its new mandate period. The churches did not bring their burning issues to the ecumenical forum in the same way as in CEC's history. This reality reflects partly the preparation of the General Assembly, and should be kept in mind for the next one: it will help the planning if some clear directions are proposed to the General Assembly in advance. At the same time, it is an indication of the churches' priorities and expectations with regard to CEC. It seems that they do not look to ecumenical assemblies in the same way as previously, as opportunities to bring forward political or ecclesial concerns. This should make us ask what should be the priorities and methods of the ecumenical movement today.

The feedback received on the Strategic Plan was more numerous than responses to queries to Member Churches usually. However, only 19 out of 147 addressees (114 churches, 15 NCCs and 18 OiPs) - eleven churches, four NCCs and four OiPs - sent their written comments. In addition, the staff had some occasions to discuss the Strategic Plan with representatives of the constituency. All feedback was very helpful, and it is reflected in the new formulation of the Strategic Plan.

We should also give some thought to the feedback not received: no Orthodox churches sent their official response, only one came from Central-Eastern Europe and only one from Southern Europe. The fact that there is at the moment one Member Church considering leaving CEC membership (see below) points to the same concerns. The point would not seem to be criticism towards concrete aspects of our work, but rather an appearance of its distance from or irrelevance to the churches' reality. The ecumenical movement is not a high priority for most European churches today. We have challenges of communicating CEC's work to our own constituency. Misconceptions and lack of knowledge lead sometimes to mistaken conclusions. We need to strengthen an ecumenical and multi-cultural image of CEC, true to its identity covering West and East,

North and South, and Orthodox, Protestant and Anglican expressions of the Gospel and of the way towards the visible unity of the Church of Christ.

One of the transversal objectives of the Strategic Plan 2019-2023 needs to address CEC's relationship with its constituency. We need to keep in our mind the questions how can CEC best serve the so called small churches, and why the so-called big churches should delegate matters to CEC which they could do themselves.

B. Remarks on programmatic priorities

The revival of CECs work in the area of ecumenical theology and mission is starting almost from zero. This stems from the fact that, as collateral damage of CEC's reform and the disappearance of the Dialogue Commission, the executive position for theological dialogue was vacant for some years. This part of our work needs to be reaffirmed, if CEC wishes to remain relevant to the wholeness of ecclesial reality and to respond to key priorities of the Member Churches. Therefore, theology, ecclesiology and mission need to be given their proper place among the priorities of the Strategic Plan.

Theology has a foundational role in all CEC's work. How to express it more clearly and how to develop political and social analysis in a spiritual and pastoral context, are questions to be kept in mind. In our Human Rights work, we can point to good experiences of churches' urgent concerns being responded to through CECs work, such as the recent cases of the Spanish Protestant pastors and the Bulgarian law on religion.

Concern for and responses to climate change and ecological catastrophes are becoming more and more urgent and they affect the mood of the societies, also among churches. CEC serves its constituency and the global Ecumenical Movement in this area by creating links among the churches, the academia, state actors and NGOs. The decisive questions about humanity's future are not unrelated to the feelings of fear and marginalisation which underlie the phenomena of populist extremism.

Social Justice has been on the agenda of CEC and its predecessor organisations in Brussels since the beginning. Social equality is one of the original European values which has been realised in a very limited way. EU is addressing this concern through the Pillar of social rights which was launched last year. It is clear that CEC needs to continue bringing the churches' experiences into this discussion. The absence of a focused programme on social justice was one of the perceived weaknesses of the Strategic Plan which is now catered to in the new version. It is related to the question of staff resources. The CALL network needs to continue as coordinated by CEC.

We have already seen that the eventual exit of UK from EU inspires the UK churches to closer relations with CEC and the European churches, as well as a growing interest in the Council of Europe. However, we have not yet arrived at clarity about the best way to do this. At the same time, the accession processes into EU of several Western Balkans countries, and the interesting role of churches in it, are to be felt in several instances of CEC's work.

The CEC office in Strasbourg carries great potential in its unique position with CEC as a recognised INGO and its interaction with the programmes of the Council of Europe. The contact has become closer with the Brussels staff, through the simple method of weekly video meetings, and this development is beneficial for all.

Migration – external to and internal in Europe - and the response to people seeking refuge and asylum will continue to put European under a fatal test of its values and ethics. CEC needs to continue bringing the special expertise of CCME to the church leaders' agenda and to make explicit interventions in the political discussion. The new mandate period will be the time to implement the agreement of cooperation between CEC and CCME. There are still aspects of practical cooperation that can be improved. Coordination needs to be developed in the area of fund raising. Following the agreement, the Governing Board and the CCME Executive Committee will hold this November a “back to back” meeting with one day of joint deliberations. The 2023 General Assembly will be held together by the two organisations.

Staff reports

C. Economic and ecological justice and sustainable future

Report on works in programme area economic and ecological justice in period December 2018 – Mai 2019. Undertaken activities include in particular:

1. Co-organising and contributing to a seminar under the title: **‘Towards a new EU-ACP partnership: Leaving no one behind through sustainable investments & decent jobs?’** 4 February 2019 in Brussels.
The seminar was organised in a cooperation of CEC, COMECE, Quaker Council for European Affairs and Brussels office of the Baha’i International Community as an opportunity for an exchange and a dialogue between faith-based organisations, policy-makers, economic actors and youth representatives. The thematic focus of the event was ‘people centred approach’ in efforts for sustainable investments and decent jobs in frame of the current round of the on-going negotiations between the EU and the Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) on their future cooperation framework. The event offered an opportunity to share concerns, as well as best practices developed by faith-based young professionals and entrepreneurs.
2. Involvement in preparation of a conference: **‘Churches contribution to a sustainable society,’** organised in a cooperation of the Church of Norway and European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN), 25-28. May 2019, Oslo and contribution to the programme of the conference. The event is focused on creating the space for an exchange of experience from work of local church communities in addressing climate change. 24-28 May 2019

3. A contribution to the project proposal applying for EU funds in frame of the EU funding programme Horizon 2020 and the call for proposals Governance for the Future. The project proposal under the title: **'Trust Tools for Citizens, Science, and Governance - context-sensitive and forward-looking initiatives to improve trust in governance across Europe, co-created through a diverse ecosystem of actors,'** has been developed in a cooperation of a multi-stakeholder consortium of 12 academic institutions, local governance authorities, and civil society organisations including Manchester Metropolitan University, Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, Fachhochschule Potsdam, city of Reykjavik and others, under the leadership of the University in Tromso (Norway).
4. **CEC compensation for CO2 emissions in 2018.** Following up the decision of the Governing Board from November 2017 regarding the CEC commitment to compensating CO2 emissions related CEC activities and CEC commitment to a cooperation with carbon offset fund Klima-Kollekte, CEC has allocated amount of 7 350 Euro for CO2 compensation in 2018. Following that CEC received a certificate for compensating 319,56 t of CO2 emissions.

Klima-Kollekte is a carbon offset fund of Christian churches that offsets the emissions of organisations, institutions, companies and individuals. The compensation contribution flows into climate protection projects in emerging and developing countries in the areas of renewable energies and energy efficiency. The projects not only serve to protect the climate, but also help combat poverty locally and implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

5. A contribution to the conference: **'Churches in Central Europe reflecting the memorable year 1918,'** organised by the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and partners in the Senate of the Czech Republic, in frame of the celebration of the 100 anniversary of the church. Prague, December 2018
6. Presentation: **'Churches contributing to the discussion on Future of Europe'** to the consultation of the Presbyterian Church USA organised in the frame of the Presbyterian World Mission's strategy process and its regional focus on Europe and Middle East, Berlin, 10-13 December 2018
7. A contribution to the evening event at the occasion of the election to the European Parliament: **'The Christian Voice at the European Elections,'** a dialogue between members of the European Parliament and candidates in the elections, and representative of Christian organisations; Brussels Chapel of the Resurrection, 10 April 2019.

In the dialogue participated candidates for MEPs: Klaus Buchner, MEP Greens and Andreas Schwab, MEP EEP. From the side of church related organisations: Jesuit

Refugee Service, COMECE, Conference of European Churches, Africa Faith and Justice Network, Caritas Europa, Young Christian Workers, Jesuit European Social Centre and CIDSE

8. Presentation: **'Christian identity in approaching climate change in a dialogue with secularity'** to the annual meeting of the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy, Rome, 25-28 April 2019
9. Presentation: **'Caring of our common future in context of the challenges Europe is facing'** to a meeting of the delegates of National Bodies of Religions for Peace Europe in preparation for the 10th World assembly of Religion for Peace, 29 April 2019, Brussels.
10. See **Appendix 1**

D. Human Rights

1. On 14-15. December 2018, some 50 representatives of Churches, aid organisations, politics and academia have gathered at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Great Park, UK to explore avenues towards peaceful coexistence in the Middle East. The Conference **on Towards Peaceful Coexistence in the Middle East** brought together Christians from that region and from Europe to arrive at a common understanding and solidarity. Having heard reports from Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria, reflecting on subjects such as pluralism, citizenship, education and Human Rights, and having discussed them intensively, the participants endorsed this communiqué-
<http://www.ceceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/20181216-Communique-of-the-CEC-Conference-Towards-a-peaceful-coexistence-in-the-Middle-East.pdf>. The Conference had the aim to tackle the subject on Persecution of Christians and other Religious Minorities in the Middle East which was requested by several CEC member churches as well as the CEC Assembly. The question is how to continue with this topic?
2. On 4th of April CEC, COMECE and CROCEU in cooperation with EPP intergroup on Interreligious and Intercultural dialogue organised the seminar in the European Parliament related to the theme on persecution of Christians and other religious minorities. The theme of the event was "The next day in Syria: A path towards the resilience of Syrian people" and the speakers touched upon topics including "humanitarian aid for all" and "reconstruction and resilience of Syria" in two consecutive sessions. For more see press release: <https://www.ceceurope.org/a-path-towards-the-resilience-of-syrian-people/> . The question is how to continue with this topic?

3. Upon the request of the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro and Littoral (Serbian Orthodox church), CEC assisted to their representatives who came and visit the EU Institutions on 17-19 of March. The reason for visit was the new process that Montenegrin Government launched to adopted the draft law from 2015. This draft law foreseen new confiscation of the church property build before 1918, violation of religious freedom regard that only those who hold Montenegrin citizenship can establish church or religious community and which also foreseen re-registration in this case Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro and Littoral. It was agreed that CEC will support with its expertise content and organization of Round Table on Freedom of Religion or Belief in Montenegro which will take place from 2-4 of May in Podgorica. The project included involvement of the Consortium on Church- State Relations - <http://www.churchstate.eu/>. The material about this case is available in CEC secretariat. See **Appendix 2, 3 & 4 (confidential)**

4. In 2016 the conference “Ensuring the fair treatment and peaceful co-existence” hosted by the Orthodox Metropoly of Zagreb and Ljubljana of the Serbian Orthodox Church on the Rights of Religious minorities resulted in the book “Religious Diversity in Europe and the Rights of Religious Minorities.” The book included positive and negative practices on tackling the issue of the rights of religious minorities in Europe. Some complex cases were presented as the case of Manzanos v. Spain. The book is published by the Globe-Ethics in Geneva. The book can be found on: https://www.globethics.net/cec-series/-/asset_publisher/Dz61PAIcccQt/content/religious-diversity-in-europe-and-the-rights-of-religious-minorities

5. WCC Freedom of Religion or Belief – Guide for biblical insights in 2019. The Executive Secretary for Human Rights Dr. Elizabeta Kitanovic contributed to the process. The guide can be found on: <http://www.ceceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/FoRB-Manuel.pdf>.

6. Editors: Dr Pamela Slotte, Dr Goran Gunner and Dr Elizabeta Kitanovic finalised CEC’s Human Rights Manuel Vol II called – Human Rights, Religious Freedom and Faces of Faith which is in the process of proofreading. This material will serve as a basis to organise the program of the CEC Summer School on Human Rights in the next 5 years.

7. In 2018 CEC organised 5th Summer School on Human Rights. The theme was Freedom of Religion or Belief, Theology and Populism. The impressions were gathered in 5 min video. <https://fileshare-emea.bm.com/dl/GPk2H2dbjB>

8. The 6th CEC Summer School on Human Rights: Freedom of Expression, Theology and Populism will take place from 17-20 of June 2019 in Portugal. In current discourse, the close proximity of 'Freedom of Expression' and 'Freedom of Religion or Belief' has become a focus of interest, describing them as 'two sides of a coin'. And indeed, for Churches all human freedom is based in God and his relationship with humankind. While there can be conflicts between individual human rights, and also between 'Freedom of Expression' and 'Freedom of Religion or Belief', all serve one aim: To create a space in which the human person can develop and flourish, and in which communities can grow. The project will be hosted by the COPIC (Portuguese Ecumenical Council of Churches) and it is done with the scientific support from the Human Rights Centre of Law faculty at Coimbra University. The program is available on: <https://www.ceceurope.org/human-rights/> .
9. The 7th CEC Summer School on Human Rights will take place in Germany from 7-10 July 2020. It will be hosted by EKD. The theme is still to be developed.
10. Contribution to the EEAS Human Rights Action Plan -- The current EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019 is coming to an end. This year, EEAS is starting a reflection process to prepare a future EU Action Plan that will guide EEAS policies on human rights and democracy from 2020 until 2024. The future EU Action Plan will be forward looking, reflecting the new geopolitical environment worldwide. CEC participated in the debate on this matter and via EPRID will submit its contribution which will focus on freedom of religion or belief.

E. Ecclesiology & Mission

As there was no opportunity to present new project proposals during the last two Governing Board meetings, work in the area of Ecclesiology and Mission in the last six months focused on the development of the new programme through a series of informal meetings and consultation with officers from the Member Churches and partners from the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, the Faith and Order Commission, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, Bossey Ecumenical Institute, and the Global Christian Forum. External meetings were used as occasions for networking and discussing partnerships on specific aspects of the strategy plan.

- Participation in 'The Geopolitics of Pope Francis, Lecture by Antonio Spadaro and colloquium,' KU Leuven, Belgium, 4-5 December 2018. The event explored the internal reform within the Catholic Church promoted by Pope Francis, his notion of 'globalisation of solidarity' and the reception of his work in different parts of the

world. It also discussed relations with the Orthodox world, war and peace questions, interreligious dialogue, and the involvement of the Catholic Church with the UN and the International Organisations.

- Participation in the Inaugural Conference on 'Pan-Orthodox Unity and Conciliarity' of the International Orthodox Theological Association (IOTA), held from 9-12 January 2019 at Iasi, Romania. Contribution to the session on 'Women in the Orthodox Church'. The IOTA is an outcome of the 2016 Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church that brought together Orthodox theologians from around the world for the first time to discuss a huge variety of topics (see <https://iota-web.org/>). Ecumenical guests were also participants to the meeting.
- Participation in the Assembly Planning Committee meeting of the WCC, 13-16 January 2019, Cyprus (APC report available).
- Participation in the BE1 ecumenical course for youth and presentation of the new programmatic work of CEC, 18-21 January 2019 in Budapest. The name of the course comes from the prayer of Jesus for his disciples that '*they may be one so that the world may believe*' (John 17.21). It started in 2017 as a joint initiative of the European Fellowship of Christian Youth and the Committee of Children and Youth of the Ecumenical Council in Finland, and developed into a yearly meeting of Christian young adults from across Europe that is organised by volunteers. The topic of the course was inspired by the material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, '*Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue...*' (Deut. 16:18-20), and raised discussion on questions of justice and equality.
- CEC organised a panel on 'Migration and Global citizenship' at the annual meeting of the European Academy of Religion (EUARE), 6 March 2019, Bologna, Italy. One of the major challenges for Europe today is the multi-facet reality of migration. The panel discussed migration, identity and borders; Christian identity, conversion stories of refugees and citizenship; gender and migration with regard to fleeing and persecution.
- Participation in the Colloquium on 'Churches under construction: Justice and Justification at the heart of our practices' organised at the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Joint Declaration on Justification by the Institut Supérieur D' Études Œcuméniques (ISEO) from 12-14 March 2019 in Paris, France. Presentation of paper on 'Justification – Deification – Sanctification: Appropriating God's grace in the liturgy'. The colloquium explored the background, method and reception of the Joint Declaration, examined justification in the Bible, and discussed ecumenical perspectives on justice and justification, and also justification and sanctification. It provided the opportunity for ecumenically-oriented Christians (academics, church

leaders and lay persons) from all over France to reflect together on the topic and strengthen their ecumenical commitment.

- Participation in the Conference on 'Church, Disability and Society' organised by the Volos Academy for Theological Studies, 30 March 2019, in Volos, Greece. Presentation of paper on 'Theology and Disability: Towards a meaningful dialogue in the Body of the Church'. The conference aimed at raising awareness about disability within the local church and invited reflection on theology and disability in the Orthodox world.

With regard to ongoing work, CEC participates in the planning of the IAMS Europe Conference on 'Locating European Missions in a Wounded World in Deep Transformation', which will be held from 23-27 August 2019 at Sankt Augustin, Germany (Full programme attached for information, see **Appendix 5**). The parallel programme of invited papers and group panels includes topics in mission theology, post-colonial discourses, mission as *martyria*, religious freedom, engagement with politics, hospitality and interreligious dialogue, migration and more.

In addition, CEC participates in the organisation of the second meeting of the Global Forum of Theological Educators on 'Vision and Viability in Contexts: Theological Learning and Formation', which will take place from 20-24 May 2019 at the Orthodox Academy of Crete, Kolympari, Greece (Draft daily schedule attached for information, see **Appendix 6**). Theological educators from the six ecclesial families engaged in the Forum –Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Historical Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Independent– will contribute to the meeting.

F. CEC Strasbourg office

Since the Strasbourg office has reopened again, the dialogue with the European institutions has been resumed.

In addition to regular contacts with parliamentarians from the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, the Executive Secretary attends regularly the prayer breakfasts at the Parliament and at the CoE. A lot happens behind the official scenes – networking is important to facilitate advocacy and awakes interest on issues relevant to our members Churches.

The Office has always attached importance to being in close contact with the bodies of the Council of Europe as well as with the European Parliament based in Strasbourg.

During the period starting from December 2018 to April 2019 the Bureau of CEC Strasbourg worked on the following topics and participated in the seminars mentioned beneath:

Statements and work on bioethics and artificial intelligence (AI)

Statement of the TRG Bioethics on the recent alleged genome editing in China December 2018

The recent report that a Chinese scientist claims to have applied genome editing techniques to human embryos, which were subsequently implanted and resulted in the birth of live babies, implies that the question of whether- and how- these techniques should be used in humans demands an urgent answer.

In March 2018, the Bioethics Thematic Reference Group (TRG) of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) produced an in-depth report on this issue, which was presented to the CEC General Assembly in Novi Sad in June 2018. This report can be found here: <https://www.ceceurope.org/bioethics/>

Artificial Intelligence – a major ethical challenge for theology and society

the European Commission's high-level expert group on AI asked CEC and other NGOs for comments on the document "Ethic guidelines for Trustworthy AI"¹ It is obvious that Artificial intelligence will be one of the most important issues in the future. It will have an impact on all kind of technology as well as on daily life. Hitherto unknown ethical questions will have to be asked and new ethical decisions have to be taken.

Three concrete applications are actually in the focus of AI development, but this is only the beginning:

- Autonomous driving
- AI - Healthcare
- Lethal autonomous weapons

The Strasbourg office has worked on the EU Commission paper and elaborated out the following thoughts. Finally, a more detailed paper - elaborated by the Communication officer, was sent to the EU Commission.

Developments in science and technology continue to prompt important ethical, social, and theological questions. The area of AI will in future essentially influence how we go about our daily lives and organise our societies. From a Christian perspective, this also affects our self-understanding as made in the image of God, the dignity of the human, and how we

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/ai-alliance-consultation>

understand the unfolding of Creation. Furthermore, science and technology will shape our future and the present of our children.

Therefore, the Conference of European Churches greets the EU Expert Group's approach to ensure "ethical purpose" and to provide guidelines "on the concrete implementation and operationalization ... into AI systems."

We appreciate in this document the methodology and the leading concept of a human centric approach. Representing over 100 churches in Europe of different denominations (Anglican, orthodox, protestant, evangelical etc.) we represent a diversity of opinion and theologies. Nevertheless, we share a common approach to ethical concerns.

Regarding the present document, we would like to share the following preliminary thoughts:

Methodology:

1. *We appreciate the idea that ethical discussions are seen as an ongoing process, which includes a diversity of stakeholders. The principle of dialogue and exchange is part of real progress of humanity.*

2. *Referring on Fundamental Rights and see the "inherent value" of every Human being corresponds to our Christian Faith, which highlights the individual value of every Human being.*

3. *We appreciate that the Expert group is not promoting unconditional progress but is reflecting on ethical values and challenges. We as churches are not against progress but we are convinced that we should not all do what we can do!*

Some general questions

1. *What does the concept of "human-centric" mean? Does it have an individualistic meaning? What does it mean when it "enjoys a unique status of primacy... " ?*

2. *The principle of "autonomy" which is often put forward when it comes to ethical principles especially in Bioethics does not take in account that humanity is based on interdependence.*

3. *What is the particularity of AI Ethics compared to other ethics? This need to be discussed, when it comes to connecting Human intelligence with AI.*

4. *The concept "trustworthy" implicates two components; reliability of the "AI" system and the trustworthy of the "creator". This raises the question of the ethical values of the "creator" and his "biases" and intentions.*

5. *Progress in Healthcare AI, which allows patients to be cared by robots, raises the question in which way human relationship is essential part of human dignity? Are the guidelines not too "technical"? Is there is not a danger to end at a "digitally*

driven solutionism” (E. Morozov) which makes smoothly disappear human relationship and core values like freedom and justice?

- *Suggestions Ethical discussion must not remain a matter for experts. Public debate can bring forward other aspects and assure diversity in the debate*

- *Religion gather a great diversity of people and are eo ipso concerned about being human in all his conditions. They should be integrated in the discussion.*

1. Seminars and working groups on Human Rights, diversity and education with CEC participation

Seminar and colloquy on intercultural learning, 17th January at the CoE

Intercultural dialogue, citizenship and democracy learning: What practices in Catholic schools in Europe? The representations at the Council of Europe of OIEC, the International Catholic Education Office and UNAEC-Europe, the European Union of Former Students of Catholic Education, organised a seminar on the subject on 17 January 2019 at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, under the patronage of Mr Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the European Institution. For a long time, the Council of Europe has made education for intercultural dialogue one of its main priorities. This resulted in a white paper in 2008. In recent years, it has expanded with the skills to be acquired for a culture of democracy.

This seminar was the opportunity for CEC to be informed and to exchange about faith-based dialogue in a pluralistic context. It could be interesting for CEC to deepen the question of diversity and the importance of the concept of diversity in a more and more pluralistic society.

2. Why do we need NGOs? Seminary on the World NGO day at the CoE the 27 February 2019

CEC has a participative member status at the Council of Europe through the Conference of International NGOs. On 27 February, this Conference has celebrated the World NGO day with the holding of a debate on “Why do we need NGOs? - (I)NGO contribution to the work and to the mandate of the Council of Europe”.

Invited panellists and participants have highlighted the invaluable contribution of (I)NGOS to the Council of Europe's work be it in standard setting, monitoring or co-operation activities.

According to most of the speakers at this one-day seminary, the role of the NGOs is to forge society, and they have a crucial role in connecting citizens to policy makers. The role of CEC is a special one taking into account that it does not represent particular interests but a very large and heterogeneous part of society. The Strasbourg office of CEC is interested to strengthen the links with other NGOs within this framework, to find common priorities and to be able to use synergy effect.

CEC joined the common declaration of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe at the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe.²

3. Duty or offence of solidarity, the action of NGOs in the system of assistance and support to migrants and refugees, conference - 11th April 2019 - CoE

In cooperation with the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

It happens that civil society organisations are hunted or sanctioned for helping people on their migration route by providing legal, humanitarian and social assistance. CEC has to be aware that some of their member Churches risk legal or sometimes other difficulties when providing help to migrants. According to the witness of participants of this conference, this is an increasing problem in Europe.

4. LGBTI Rights AND Freedom of Religion - 9th of April

Side event organised by the European Forum of LGBTI Christian Group and Human Rights Committee of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe

General Secretary Father Heikki Huttunen and Executive Secretary at the Strasbourg office of CEC, Rev. Sören Lenz participated at a side event during the Plenary Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. CEC has a long-standing experience when it comes to struggling against enemy images. When it comes to religious freedom and Human Rights regarding LGBTI rights, churches and other religious communities are in the centre

²"Declaration of the Conference of Christian NGOs at the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the CoE" in French: https://www.paxchristi.net/sites/default/files/manifeste_70_ans_du_coe_220319_-_plusieurs_oing_membres_de_la_coing_-_def.pdf; 1 May 2019

of attention and part of the problem but it is important to envisage how we can be part of the solution.

There is a lot of suffering on both sides: LGBTI Christians are suffering from some exclusive behaviour in their communities as some churches fear an open discussion. At this conference Eleni Tsetsekou, Head of SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) Unit of the Council of Europe proposed that CoE should established the dialog between the different faiths. To be open for dialog and inclusion and to promote tolerance are the keys words regarding this issue.

The changes in society do not stop at an imaginative iron curtain or a "Berlin wall". Through internet and the social networks, we are all – East or West, North or South - facing the same new developments in society. We have to face them as Churches and we need to dialog about them, even if we do not have the same point of view or the same theological approach. At the very beginning, we should be careful about the kind of language we use when we talk about LGBTI. Sometimes we may hurt people when using a discriminative language – the border to hate speech is quickly crossed.

We have a lot to do as Churches and the new strategy plan foresees the dialog on the concept of a diverse and pluralistic society.

5. Participation of Strasbourg office in the drafting group on freedom of expression and links to other human rights of the CoE

In collaboration with the HR Officer in Brussels, the Strasbourg office took part in the elaboration of a *Guide to good and promising practices on the way of reconciling freedom of expression with other rights and freedoms, in particular in culturally diverse societies.*

This guide, aimed at policy makers and facilitators in all member states of the Council of Europe, has a special chapter on freedom of expression in relation to specific other human rights including a paragraph about the tension between freedom of expression and freedom of thought, conscience and religion. the HR Officer, in collaboration with the CEC office in Strasbourg contributes to this guide with its particular expertise in religious affairs.

6. Conferences, lectures etc.

The Strasbourg office is regularly invited by church groups and parishes, especially in the Rhine area in France, Germany, Switzerland and Austria, to speak about the role of CEC in Europe.

As part of the common office with the Conference of the Churches on the Rhine the Executive Secretary gave a lecture and participated in the debate with deputies and theologians in the German-French context, for example in February with German deputies of the Bundestag and regional Church leaders in Friesenheim, and in April the Executive Secretary participated in a discussion with a French deputy in Forbach in the perspective of the European elections.

7. WCC - General Assembly in Karlsruhe 2021

“Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity”.

In 2021, the General Assembly of the WCC will take place in Karlsruhe/Germany. This international event will be a cross border event due to the fact that Karlsruhe is near the French border and only 50 km North of Strasbourg. During the first meeting of the WCC organisation committee and the EKD in January in Karlsruhe, it was highlighted that the CEC Strasbourg office would have an important role related to its contact with the European Institution in Strasbourg.

The Strasbourg office is meanwhile in close contact with the concerned authorities in Karlsruhe and a first meeting is already scheduled with representatives from the Council of Europe.

G. Peace Conference

The conference will take place between the 10th -12th September 2019 at the Institut Protestant de Théologie in Paris, France. Speakers will include H.E. Metropolitan Emmanuel of France; Professor Jan Öberg; OKR'in i. R. Antje Heider-Rottwilm; and Rev. Dr Björn Cedersjö. Invitations to participate in the conference were circulated to CEC member churches during the week of 22 April 2019. **See Appendix 7**

H. Communication

1. We produced the EU elections campaign work, including the video series. It was really well received. So far translations into Dutch, Italian, and Welsh. Our members really needed this content from us.
2. Two regular videos, Easter and Christmas.
3. Two videos on youth from Governing Board members (Emma and Andreas) – to be released

4. Annual Report 2018 – finalised in English. German, French, Russian in progress with designer
5. CEC membership book
6. Branding materials: CEC brochures (reprinted), banners, USB, covers for social media
7. Provided support for coverage of other CEC events (e.g., at the Chapel and European Parliament), other messages and statements as usual. Work on regular design jobs like the Peace Conference and SSHR.
8. Approved a light redesign of the front page of our website.
9. Finalised the bioethics book on Gene Editing for publication.
10. Got the next Human Rights training manual close to production.
11. The conference on hate speech and fake news in Helsinki was a success! Sold out at 50 people, good representation from youth and women, too. This will then feed into other CEC work including the SSHR.
12. Wrote the CEC response to the European Commission proposed guidelines on AI, noted that some of my remarks were taken up in the final version, including on ecological concerns and ecotheology.
13. Developed proposal on 60th anniversary project further, including finalizing a list of interviewees and budget proposals for the project.

<h2>I. CEC offices and staff</h2>

The fragility of the practical operation of CEC has been clearly revealed during the past six months. It has been a time of work overload and stress to some of our colleagues. The problems in financial administration were felt in the November 2018 GB meeting, and in the work of the Budget Committee. Thanks to the efforts of the Treasurer and a temporary arrangement of CEC's accounting and financial services, the financial situation of CEC is gradually being clarified, as reported by the Budget Committee in this meeting. Other areas of administration and housekeeping have also suffered. This situation reveals aspects about how the EECS/CS/CEC office grew from a small and focused Brussels operation into a Europe-wide ecumenical organisation; new tasks and staff members were piled up on the previous ones without much planning. CEC's style of work has the resources of an NGO, but the contents, contacts and expertise of political leadership. An international organization always also faces challenges in the compatibility of different cultures of work and executive leadership. Real solutions appear impossible due to the seriously limited resources. It seems that these matters were not adequately considered in CEC's reform 2009-2018. I think CEC has been able to fulfil its tasks quite well despite this imbalance, but the circumstances in the past months have revealed the urgency of finding new solutions.

It should be mentioned that the Strasbourg office has picked up its functions very well, despite the change of both staff and a vacancy period in between.

The President has been active in looking for solutions to the imbalance between the Strategic Plan and the staff resources by approaching some Member Churches for secondments of executive staff.

In addition to the accounting and budgetary tasks, basic Human Resource work is being reorganised in the CEC office. Constant problems with IT connections require a permanent solution. The legal requirements for GDPR are being solved through an in-house arrangement together with CCME.

The Communication Coordinator Dr. Erin Green is on maternity leave since 10 April until the end of the year. During this time communication are being managed by her assistant Ms. Naveen Qayyum, and no other substitution is necessary.

Due to budgetary restrictions there is currently a lack of a 50 % administrative position.

J. Staff Regulations

Staff regulations in CEC have been discussed for years already before the structural reform. A draft text on the basis of the WCC staff regulation and agreed with the CEC staff had been prepared. Unfortunately, a text for Staff Regulations was approved by the Governing Board in 2015, but not submitted for consideration by the staff, as required by Belgian law. Immediately after that the employees raised questions regarding staff regulations and a working group was established, with representatives of the employees and the employer. The group is composed of Fr Heikki, General Secretary, Charlotte Vander Borght, head of administration, Peter Pavlovic, representative of the executive staff and Charlotte Belot, representative of the administrative staff.

From early January 2018 until late September 2018, the group met every month to discuss the different articles of the staff regulations, comparing the previous regulations of Church and Society, CEC in Geneva, and the text approved by the Governing Board in 2015. By September 2018, the content had been agreed, and some verification needed to be done by Ms Vander Borght in regard to Securex (employers' social bureau) and the Belgian and French legislation.

This last bit of work was pending since Ms Vander Borght's sick leave. Considering the situation, Ms Belot agreed to take over this matter and has been finalising the working document. It is now in the hands of Securex for review.

Once this step is secured, the working document will be distributed to all CEC staff in Brussels and Strasbourg for comments. Upon agreement by the staff, the document will

be proposed to the Governing Board for approval and then registered under Belgian and French Law.

K. Contacts with Member Churches

Churches in Italy

The federation of Italian Protestant Churches (FCEI) is one of the most active CEC Member Churches. It regularly sends well prepared high quality participants to meetings and working groups. Its internationally best known programme this year is Mediterranean Hope, creating safe and legal passages for migrants into European countries; it is ecumenically managed together with the San Egidio Community. These months FCEI it is cooperating with the CEC office in hosting the annual ENCCs meeting in Rome on 6-9 May.

The CEC Study Secretary participated at the Synod of the Church which met from 25 – 28 April, to which he was invited as the speaker addressing the theme of churches' engagement with climate change. The synod adopted 5 recommendations to step up activities of the church in area of care for creation, addressing climate change and ecumenical cooperation / networking in addressing these challenges.

Ecumenical Patriarchate

The President and the general secretary visited Constantinople on 6-8 January 2019 to participate in a conference on trafficking organised by the Ecumenical Patriarchate "Forum on modern slavery". The general secretary had the honour to introduce the President to His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew. The conference was also an opportunity to speak with several members of the Holy Synod and members of the Patriarchate's anti-trafficking network.

Churches in Slovakia

CEC was represented by study secretary, Rev. Dr. Peter Pavlovic at the consecration of the new bishop of the Slovak Lutheran Church, the Rt. Rev. Ivan Elko, in March in Zvolen, Slovakia.

The CEC office has been informed that the Holy Synod of the Czech and Slovak Orthodox Church will discuss in its May meeting a proposal to leave CEC membership. This proposal is presented in the report of the delegate of the church to the 2018 Novi Sad General Assembly. The matter is being prepared for the Holy Synod discussion by two persons with broad ecumenical experience. The general secretary and the study secretary are following the matter closely.

Nordic-Baltic churches

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland is an active partner in the dialogue with the European Institutions. Without a representation in Brussels, they prefer to work closely with the CEC office through active participation in meetings and frequent visits by relevant persons and groups. The ELCF working group on EU funding visited the office on 5th December 2018. The bishops of the church visited during several days in March

the Institutions in Strasbourg. On 26 March the programme involved CEC, organised by the Strasbourg office. The CEC-WACC conference on hate speech and fake news, which was held on a ferry between Helsinki and Stockholm on 10-12 April, was co-organised and co-sponsored with the communication department of ELCF.

The new secretary responsible for relations with CEC in the Church of Sweden, Cajsa Sandgren is in weekly contact with the CEC office. The church actively supports CEC, in particular the Human Rights programme as well as other timely concerns.

The general secretary was one of the three invited speakers at the 30 years' jubilee of the Estonian Council of Churches on 21 February 2019.

The Nordic-Baltic churches held the annual meeting of their ecumenical secretaries in Roskilde, DK, on 12-14 March 2019. The meeting included nearly 40 participants from six countries, five NCCs and both majority and minority churches. The last day was dedicated to CEC and the Strategic Plan. The Governing Board members Anne Burghardt and Anders Gadegård as well as the General Secretary participated.

Moscow Patriarchate

According to information received by CEC representatives, the report of the Moscow Patriarchate observer at the 2018 Novi Sad General Assembly, Ms. Elena Speranskaya, was a positive one. However, the intra-Orthodox canonical dispute of the Church in Ukraine, seems to have complicated also multilateral ecumenical relations. CEC now expects a response from Moscow Patriarchate to proposals regarding future cooperation, and the possible return of Moscow Patriarchate to full membership in CEC.

The General Secretary made a courtesy visit to the Department for External Church Relations 13 December, as he participated in an ecumenical seminar on nationalism and churches organised by St. Andrew's Biblical University in Moscow.

Referring to the unclear legal situation of churches other than Moscow Patriarchate in the area of Donbas, and similar concerns of the Moscow Patriarchate in the rest of Ukraine, the general secretary wrote to the external church relations office of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) about the feasibility of a pastoral visit by CEC to both areas. This would be done in cooperation with the European Baptist Federation and possibly the WCC. An acknowledgment of the receipt of the message has been received, but no actual answer to the question.

Moscow Patriarchate is a member church of the Estonian Council of Churches. The jubilee in Tallinn gave the general secretary an opportunity to meet with the recently appointed Metropolitan Evgeniy of the Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox Church of Estonia, who used to serve as the rector of the Moscow Theological Academy. The audience was cordial and an open-minded and generous discussion touched on the challenges faced by the church in Estonia, as well as the ecumenical relations and perspectives of Moscow Patriarchate in general.

EPUB

The United Protestant Church in Belgium is CEC's only Belgian Member Church. Other Member Churches based in other countries do have a considerable presence in Belgium and participate in ecumenical cooperation. With the active role of the Treasurer, Rev. Jelle Brouwer, the contacts with EPUB have become more regular. They clearly present a great potential.

Serbian Orthodox Church

The successful experience of hosting the CEC General Assembly in Novi Sad strengthened ecumenical potential in the Serbian Orthodox Church. To enhance participation of this church and its members – students, experts, clergy – in the work of CEC should not be forgotten after the General Assembly. CEC's Human Rights programme is able to offer its help towards the discussion of religious freedom and church-state relations in Montenegro, one of the countries within the canonical sphere of the Serbian church. The ecumenical training course Be1, where CEC is a sponsor, has been offered to be organised in Novi Sad in 2020.

Church of England

The President and the general secretary participated in a conference on the Brexit situation in Lambeth Palace on 16 November 2018, and their contributions were published in the report of the event in February 2019. Conference on the Middle East organised together with the Cumberland Lodge was an example of a generous cooperation with an institution linked with a Member Church. Correspondence has been undertaken by the general secretary with the ecumenical office of the church regarding the definition of church membership and membership fee in CEC. On a more creative note, the executive secretary on theological dialogue is preparing together with the Church of England a conference to mark the significant 1920 initiatives of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

UEPAL

The Union of Protestant Churches in Alsace and Lorraine is closely linked with CEC's work. It is the home church of the President, and provides the position of the executive secretary of the CEC office in Strasbourg. The executive secretary works 60 % for CEC and 40 % for the Churches along the Rhine, which is a regional body of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE). UEPAL is helpfully involved in some aspects of the programme of the GB meeting in Strasbourg.

L. NCCs and local councils of churches

Annual meeting of the European National Councils of Churches took place in Rome on 6 to 9 May. It is a programme of CEC, concretely carried out together with the respective hosting Council of Churches.

Contacts with regional and local councils of churches provide CEC with insights and reflections which connect our European work with the local reality of the churches. When possible, the staff responds positively to invitations. The general secretary had the opportunity to speak at three local ecumenical events: On 26.11.2018 at the annual meeting of the Ecumenical Council of Berlin-Brandenburg, with the theme Frontiers of ecumenical action. On 18.1.2019 he preached at the Opening prayer of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity hosted by the churches in Namur, Belgium, and on the following day at a seminar hosted by the nearby Monastery of Chevetogne.

M. Contacts with ecumenical partners

World Council of Churches

The President and the general secretary met with the WCC general secretary Olav Fykse Tveit and the communications director Marianne Ejdersten in Frankfurt on 9.1.2019. They discussed possibilities for intensifying cooperation between the two organisations. Although this works well in some areas, such as environment and human rights, and is being reactivated in the area of theological and interreligious dialogue, a general approach is needed. This could be done for example through annual staff seminars. It should be clear that for European initiatives the WCC consults CEC, and for the ones beyond Europe, CEC consults WCC and the respective REO.

WCC has begun the preparations of its General Assembly in Karlsruhe in 2021. The executive secretary for theological dialogue Katerina Pekridou represented CEC in the meeting of the Assembly Planning Committee in Cyprus in January 2019. The President and the executive secretary of the Strasbourg office participated in a meeting discussing the local hosting in Karlsruhe in March 2019. A WCC General Assembly in Europe is an opportunity CEC. CEC's work should in an appropriate way be related to the Assembly theme "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity". CEC will be asked to organise a regional pre-assembly, which should give visibility to Europe « beyond Germany ». There are other parts of the programme where CEC should also be involved, such as workshops and exposure visits. The Europe plenary session of the Assembly should be prepared together with Act Alliance EU. A session should be dedicated to the WCC General Assembly in the next CEC GB meeting.

Regional Ecumenical Organisations

The Regional Ecumenical Organisations are a network of councils of churches corresponding to CEC in different parts of the world. The general secretaries meet bi-

annually, organised by WCC, next time in July 2019. CEC has a particular interest in its programmes to cooperate with the Middle East Council of Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches. Communication with both exist.

European ecumenical partners

The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) is a close partner with CEC on many levels. Unfortunately, the secondment of an executive secretary in the Brussels office was not possible at this stage, after Frank-Dieter Fischbach's contract ended. However, having become a legally registered entity in 2018, CPCE would like to strengthen its visibility in the European Institutions, through cooperation with CEC. There are also common priorities in both organisations' programmes, such as the recognition of baptism, Orthodox-Protestant dialogue, Artificial Intelligence etc. The secretaries for theological dialogue of both have already initiated their planning for joint projects.

The Conference of the Churches on the Rhine (KKR) is a regional group of CPCE consisting of 14 churches in 5 countries. The KKR supports the CEC Strasbourg office through donations towards its functioning. A negotiation between the KKR and CEC leaderships was held on 28.11.2018 in Strasbourg. The Strasbourg executive secretary represented CEC in the KKR General Assembly on 4-5.5.2019.

The Commission of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of EU (COMECE) is a close partner for CEC in Brussels. The two organizations coordinate the churches' participation in the official TFEU Art17 dialogue with EU. The new Presidents of the two organizations have established close working relations.

The Council of Catholic Bishops' Conferences in Europe (CCEE) is traditionally perhaps the closest ecumenical partner for CEC. The joint committee meets bi-annually, the next meeting being in Brussels prior to the Governing Board meeting in November 2019. Joint messages are prepared for the Day of Creation, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and sometimes other occasions. The approach is one of ecclesial co-operation, mission and pastoral care.

Both CEC and CCEE participate in a yearly meeting of general secretaries of (previously) "Geneva-based Christian organisations", where also The European Evangelical Alliance and Global Christian Forum attend. It is an important forum of information and discussion out of the usual boxes for the participating organizations.

The Committee of Orthodox Representations to the EU (CROCEU) enhances and develops the Orthodox profile in Brussels. Cooperation CEC-CROCEU is an important way to support this and to increase the concrete participation of the Orthodox Member Churches in CEC.

CEC participates in the meetings of the Global Christian Forum and follows the development of the European Christian Convention.

N. Dialogue with European Institutions

The dialogue of the European Institutions with the churches, faith communities and other convictions is stipulated in the Lisbon treaty TFEU Art17. This dialogue is a legal requirement for the EU Council, Parliament and Commission. Its implementation in each of the mentioned Institutions during the new mandate period will be defined in the political process after the European elections.

CEC and its Catholic partner COMECE have been able to make it clear that the nature of the dialogue requires an effective working relationship with an adequately well placed contact in each of the three Institutions. The arrangement during the incumbent Commission was not satisfactory, and with the Council it was non-existent. On the other hand, the Parliament has shown more activity and initiatives, especially with First Vice President Mairead McGuinness being responsible for the dialogue the past two years. The principle question of the division of the dialogue into two - the churches and religions on the one hand, and the non-religious convictions on the other - remains on the agenda. An evaluation meeting on the dialogue was organised by the European Parliament on 17 February, and among others CEC presented its reflection document.

The CEC secretariat prepared a response to a document of the Commission reflecting on the ethical dimensions of Artificial Intelligence in January 2019.

Two Dialogue seminars were organised by the European Parliament since the previous Governing Board meeting, on 4 Dec 2018 with the theme Religion and Human Rights within the EU – a shared responsibility, and on 19 March about Artificial Intelligence and ethical requirements. CEC was able to coordinate the representation of its constituency among the speakers of both seminars. A special feature of the seminar on Artificial Intelligence was that its speakers included specialists both from religious and non-confessional organisations.

Meetings of church representatives with the Presidency of the European Council are a visible form of the dialogue with the European Institutions. On 28.1. the Romanian government received the delegations of CEC, COMECE and CROCEU. A document was prepared reflecting on the Priorities of the Romanian Presidency by the CEC and CCME secretariats. The delegations were received by the Foreign Minister Mr. Teodor Melescanu and the State Secretary for Religions Mr. Victor Opaschi. H.B. Patriarch Daniel of the Romanian Orthodox Church also received the delegations. The Orthodox Church was represented alongside the delegations by Metropolitan Nifon, and the other CEC Member Churches were represented by Bishop Reinhart Guib of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession. A meeting with the Finnish EU Presidency is being prepared for early September.

Cooperation with the Member Churches and their confessional networks is essential for CEC's effective dialogue with the European Institutions. Churches are in radically different positions with regard to this dialogue. Some have representations actively developing their relations to the Institutions in Brussels and Strasbourg (Church of

Cyprus, Church of Greece, Church of England, Ecumenical Patriarchate, German Protestant Church EKD, Moscow Patriarchate, Romanian Orthodox Church) while most Member Churches do not have this opportunity, and rely mostly on CEC for these tasks. A meeting of the Brussels-based church representations was organised by CEC on 17 January.

Some groups of Member Churches have expressed interest in raising their confessional profile with the European Institutions, such as the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) and Committee of Representations of the Orthodox Church to the European Union (CROCEU). This can be seen in the light of a general interest in visibility and dialogue with political actors. It is not primarily related to developing competence in current European issues, as this is customarily provided by CEC. Throughout its existence in Brussels, CEC (and its predecessors EECCS and CS) has coordinated the Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox participation in the dialogue with the European Institutions. How to relate CEC's traditional role and thematic competence with the new confessional interest in high-profile visibility in the European dialogue is a strategic conversation which needs to continue between the Governing Board, the staff and the representatives of the Member Churches.

CEC has an officially recognised position as an International Non-Governmental Organisation in the Council of Europe. This gives it access to the working structures of the Council, in the areas of Bioethics, Education and Human Rights, as well as a unique position to speak for its Member Churches.

Activities General Secretary, since last Governing Board

2018		
„Die Grenzen des ökumenischen Handelns weiten“ Study Meeting Ecumencial Council Berlin Brandenburg	26 November	Berlin (DE)
Meeting with President Albecker (UEPAL/KKR)	28 November	Strasbourg (FR)
General Secretaries of the (formerly) Geneva based Christian organisations	4 December	Brussels
“Religion and Human Rights within the EU - A Shared Responsibility” Dialogue Seminar	4 December	Brussels
Visit of the Evangelical –Lutheran Church of Finland EU working group	5 December	Brussels
Human Rights within the EU Evening Debate	5 December	Brussels
Liturgy and reception, Romanian Orthodox Church with HE Metropolitan Joseph	6 December	Brussels
Meeting with Lena Kumlin (Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland) & Br. Olivier (COMECE)	7 December	Brussels
Conference on “Nationalism in Churches” - St. Andrew's Biblical Theological Institute	12-15 December	Moscow
Conference – “Persecution of Religious Minorities in Syria and Iraq”	14-16 December	Cumberland Lodge (UK)
2019		
Forum: Awareness, Action and Impact	7 January	Istanbul (TR)
Inter-Orthodox Consultation	8 January	Istanbul (TR)
Meeting with WCC General Secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit	9 January	Frankfurt Airport (DE)
Working meeting on coordination and cooperation of CEC Member Churches with regard to TFEU Art17 dialogue with European Institutions	17 January	Brussels
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - Event in Chevetogne Monastery	18-19 January	Namur (BE)
Opening of the Romanian EU Presidency a BOZAR	24 January	Brussels

Meeting with Romanian EU Presidency	28 January	Bucharest (RO)
Opening Prayer for the Romanian EU Presidency, St Nicholas Church of the Romanian Orthodox Church	30 January	Brussels
International Holocaust Remembrance Day	30 January	Brussels
KAICIID CPCE	4-5 February	Vienna (AT)
30 th Anniversary Celebrations & meetings - Estonian Council of Churches	21-22 February	Tallinn (EE)
Visit of Ms Lena Kumlin & Teemu Laajasalo, Bishop of Helsinki (E-LCF)	1 March	Brussels
Visit of YWCA Europe	1 March	Brussels
Talk: "Europe and the the Churches - Challenges and Possibilities" Seminar to honour the 60 th birthday of Bishop Matti Repo	7 March	Tampere (FI)
CEC Budget Committee	8 March	Brussels
Nordic-Baltic ecumenical secretaries	14 March	Roskilde (DK)
Meeting with Fr. Martin Michalicek, CCEE	15 March	Brussels
Preparatory Meeting – Yearly ENCC meeting	18 March	Rome (IT)
Visit of delegation from E-LCF to Council of Europe	25-27 March	Strasbourg (FR)
CEC Presidency	29 March	Leicester (UK)
Visit of Rev Dr Dagmar Heller, scientific advisor on Orthodoxy - Institute for Ecumenical Studies and Research, Bensheim (DE)	8 April	Brussels
INGO Side event, Council of Europe	8-9 April	Strasbourg (FR)
Joint CEC-WACC Seminar and Assembly	11-12 April	Stockholm (SE)/Helsinki (FI)
Annual Meeting of European NCC	6-9 May	Rome (IT)

Economic and ecological justice, and sustainable future

Work programme 2019 -23

1. Background

Challenges of continuing environmental degradation, climate change, loss of biodiversity, and challenges related to overall concerns of sustainable future are increasingly on the agenda of experts, political decision makers, in the media as well as the attention of a broad public. Authoritative scientific reports warn of dramatic impacts. On the top of it, most of these challenges impact the world in an unequal way. It is the poorest who suffer the most to adapt, including extreme weather, lack of food, and loss of land. Challenges of climate change and related effects are the issue of justice. It is unjust that those who have contributed the least, poor, those living in developing countries, as well as future generations, are about to suffer the most. Ecological crises and sustainable future is one of the most serious challenge Europe and the globe will need to manage in the near future.

Activities of political institutions in addressing challenges of climate change and sustainable development are intensifying. Paris climate agreement and the follow up process through annual meetings of COPs, as well as UN agreement of Sustainable Development Goals and efforts of the EU in this area are getting momentum, as well as increasing support of the people. From very recent EU proposal should be noted in particular the initiative of the Economic and Social Committee of the EU titled Climate justice (2017), European Commission outline of the EU climate strategy, presented in 2018 and the European Commission reflection paper Towards a sustainable Europe 2030 presented in January 2019.

These developments have been accompanied by a growing interest and growing engagement of churches and ecumenical organisations. CEC has been since several years increasingly contributing to these efforts through a number of programmes and initiatives, as e.g. dialogue with in the European Parliament on divestment from fossil fuels, a dialogue in the European Commission on climate change, the publication addressing European economic governance Beyond Prosperity? support work of European Christian environmental Network (ECEN), CEC document Sharing of God's earth and its riches justly. CEC has been active in a long year and systematic contribution of WCC climate change programme. CEC engagement has been accompanied by an active work of ECEN which has been offering a broad platform enabling support and encouragement of churches engagement in care for creation, as well as by sharing of experience and mutual support between CEC and ECEN. ECEN as a network closely cooperating with CEC and to which CEC is offering an administrative support, is an instrument of a cooperation reaching beyond CEC member churches and including, notably, through the involvement of CCEE in participation on ECEN, a cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church. In terms of programmatic activities, work of ECEN is characterized in particular by the focus on sharing of experience between churches and church groups engaged in works on care for creation, the

support of theological reflections related to care for creation and support of liturgical initiatives, as it is, notably, churches' engagement in celebrating Time of Creation (1 September – 4 October) and ecumenical cooperation in such celebrations.

CEC work in period 2019-23 will, along with support of already existing initiatives of ECEN on growing churches' engagement, theology and liturgy, put an emphasis on enhancing CEC capacity for a dialogue with the political decision makers, in particular with the EU. In order to achieve that, CEC will establish a working group of experts from CEC member churches. The group will strengthen CEC capacity for a political dialogue and work on those aspects of climate change and sustainable development that are of particular concerns for churches, as notably: the awareness that technological progress will not be sufficient for efficient reaction neither to climate change, nor to achieving SDGs, relationship of sustainable production and consumption to questions of lifestyle and the need of lifestyle transition, ecological justice, link of ecological concerns to economic justice, economic models and its social consequences.

Effective addressing concerns of ecology, care for creation and sustainable future offers a platform for successful ecumenical cooperation while underlying the fact that addressing these concerns is not obstructed by dogmatic theological differences, as well as a space for a productive exchange and cooperation with other faiths and with partners from academia and secular world.

2. Working group

Economic and ecological challenges are linked to our ethical choices. The role of churches and faith based organisation is increasingly needed. Challenges of economic and ecological justice have been addressed in the CEC Assembly 2018, especially in the Assembly decisions incorporated into the public issue document.

In order to face these challenges and in following up commitments of the General Assembly 2018 CEC will create the working group on Economic and ecological justice and sustainable future. Working group will draw on expertise and experience offered to CEC for addressing challenges and concerns related to economic and ecological justice and sustainable future from CEC member churches. This will include concerns related to limits of the earth's capacity, lifestyle change, reduction of fossil fuels and ecological footprint, model of economic growth and criteria of sustainable development. Accents in the work of the group will be given to preparation of the dialogue of CEC related to above mentioned concerns with the EU and in cooperation with other ecumenical bodies, in particular the WCC for a churches' contribution to global addressing of concerns related to climate change and sustainable development, as they are in the agenda of the UN. Work in the group will require ability to participate on the dialogue of churches with politics, communication with experts from different fields engaged in work on climate change, ecological and economic justice and sustainable development.

Aims of the CEC working group:

- Share and enhance expertise assembled in CEC member churches in addressing concerns related to climate change, ecological and economic justice and sustainable development
- Prepare and facilitate a dialogue of CEC with the EU on these and related themes and using opportunities for such a dialogue with EU
- Strengthen theological and ethical arguments related churches' concerns on climate change, ecological and economic justice and sustainable future; contribute to CEC becoming an actor shaping public theology and churches' contribution to a public space.

3. Work programme

CEC work programme for 2019-23 draws on the joint work and complementarity of CEC working group on economic and ecological justice and sustainable future and activities of European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN). The work programme will focus on the following:

Program cluster: Networking and churches' engagement in care for creation, ecological justice and sustainable future

Aims	Objectives	Activities	Description	When
Increase engagement of CEC Member Churches in the care for creation and sustainable development [30%]	A: Offering a space for sharing, exchange of experience and support of common projects related to churches' work on care for creation, encouraging and motivation churches' work on care for creation. B: To undertake and support	Facilitating the networking, providing leadership and secretariat for European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) and ensuring vitality of the network. (Assembly public issue document)	Offering through ECEN a communication platform and opportunities for networking, incl. concrete opportunities for sharing and working together as e.g. ECEN twinning project, the support of exemplary projects through Roman Juriga Award, visiting and encouraging church initiatives, and others.	Continually 2019 - 23

	<p>initiatives aiming at reducing ecological footprint. Support churches in the fight against climate change and ecological destruction.</p> <p>C: Listening 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. (Assembly public issue document)</p>	Conference: Churches contribution to a sustainable society	Conference co-organised in cooperation of ECEN with the Church of Norway on sharing of experience and churches' concerns related to sustainable development	May 2019
		Finalising the Eco-management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) in the Ecumenical Centre in Brussels		2019
		ECEN Assembly 2020	Organisation and leadership in preparing biannual ECEN assemblies, and also workshops and seminars.	Aug – Sept 2020
		ECEN Assembly 2022		2022
<p>Strengthen a joint churches' contribution responding to climate change and sustainable future. [15%]</p>	<p>Work together and strengthen effective cooperation with other ecumenical actors, in particular the World Council of Churches, CEC Organisations in Partnership, faith based actors and other partners from civil society. (Assembly public issue document)</p>	Strengthening the cooperation with the WCC, contributing to an ecumenical team under the leadership of the World Council of Churches in works on climate change and sustainable development	Participating on the activities of the WCC climate change group, contributing to the WCC programmes on economic and ecological justice	2019-23
		Enhancing cooperation with partners	Strengthening a cooperation with CCEE and CEC Organisations in Partnership, other ecumenical partners, faith based actors and other partners from civil society.	2019-23

		Conference: Churches contribution to a sustainable society	Conference co-organised in cooperation of ECEN with the Church of Norway on sharing of experience and churches' concerns related to sustainable development	May 2019
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Program cluster: Public theology, eco-theology and liturgy

Aims	Objectives	Activities	Description	When
Highlight a particular role for churches in addressing care for creation, sustainable development, economic and ecological justice in word and prayers. [15%]	Elaborating and deepening theological arguments in eco-theology and environmental ethics.	Conference on Eco-theology and environmental ethics ECOTHEE	Cooperation with the Orthodox Academy in Crete and other partners in preparing the conference and contributing to the conference	September 2019
		Season of Creation / Time for Creation: 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	Support of initiatives related to celebration of season of creation, incl. sharing of liturgical resources and supporting ecumenical dimensions of season of creation, through cooperation with partners incl. Global Catholic Climate Movement, WCC, LWB and others	2019- 23 with focus each year on the period 1 September - 4 October
		Sharing and joint reflection on eco-theology	Organising and conducting workshops under the auspices of ECEN working group on Eco-theology and liturgy	2019 - 23
		Publication of articles on eco-theology	Publication of articles and contributions to conferences and events organised by	2019 - 23

			partners focused on theological and ethical aspects of environmental crisis, ecological justice, sustainable future and related concerns	
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Programme cluster: Churches' contribution to a sustainable future

Aims	Objectives	Activities	Description	When
Ensure a qualified voice of churches and faith based actors in addressing challenge of climate change and ecological destruction. [25%]	A: Strengthening churches' capacity in addressing challenges of climate change and sustainable development through pooling of expertise of CEC member churches	CEC working group on economic and ecological justice and sustainable future	Working group analysing documents and initiatives of the EU, the UN and other political institutions related to climate change and sustainable development incl. SDGs and preparing a dialogue with the EU on churches' concerns related to economic and ecological justice and sustainable future.	2019-23
		Publication: Churches' contribution to a sustainable future	Publication developed as a result of the working group discussion	2022
	B: Ensure a qualified churches' contribution to a challenge of sustainable future through a cooperation with partners	Project: Sustainable governance/trust in governance	Contribution to the project developed in cooperation with partners from academic institutions and civil society organisation and applying for the EU funds	2020-23

Programme cluster: Advocacy and dialogue with the political institutions

Aims	Objectives	Activities	Description	When
Raise the voice of churches in a dialogue with relevant political institutions , especially the EU and the UN in expressing churches' concerns related to climate change and sustainable development. [15%] (Assembly public issue document)	Advocate and be a strong voice at the European level regarding questions related to environmental protection, climate justice and sustainable development. Support of efforts for achievement of SDGs.	Facilitating, organising and engaging CEC Member Churches in dialogue on themes related to economic, ecological and intergenerational justice with the European Union.	Active search for opportunities for a dialogue with the EU in relation to EU initiatives addressing climate change and sustainable development, incl. opportunities of High level religious meeting, Dialogue seminars with the European Commission and European Parliament, etc. In cooperation with partners to organise events enabling such a dialogue and contributing to such a dialogue organised by partners.	2019-23
	(Assembly public issue document)	Raising a voice of churches at the United Nations level, incl. presence in United Nations Climate Change Conferences (COPs).	Contributions to annual COPs in cooperation with WCC, Act Alliance and other partners. A particular focus on COPs taking place in Europe and in cooperation with churches in European hosting countries support in organisation of a spiritual life (e.g. prayers) and ecumenical worships	2019-23

Visit of the Delegation of the Diocese of Montenegro of the Serbian Orthodox Church

18-20 March 2019, Brussels, Belgium

Monday, 18 March 2019

19:00 *Dinner - Vladimir Filipovic, Dicon Dusan (Markovic)*

Tuesday, 19 March 2019

10:30 – 11:30 Meeting with Mr Thomas Hagleitner, EC DG NEAR, Unit D. 1
Montenegro, (15, Rue de la Loi)

11:30 – 12:30 Meeting with Dennis de Jong, European Parliament

12:30 – 14:00 *Lunch*

15:00 – 18:00 Seminar on Article 17 "*Artificial Intelligence: Ethical Concerns*",
European Parliament

19:00 *Dinner*

Wednesday, 20 March 2019

Arie de Pater (Morning/early afternoon)

11:00 – 12:00 Meeting with Mary Clune and the Western Balkans Task Force,
EEAS

12:30-13:30 Lunch meeting with Serbian Ambassador Marina Jovicevic,
Serbian Embassy

15:15 – 16:30 Meeting with Mr Romain Strasser, EPP (European Parliament,
ATR building entrance, in front of the Total Station)



Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro
and the Littoral

I N V I T A T I O N

Round table discussion on Freedom of Religion or Belief in Montenegro

2-4 May 2019, Podgorica, Montenegro

The Conference of European Churches and the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral of the Serbian Orthodox Church are organizing a Round table discussion on Freedom of Religion or Belief from 2-4 May 2019 in Podgorica, Montenegro.

In order to replace the outdated 1977 Law on the Legal Status of Religious Communities, the Government of Montenegro issued on 30 July 2015 a Draft Law on Religious Freedom. However, this Draft Law deviates in a number of its provisions, from the relevant European and International conventions, standards and obligations of Montenegro in the field of human rights and freedom of religion or belief. It causes grave concern for the churches and religious communities because, if adopted as proposed, seriously jeopardize religious freedom, the autonomy of churches and religious communities and the principle of non-discrimination.

This Draft Law presents serious problems on many points that should be addressed with, concerning re-registration process, burdensome registration requirements, discriminatory citizenship and territorial requirements, disproportionate sanctions on the religious communities and finally the issue of "confiscation" and the property rights of churches and religious communities.

The aim of the Round table discussion is to assist the relevant

stakeholders in drafting a new text that would meet International and European standards of freedom of religion or belief and respect for the rights and legitimate interests of the churches and religious communities. We are aware that the 1977 Law was adopted during the socialist political system and today Montenegro operates in significantly different legal, political and social conditions. The Round table discussion will examine international and national legal standards on freedom of religion or belief, take stock of current challenges on freedom of religion or belief, the role of state actors in improving freedom of religion or belief and legal position of churches and religious communities, different political and legal practices and best practices on preparation and adopting a law on freedom of religion or belief.

We would like to invite you to join to us in this debate on the freedom of religion or belief in Montenegro.

Kind regards,



Metropolitan of Montenegro and Littoral
Dr Amfilohije (Radovic)



Secretary General of CEC
Very Rev. Fr. Heikki Huttunen

D R A F T 08 04 2019

Freedom of Religion or Belief in Montenegro - 2-4 MAY 2019 Podgorica, Montenegro

ARRIVAL – 2ND OF MAY

DAY I - 3RD OF MAY

Welcome and Introduction

09:00-10:00 His Eminence Metropolitan Dr Amfilohije (Radovic), Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro and Littoral, Very. Rev. Dr Velibor Dzomic, Legal counsel of Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro and Littoral and Rev. Christian Krieger, President of the Conference of European Churches (CEC)

SESSION I

10:00 -11:30 – Freedom of Religion or Belief in International and European Union Law

Moderator: Dr Elizabeta Kitanovic, CEC Human Rights Secretary

Speakers:

- a) Prof. Dr Silvio Ferrari, University of Milano (emeritus)
- b) Prof. W. Cole Durham, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University

11:00-11:30 Coffee Break

SESSION II

11:30-12:30 The Draft Law on Freedom of Religion or Belief in Montenegro. Process and content issues

Moderator: Dr Merilin Kiviorg, University of Tartu, School of Law

- a) Very Rev. Dr Velibor Dzomic, Coordinator of the Legal Consortium of Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro and Littoral
- b) Prof. Dr Bogoljub Sijakovic, Theological Faculty, University of Belgrade
- c) Dr Vlada Djuric, Institute of Law, Serbia

12:30-15:00 Lunch break

SESSION III

15:00- 16:30 The Draft Law on Religious Freedom or Belief in Montenegro. Perspectives from different EU countries I

Moderator: Rev. Dr Patrick Roger Schnabel, Berliner Missionswerk

- a) Prof. Dr Gerhard Robbers, University of Trier (emeritus)
- b) Prof. Dr Wolfgang Wieshaider, University of Vienna
- c) Dr Sophie van Bijsterveld, University of Nijmegen (TBC)

16:30-17:00 Coffee Break

SESSION IV

17:00-18:30 The Draft Law on Religious Freedom or Belief in Montenegro. Perspectives from different EU countries II

Moderator: Rev. Dr Patrick Roger Schnabel, Berliner Missionswerk

- a) Dr Merilin Kiviorg, University of Tartu, School of Law
- b) PhD Univ. Lecturer Emanuel Tavala, Law Faculty of the University of Sibiu
- c) Superintendent Dr Daniel G. Topalski, Methodist Church in Bulgaria
- d) Prof. Dr Marco Ventura, Professor at the Law School of the University of Siena, Director of the Centre for Religious Studies of Fondazione Bruno Kessler of Trento and President of the European Consortium for Church and State Research.

19:00- Dinner

DAY II - 4th of MAY

V SESSION

09:00- 10:30 The Draft Law on Religious Freedom or Belief in Montenegro in the European Union context. Assessment and proposals

Moderator: Dr Merilin Kiviorg, University of Tartu, School of Law (srpski modeartor)

- a) Dialogue and cooperation between State and religions - Archimandrite Nikifor Milovic
- b) Registration - Very Rev. Dr Velibor Dzomic, Legal Coordinator of
- c) Property rights and restitution – Dr Vladimir Lepsavic, Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro and Littoral

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 -12:30 Conclusions

- a) Metropolitan Amfilohije (Radovic)
- c) Dr Elizabeta Kitanovic, CEC Human Rights Secretary
- d) Prof. W. Cole Durham, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University

- e) Prof. Dr Silvio Ferrari, University of Milano
- f) Prof. Dr Gerhard Robbers, University of Trier
- d) Very Rev. Dr Velibor Dzomic, Legal Coordinator of the Legal Consortium of Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro and Littoral

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- a) Prof Dr Snezana Miladinovic
- b) Prof Dr Dalibor Djukic, Law Faculty Belgrade
- c) Prof. Dr Nenad Djurdjevic, Law faculty Kragujevac



Brussels, 12 April 2019

Dear High Representative Mogherini, Dear Commissioner Hahn,

Through this letter on behalf of Parliament's Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief & Religious Tolerance, I like to draw your attention to the situation in Montenegro with regard to the protection of freedom of religion or belief.

In particular, the Conference of European Churches together with a delegation from the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Montenegro & Littoral brought to my attention their concerns with the draft law on the Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities prepared by the Government of Montenegro in 2015. This draft law would further restrict the rights of religious communities even in comparison with the already restrictive Law on Legal Status of Religious Communities dating back to 1977, i.e. the socialist period.

These concerns, which are shared by other religious communities, such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Islamic Community in Montenegro, relate to several aspects:

- not only new, but also longstanding religious communities have to re - register and submit a decision on their establishment. For traditional communities, this will result in a break in their centuries-long continuity of legal personality; moreover, there is also a wide discretion for the authorities not to grant registration;
- secondly, the draft law stipulates seizure by the state of all sacral facilities that were constructed by believers before 1918. Especially the longstanding religious communities will thus lose their sacral properties, or if they were seized in the past, their properties will not be returned or compensated for.

Although the Government of Montenegro claims to stick to the principle of separation of State and Church, obviously with the draft law it would directly encroach upon the internal organisation of religious communities. At the moment, it is uncertain if and when a new law will be formally adopted replacing the unfair law of 1977, as by the end of 2015 the Government withdrew the Draft Law from the procedure before the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODHIR.

Bearing in mind the status of Montenegro as a pre-accession country call upon you to encourage the Government of Montenegro and the competent Ministry for Human and Minority Rights to open a public, transparent and institutional dialogue with representatives of churches and religious communities and other relevant stakeholders as soon as possible. Furthermore, I like to recommend the forming of the Working Group for the preparation of the Strategy on the Protecting the Freedom of Religion. Finally, for preparing a new Draft Law on Freedom Religion or Belief relevant political entities, representatives of the civil society and experts in the field of human rights should be given the opportunity of assisting the Government in its work.

Also, Montenegro has an obligation to remove all discriminatory aspects that exist in the Law on restitution and indemnity, which does not allow churches and religious communities to return of or compensation for seized property at the time of the socialist regime, to use this right in the procedure and in a manner similar to all other subjects.

We stress the importance for the EU institutions, as in other cases, to help Montenegro to regulate these very important issues in their pre-accession process to the EU, in accordance with European standards.

Sincerely yours,



Dennis de Jong
co-chair of the Intergroup
Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance



IAMS EUROPE CONFERENCE

AUGUST 23-27, 2019
SANKT AUGUSTIN
GERMANY

LOCATING EUROPEAN MISSIONS

IN A WOUNDED WORLD IN DEEP
TRANSFORMATION

CONFERENCE WEBSITE AND
REGISTRATION
MISSIONSWISSENSCHAFT.EU

IAMS Europe Conference – at a glance

Friday 23 August 2016

- | 16:00-18:00 | Arrival and Registration
- | 18:30-19:30 | Dinner
- | 20:00-21:30 | Opening | Plenary Session 1
- | 21:30-22:30 | Reception

Saturday 24 August 2019

- | 09:00-10:30 | Plenary Session 2
- | 11:00-12:30 | Plenary Session 3
- | 12:30-13:30 | Lunch
- | 14:00-16:00 | Corridor of Ideas: Parallel Paper Sessions I
- | 16:30-18:00 | Plenary Session 4
- | 18:30-19:30 | Dinner
- | 20:00-21:00 | Plenary Session 5

Sunday 25 August 2019

- | 09:00-10:30 | First Roundtable – Session 6
- | 11:00-12:30 | Second Roundtable – Session 7a
- | 11:00-12:30 | Third Roundtable – Session 7b
- | 12:30-13:30 | Lunch
- | 14:00-16:00 | Corridor of Ideas: Parallel Paper Sessions II
- | 16:00-19:00 | Departure for Visit with Iraqi Migrant Community / Syrian Catholic Church in Cologne-Mühlheim
- | 19:00-21:00 | Oriental Choral Evensong | Cultural Evening

Monday 26 August 2019

- | 09:00-10:30 | Plenary Session 8
- | 11:00-12:30 | Plenary Session 9
- | 12:30-13:30 | Lunch I
- | 14:00-16:00 | Corridor of Ideas: Parallel Paper Sessions III
- | 16:30-18:00 | Plenary Session 10
- | 18:30-21:30 | Dinner & Garden Party

Tuesday 27 August 2019

- | 08:00-10:00 | Breakfast
- | 10:00-12:00 | Farewell and Departure

Locating European Missions in a Wounded World in Deep Transformation

Conference Theme: Living and believing in an unstable and vulnerable world has become the prevailing experience and challenge for most societies worldwide, and so too for many parts of Europe, as we move further into the 21st century. Progressive thinking has hit real barriers for some time now, with no clear vision for our common future available, giving way to different forms of retrotopian nostalgia which pronounce revisionist hopes of an imagined past (Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia*, 2017). Recent analysis, however, proposes reading the profound changes, risks and vulnerabilities of our current world as being part of a deep, even metamorphic transformation (Ulrich Beck, *Metamorphosis of the World*, 2016).

Against such a backdrop, this conference seeks to locate European missions in that wounded world of deep transformation in a three-fold way:

- We start with naming the wounds and transformations, past and present, which haunt European societies and Christian missions – and re-examine their complex entanglements and complicities in today's wounded and vulnerable world (day 1).
- This allows us not only to revisit theologies of mission, foremost missions *ad vulnera*, but also to rethink them in new perspectives, especially in light of recent shifts in theology and contexts where vulnerability and deep transformation have long been reflected. Here, a special focus is given to new locations and meanings of baptism as part of a missionary spirituality towards deep transformation in Europe (day 2).
- With such locating, distinct areas of vulnerable missions and commitments as resources of healing, renewal and deep transformation for living and believing in today's world come to the fore (ecclesial futures; engagement for religious freedom; practices of deep solidarity etc.) (day 3).

The conference seeks to further interdenominational exchange across Europe's missiological networks and missionary scholar-practitioners. It represents also a regional (European) conference in preparation for the global IAMS 2020 conference in Sydney on "Powers, Inequalities and Vulnerabilities: Mission in a Wounded World", 9-14 July, 2020.

Coordination: On behalf of IAMS Europe, Institute of Missiology and the Study of Theologies Beyond Europe, University of Münster, and SVD Missiological Institute, St. Augustin / Bonn, Germany. Contacts: Norbert Hintersteiner, iamseuro@uni-muenster.de and Christian Tauchner SVD, 2019IAMS-conference@steyler.eu.

Coordination draws on a support group and open platform of individual members or representatives of various European regional missiological networks and interest groups (NIME, AFOM, CEEAMS, BIAPT(Mission Studies), OMN, IACM Europe, IIMF, DGMW, IIMF, KEK, etc.).

Venue: Missionspriesterseminar Sankt Augustin
Arnold Janssen Straße 30
53757 Sankt Augustin

Friday 23 August 2016

| 16:00-18:00 | Arrival and Registration

| 18:30-19:30 | Dinner

| 20:00-21:30 | Opening | Plenary Session 1

Norbert Hintersteiner (Münster) and Christian Tauchner SVD (St. Augustin)

Welcome

Robert J. Schreiter (Catholic Theological Union, Chicago)

Locating European Missions in a Wounded World in Deep Transformation

This paper explores the current situation for engaging in mission in Europe. It notes that Europe is living in a situation "between the times" that is marked by breakdown of established social patterns, widening divisions, and a sense of loss of control. In such times, it is important to see paradox where others see polarities, and look for the clues to a new framework for understanding what the *missio Dei* means. This is explored under two rubrics: the woundedness of the world and the need for deep transformation. The deep wounds Europe carries on many fronts can be addressed by a spirituality of seeing baptism as entering into the death and resurrection of Christ. The need for deep transformation calls forth practices of ongoing conversion, kenosis, building community, and prophetic witness. Such acknowledgment of wounds and these four practices can prepare us to seek a new framework for mission for Europe today.

Robert J. Schreiter is the Vatican Council II Professor of Theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, USA. He is past president of both the American Society of Missiology and the Catholic Theological Society of America. He has also worked in peacebuilding after conflict on all six continents. Among his books are *Constructing Local Theologies*; *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*; *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*.



| 21:30-22:30 | Reception

Saturday 24 August 2016

Naming Wounds and Transformations

The first day of the conference looks at processes of history and transformation in Europe that have produced wounds in different fields and behaviours. Traumatic experiences are often barely dealt with and are easily instrumentalized for political aims. The churches have played their roles in ambiguous ways both as victimizers and martyrs. Historical and cultural memory is not self-evident but requires responsible construction and articulation in order to be able to contribute to the hopeful configuration of society.

Chair: Christian Tauchner SVD (St. Augustin)

Geographies of Religion and Politics of the Wounds

As wounds of the past as well as present continue to shape Europe's collective memories and identities, they become the battle ground for various political, cultural and religious interests and emerge as obstacles or resources for transformation, social and religious change. The panels of sessions 2 and 3 study Europe's entanglement in such religion and politics of the wounds in select European regions and explore vulnerability as socio-cultural, ethical and theological concept for living and believing in a wounded world. Both areas of analysis and reflection are key to a future Missiology and Mission *ad Vulnera* in Europe.

András Máté-Tóth (Szeged University)

Within Wounded Worlds: Collective Identities and Missionary Capacity in Central and Eastern Europe

For long positioned at the crossroads of major cultural and political hegemonies, Central and Eastern Europe's collective memory is marked by major haunting historical wounds (traumas), which have a determining impact on its capacity for social and religious transformations: (i) the lack of national sovereignty, (ii) the refusal to allow practicing minority rights, (iii) a politically determined social mobility, (iv) the persecution of religions, churches and dissidents, and (v) genocides and other mass killings. The paper explores how in midst of the presence and political instrumentalization of such wounded collective identities, present-day missionary capacity of the churches and of Christian theology can be perceived.



András Máté-Tóth is professor for the Study on Religions at Szeged University. His research interests include: the mutual interaction between social and religious turns in Central and Eastern Europe, the theoretical interpretation of contemporary religious processes. Latest book: *Verwundete Identitäten. Freiheit und Populismus in Ost-Mittel-Europa* (Herder 2018)

Irina Paert (University of Tartu)

'Keep Your Mind in Hell and Despair Not' (St.Siluoan). The Wounds and Complicities of Orthodoxy in Estonia in the 20th Century

The collective wounds of colonialism, war and repression have underpinned a now secularized theology of the nation's suffering in the Baltic memory. Orthodoxy was a minority religion in Estonia: during the time of the Russian empire it was the faith of the Tsar and during socialism it was the faith of the Russians who were identified with the communists. The current commemoration of the martyrs by the Orthodox churches readily confirms the collective image of the church as victim of an atheist regime, while downplaying issues of collaboration. This paper revisits critically the ambivalent and controversial location of the Orthodox church within the Baltic memory of national suffering. It further offers a distinct Baltic Orthodox theological prospect of Christian mission to collective wounds, drawing on St

Siluoan the Athonite (1866-1938) and his rich interpretation in the works of Archimandrite Sophrony Saharov (1896-1993) and Estonian composer Arvo Pärt (b. 1935).

Irina Paert is a Senior Researcher at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Tartu. She is the author of two monographs, *Spiritual Elders: Charisma and Tradition in Russian Orthodoxy* (2010) and *Old Believers, Religious Dissent and Gender in Russia, 1760-1850* (2003). She also edited a collection of articles on the history of Baltic Orthodoxy (2018; in Russian) and on Orthodox pedagogy (2013; in Estonian).



| 11:00-12:30 | Plenary Session 3

Chair: Jonas Adelin Jørgensen (Aarhus)

Vulnerability as Socio-Cultural, Ethical and Theological Concept

Zilka Spahić Šiljak (TPO Foundation, Sarajevo)

Social Vulnerability and the Ethics of Responsibility in the Balkans:
Whose Lives Matter?

Very often behind the triumph of truth, justice and prosperity of modern civilization we find so many narratives of violence, marginalization and deprivation of basic rights – and exposure to pain and loss. The human body keeps the score and remembers everything which it has been through. Social vulnerability is a result of our exposure to pain, loss and violence particularly if we belong to a minority. The problem is how we value vulnerability, and how much some lives matter in comparison with the lives of others who are less privileged. In this paper I will explore how the construction of our bodies in the social and political space of war and the post-war transition in the Balkans influences our vulnerability, capacity to grieve and act as an ethical being. Working on peacebuilding in the Balkans in the last two decades has made me re-think the ethics of responsibility. How do we decide whose life is more valuable and why do we grieve only for some people and do not show compassion for others? How do we sympathize with some groups of people and dehumanize and not care for others? How do we decide about it? What are the ethical foundations that shape our sensitivity towards others and how do religion and churches empower or disempower in the discourse of responsibility?



Zilka Spahić Šiljak holds a PhD in gender studies and works on issues involving human rights, politics, religion, education and peacebuilding. She runs TPO Foundation Sarajevo and teaches at several universities in BiH and abroad. Her publications include: *Shining Humanity – Life Stories of Women Peacebuilders in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2014); *Contesting Female, Feminist and Muslim Identities. Post-Socialist Contexts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* (2012); *Women, Religion and Politics* (2010).

Miriam Leidinger (Missio, Aachen)

The Power of Vulnerability: A Systematic Approach to an Ambivalent Term

As the present times are marked by an increased sense of insecurity and vulnerability, talking about vulnerability is *en vogue* across many academic discourses. The aim of this presentation is to systematically reveal the diverse layers of the term vulnerability by disclosing its ambivalence and cognates across various fields. Why and how should theology talk about vulnerability? Conceptualizing vulnerability as distinct theological idea, do we need a “theology of vulnerability”, a “theology for the vulnerable” or a “vulnerable theology”? In sum, the paper will map theology’s contribution to the discourse on the “power of vulnerability” and indicate where caution about it is critical.

Miriam Leidinger works at the Theological Research Desk at Missio Aachen. Her research interests include gender and queer studies, body and religion, contextual and liberation theologies. She holds a PhD in Systematic Theology, with her thesis published as *Verletzbarkeit gestalten. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit ‘Verletzbarkeit’ anhand der Christologien von Jürgen Moltmann, Jon Sobrino und Graham Ward*, Regensburg 2018.



| 12:30-13:30 |

Lunch

| 14:00-16:00 |

Corridor of Ideas: Parallel Paper Sessions I

| 16:30-18:00 |

Plenary Session 4

Chair: Kirsteen Kim (Pasadena, CA)

Complicity and Mission in a Wounded World: Theological Perspectives

This topic will be interpreted from two perspectives: On the one hand, historical and post-colonial studies reveal how Western Christian missions have been complicit in wounding the world. On the other hand, Christian faith inspires a mission of resistance to the complicity of big business, economic globalization, and greediness that causes exploitation, forced displacement, and environmental destruction. For each perspective, we will interrogate a particular example theologically. First, one of the most insidious ways in which mission compromised with the evils of colonialism is in its complicity with racism and white supremacy. To what extent is the theology of mission infected with this damaging worldview? Second, involuntary migration is related to forces of economic globalization and super-power conflicts. What analysis of the problem does theology offer and what solutions does it propose?

Anthony G. Reddie (Wesley House, Cambridge)

African Caribbean religio-cultural retention as riposte to Mission Christianity

The rise in prominence of Contextual theologies has reminded us also of the ideological basis of much that can be construed as theology. Any casual observance of the role that Christianity played in the construction of the British Empire cannot but help notice the ways in which Eurocentric, Christian theology provided the buttressing for the ideological claims to

subjugate and occupy lands and people's minds. In the now famous dictum of Stanley Livingstone the British Empire was founded on the triumvirate of 'Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization.' This paper explores how an experiential engagement with African Caribbean religio-cultural retention can assist in deconstructing the bourgeois civilizing code of respectability of Mission Christianity that has given rise to a conservative, spiritualized disembodied mode of faith that ignores the materiality of Blackness.

Anthony G. Reddie is an Extraordinary Professor and Research Fellow of Theological Ethics at the University of South Africa and a Fellow of Wesley House, in Cambridge. He is a prolific writer whose work explores the interface of Black theology and Practical theology. He is editor of *Black Theology: An International Journal*.



Judith Gruber (Leuven)

"I pray instead to be haunted, bypassing the arrogance of the cure" (G. Spivak)

Addressing Post/Colonial Trauma through Christ's Wounded Resurrection Body.

I will situate the issue of forced migration in a broader framework by examining how post/colonial societies deal with the legacies of colonialism that live on in the form of racism. The guiding question is this: What analysis of the problem of post/colonial trauma can theology offer and what solutions does it suggest? I will develop an answer by comparing two memory discourses in the wake of empire that set out to develop counter-narratives to the colonial discourse: I will, first, examine the post/colonial relationship between Belgium and the DRC as it is imagined in the Royal Museum of Central Africa. Founded by Leopold II as propaganda for his colonial efforts, the RMCA is currently closed for renovation and is developing new modes for the representation of Belgium's colonial past. Bringing in a theological perspective, I will, contrast the RMCA's shifting memory politics with postcolonial re-tellings of NT stories about cross and resurrection. My goal is to discern what kinds of memory politics are effective in contesting the discursive sovereignty of the colonial gaze and the violent mechanisms through which it maintains its power in post/colonial societies.



Judith Gruber is Research Professor of Systematic Theology at KU Leuven, Belgium. In her research, she brings Catholic theology into conversation with critical cultural theories. Recent publications include *Intercultural Theology. Exploring World Christianity after the Cultural Turn* (V&R 2017).

| 18:30-19:30 |

Dinner

| 20:00-21:00 |

Plenary Session 5

Chair: Norbert Hintersteiner (Münster)

European Platform of Missiological Networks

IAMS Europe Business Session

A Missionary Spirituality Towards Deep Transformation:

Locating Baptism in Vulnerable and Transforming Europe

A missionary spirituality towards deep transformation is grounded in a profound humility. It is carried by an understanding that the *missio Dei* will bring the world to its deep transformation and final reconciliation. Human cooperation in it is marked by kenosis through baptism, ongoing conversion, building community, and prophetic witness. What kenosis entails in search of deep transformation is learning to live radically with the fact that, in baptism, we carry the death of the Lord in our bodies (2 Cor 4:11). This is most manifest when our mission is with those carrying wounds. Baptism commits us to this manifestation of the death of Christ so that, as Paul reminds us, the resurrection of Christ might be made visible. The paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ is not a seamless move from one state to another for Jesus; it is a radical disruption and emergence of something quite new that is paradoxically also in continuity with the past. The practice of kenosis and baptism keeps freeing us from clinging to the wrong ideas and the wrong things. It also conforms us more closely to the action of God in the Word becoming flesh, thereby helping us put on the mind of Christ.

From scholarly analysis, baptism has become a major issue in the rapidly changing societies in Europe in recent years. Discussing baptism in Europe through the lens of the secularization theories calls attention to the socio-political and religious realities of nation-states, denominations, and church-state relationships. Discourses on nationalism, the so called *Volkirche*, proselytism, apostasy, as well as individual human rights come to the fore. The so-called de-churching processes and the emergence of new forms of Church are other areas in which the question of baptism becomes relevant. Additionally, complex socio-political processes and changes in the religious landscape of Europe caused by diverse migration processes call for a rethinking of baptism in relation to other faith traditions. As part of migration dynamics, the issue of conversions of asylum seekers and their relation to migration management also opens up new discussions about the meaning of baptism. While these debates include socio-political, ecclesiological and religious aspects, they also actualize questions and analyses of power, vulnerability, religious identity/ies and create a broader concern for a missionary spirituality towards deep transformation in a wounded world.

In light of such complexity, the Special Topic Day seeks to bring together both practical and interdisciplinary academic knowledge and provide a forum where topics of baptism in contemporary Europe can be explored in three distinct [roundtable discussions](#).

Chair: Kari Storstein Haug (Stavanger)

Mapping Baptism in Territorial Churches and Nation Building

The first roundtable embarks on addressing baptism in Europe with two introductory presentations on the state of research around baptism in Europe. Further, experts will discuss how the relationship between the nation state, national identity and baptism. National identity is concerned with the emotional need for authenticity, identity and belonging. At the same time, national identity is also concerned with foundations for legitimate power to create and maintain social order. Thus, a number of narratives, which have been instrumental for their creation, form modern European nations. Especially, starting with modernity, religious and national ideas/narratives have been intertwined and baptism has been used as a symbol of nation making within historiography (E.g. baptizing the nations in the ethnic narrative, the elite narrative, the patriotic narrative, or the covenant-narrative).

Although in different forms, (e.g. dynamics of the Nordic region might differ from dynamics in Eastern or Southern Europe), churches have been instrumental in creating national identity and belonging; church membership has been understood as part of the national identity. In recent decades, several of the established and old churches struggle with declining numbers of baptisms. This has led to increased focus on understanding church members' views on baptism, including why members choose not to let their children be baptized, their expectations from churches, and the 'lived ecclesiology' of church members in so called secular contexts. But it has also lead to revisiting questions concerning the relation between e.g. 'Danish-ness' and Christianity' or 'Polish-ness and Christianity'. The link between baptism and national identity is observable in France as well. Baptism is a matter of free choice. Yet many cases show that especially when it comes to people who immigrate to France, baptism becomes a symbol of integration into the larger society. Christian communities struggle with the question of how to explain the meaning of baptism to people who see it as a symbol of citizenship of belonging to French society. At the same time, there is also the issue of social pressure and baptism, if in no other ways, than through a familial pressure especially in 'traditional families'. How to rediscover and promote the theological meaning of baptism in a secularized context of the nation state, as well as for French traditional families and for newly arriving people?

Roundtable resource persons:



Archimandrite Cyril Hovorun is an Associate Professor of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and Acting Director of Huffington Ecumenical Institute.

He has published several books in different languages: *Political Orthodoxies: The Unorthodoxies of the Church Coerced* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018); *Ukrainian Public Theology* (Kyiv: Dukh i Litera, 2017, in Ukrainian), *Scaffolds of the Church: Towards Poststructural Ecclesiology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017; Ukrainian translation published in 2018); *Wonders of the Panorthodox Council*, (Moscow: Christian Book Club,

2016, in Russian); *Meta-Ecclesiology, Chronicles on Church Awareness*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; Ukrainian translation published in 2017); *From Antioch to Xi'an: an Evolution of 'Nestorianism'* (Hong Kong: Chinese Orthodox Press, 2014, in Chinese); *Will, Action and Freedom. Christological Controversies in the Seventh Century* (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2008).

Ida Marie Høeg, is professor in sociology of religion at the University of Agder, Norway. Her research centers on religious change and religious practices in contemporary Norway. Her research fields include sociology of youth, ritual studies, sociology of Jewry, and sociology of death and bereavement. The findings from her research have been published in various articles and edited collections. Her last books include *Religion og ungdom* (2017, editor) [Religion and youth]) and *Den offentlige sorgen: Markeringer, ritualer og religion etter 22. juli* [The public grief: Markings, rituals and religion after July 22] (2013, editor with O. Agedal and P. K. Botvar).



Jonas Adelin Jørgensen holds a PhD in systematic theology (2006) from University of Copenhagen. He has researched and taught missiology, intercultural theology and theology of religions at University of Copenhagen (2006-2012) and is now GS of Danish Mission Council, an ecumenical organizations supporting missionary and development work of member organizations and their partners around the globe.

Dorottya Nagy is professor of missiology at the Protestant Theological University in Amsterdam, the Netherlands with research interest in migration, mission studies, ecclesiology, Christianity in postcommunist Europe, and innovative ways of theologizing. Her publications include *Migration and Theology: The Case of Chinese Christian Communities in the Globalisation-Context* (2009), "Minding Methodology: Theology-Missiology and Migration Studies" (2015), together with Gé Speelman, "Conversion Controlled: Missiological reflections on assessing conversions to Christianity among asylum seekers in the European Union", *Theology* 120 (2017) 5, 355-363.. Nagy is president of the Central and Eastern European Association for Mission Studies (CEEAMS) and member of the editorial board of its journal.



| 11:00-12:30 | [Second Roundtable – Session 7a](#)

Chair: Kari Stostein Haug (Stavanger)

Baptism in Multi-Faith Europe

Discussing the link between baptism and multi-faith Europe, the second roundtable focuses on migration processes that raise questions about baptism. Migration dynamics in Europe when addressed through the migrant non-migrant dichotomy, lead to the creation and sustaining of the so-called "diaspora churches" (a very problematic label, which mirrors that labelling and implies imbalanced power relations). Baptism in "migrant churches" is being

practiced in manifold ways. Moreover, people baptized in one of those communities, when changing their Christian affiliation may not be accepted as baptized. Beside the theologically unsettled issue of baptism in communities labelled as migrant churches, baptism also becomes an issue in the relationship between the so-called “already existing churches of a country” and the “migrant churches”. Theological-missiological reflection on these issues is much needed. What kind of theological understandings of baptism lie at the foundation of actual practices? How do we and what kinds of power relations ascribe meaning to baptism?

Another concern, which links migration with the earlier highlighted phenomena of nation building, is the (Eastern) Orthodox Church’s presence in parts of Europe where it started to emerge due to the large number of migrants from countries with a majority of Orthodox believers. How is baptism being addressed and practiced in those communities? What is the meaning and function of baptism? What new practices arise?

In a number of European countries, baptism has become a hot issue due to conversions of asylum seekers and their requests for baptism. Baptism becomes a question, which Christian communities need to address outside ecclesial structures, and in legislative settings. In a number of EU countries, e.g. the Netherlands, Germany, Norway and the UK, an asylum seeker whose case had been rejected could reapply for asylum if she/he can present plausible arguments that his or her conversion to Christianity might cause him/her persecution in his/her homeland. What are the theological implications of placing baptism in the legal procedures of the asylum law? What are the implications for churches, Christian communities and their leaders when challenged to deal with baptism in such a context? Is there common reflection on Christian identity in European contexts? Do theological reflection and ecclesial guidelines and policies follow or contrast political agendas? How is this situation a challenge to theology/missiology?

Roundtable resource persons:



Niels Nymann Eriksen has been a pastor for migrants in Vesterbro, Copenhagen since 2005. He holds a PhD in philosophy of Religion from Cambridge University (Kierkegaard’s Category of Repetition, 1999) and a M Div from Copenhagen University (1995).

Stian Sørli Eriksen works as assistant professor and programme director of intercultural and religious studies at the Faculty of theology, diaconal and leadership studies at VID Specialized Univeristy in Stavanger, Norway. His research interests are in particular related to religion and migration, global Pentecostalism and mission studies. Most recent article: Eriksen, S.E. 2018. “Changing the World through Prayer: Prayer as Mission Strategy among Migrant Churches in Norway.” *Mission Studies* 35: 124–151.





Maria Hämmerli is a researcher in the field of social scientific study of religion at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. Her main research expertise is with Orthodox communities in Western Europe and her research interests include religion, migration, globalization and ethnicity. She is the main editor of *Orthodox Identities in Contemporary Contexts. Migration, Settlement and Innovation*, and the author of publications on Orthodox "diaspora", Orthodox monasticism and Orthodoxy in a global context.

| 11:00-12:30 |

Third Roundtable – Session 7b

Chair: Dorottya Nagy (Amsterdam)

Baptism and Secularization

The third roundtable seeks to address issues related to baptism with special attention to the “rights” of the individual. Keywords within this session are individual identity, individualization, (re)engineered humanity, and de-baptizing.

In October 2011, a French court decided in favour of an individual who had requested to have his name permanently removed from the baptism register of the local Catholic Church in Normandy. The ‘de-baptizing’ of this individual became a starting point for a national ‘de-baptizing’ movement of persons protesting against the Catholic Church by requesting to be removed from records. The secular drift of society and individual protests seems to stand in sharp contrast to the sacramental theology of the church, and raises new questions such as ‘can baptism be undone?’

Transgender sexuality is another aspect, which this section seeks to explore in relation to baptism. The speed of technological developments in medicine and changes in human rights legislations trigger questions about the identity of a person during and after medical treatment. Some transgender people express their desire to have their baptism re-confirmed or be re-baptized when receiving a new social identity. How do churches respond to such questions? How do churches create space for discussion on baptism and transgender questions?

Individualization and baptism are linked in many different forms; one last issue to be named is the materialization of baptism in terms of god-parenthood. In a theological sense god-parenthood implies the responsibility of the god-parent to care about the spiritual formation of the baptized one. However in many contexts in Europe god-parenthood is being practiced in terms of materiality, e.g. the god-parents providing the baptized one and his/her family with money and/or other sorts of gifts at certain moments of life. How can a rethinking of baptism focusing on such materialized practices gain new meaning beyond materiality?

Roundtable resource persons:

Anne Morelli is professor of History at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB).

She was director of the Centre Interdisciplinaire d'étude des religions et de la laïcité (CIERL) where she taught courses on the Contemporary History of Christian churches en Contemporary Roman Catholic Texts.

She published on the issue of difference (if there is any) between churches and sects. For a full publication list see: <http://www.solvay.edu/profile/annemorelli>



Heleen E. Zorgdrager is professor of Systematic Theology and Genderstudies at the Protestant Theological University in Amsterdam. She studied theology in Kampen, the Netherlands, and in Wittenberg, GDR. She was ordained in 1991 and served as a students' chaplain in Leiden and as pastor of the Reformed congregation in Leersum. She defended her PhD in Kampen in 2003 on a gender-critical reading of Schleiermacher's theology. From 2005-2010, she was program manager in service of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands for missional cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe. From 2005-2013 she worked part-time in Ukraine as seconded lecturer at the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, teaching ecumenical theology. She continues in Lviv as a visiting professor, besides her lecturing in Amsterdam. Her current research is on spirituality in lifestories of transgender persons; gender, sexual diversity and political theology; women's ecumenical engagement in the peace movement of Ukraine.

Stephen Bullivant is Professor of Theology and the Sociology of Religion at St Mary's University, Twickenham, UK. Since 2016, he has directed the Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society. His forthcoming books include *Mass Exodus: Catholic Disaffiliation in Britain and America since Vatican II* (OUP, 2019) and *The Cambridge History of Atheism* (CUP, 2020; co-dited with Michael Ruse).



| 12:30-13:30 |

Lunch

| 14:00-16:00 |

Corridor of Ideas: Parallel Paper Sessions II

| 16:00-19:00 |

Departure for Visit with Iraqi Migrant Community / Syrian Catholic Church in Cologne-Mühlheim

Light for all Peoples

Iraqi Women's Church Choir Sun of the Arameans
& Women's Schola Ars Choralis Coeln

Directed by Maria Jonas, Beate Alsdorf and Ghedaa Sami



"Light for all peoples" is the motto of the collaboration of an Iraqi women's choir, "Sun of the Arameans", of the Syrian Catholic migrant church in Cologne and the Cologne women's choir "Ars Choralis Coeln".

This collaboration was initiated in 2015 by Sister Rebekka (Community of Jerusalem, Groß St. Martin) and is based on her interest in oriental church history. Together with Cologne musician Beate Alsdorf, Sister Rebekka visited a liturgical service of the Syrian Catholic migrant community in Cologne Mülheim, where a local Iraqi women's choir led by Ghedaa Sami beautifully carried the liturgy. They were deeply moved by the faith of these Christians from Iraq, their ancient traditions, and their Aramaic and Arab prayers and songs. The idea arose to invite these Iraqi women's choir and develop a program together with other women vocalists and musicians based in Cologne. Professional support was provided by Maria Jonas, medieval music expert and head of the Cologne women's choir: Ars Choralis Coeln. Since then, they have developed several joint concerts and performed in joint liturgical services.

The rehearsals are like a voyage of discovery: at first the music of the Aramaic-Arabic and Medieval choral cultures sounded completely different, not only because of the languages and musical traditions, but also because of the different process of learning new songs: Western musicians are accustomed to learning with music written down, whereas the Iraqi women base their learning on an oral tradition. This difference quickly was understood as enrichment, while it was recalled that also in the Middle Ages songs were conveyed orally and

instrumentalists improvised to the songs, as it is still common in the Orient today. This allows for a creative exchange and togetherness.

A bridge between the two worlds is also offered by the musician Bassem Hawar, who was born in Baghdad, where he had received his professional music education. He lives in Cologne for well over 10 years and does not only speak both languages, but also feels at home in both cultures.

The concerts include songs in Aramaic and Arabic, Portuguese, Latin and Italian: Iraqi, Syriac and Aramaic Marian hymns; Cantigas de Santa Maria and Laudes from the 13th century; Gregorian chants and songs by Hildegard von Bingen. Both ensembles are accompanied by Western and Oriental instruments: flutes (Beate Alsdorf), Djoze / Iraqi knee violin (Bassem Hawar), Oud and Viella (Dominika Maria Alkhodari) and Harp (Uta Kirsten). Passages from Ephraim the Syrian and other church fathers of the tradition of the Oriental churches add to the programme.

In a wounded world of deep transformation, Light for All People sends a signal of hope that integration can succeed, when one meets with curiosity, grows together in a collaborative project, and radiates the joy that comes from it to all.



Followed by Outdoor Picnic Party & Reception with Syrian Catholic Church Community

Monday 26 August 2019

Missions ad Vulnera: Solidarity and Transformation

The conference so far has proposed that we use two aspects of the current situation as points of entry to locate the challenges to European missions today: the wounded character of the world, and a quest for deep transformation. Locating European Missions in a “*missio ad vulnera*”—“mission to wounds” is a response to living within the *missio Dei* in today’s situation. To be sure, the Christian mission has always had some sense of this, in its concern for healthcare, relief from natural catastrophe, care for the stranger, the migrant, and the orphan—indeed, in much of its *diakonia*. Drawing on this tradition and given the current challenges, here we will explore how a mission to wounds today requires new locating and refiguring of Christian communities; aims at creating resilience among those who carry wounds; pursues spaces of religious freedom; engages in deep solidarity, transformation and renewal.

| 09:00-10:30 |

Plenary Session 8

Chair: Nigel Rooms (Leicester)

Christian Communities in Mission

The theme for IAMS 2020 follows “Powers, Inequalities and Vulnerabilities”. Reading these words in Europe in the early twenty-first century brings to mind the end or at least the ‘twilight’ of Christendom that has been occurring across the continent for the last one hundred years or so. The Christian churches find themselves in a changed relationship with “the powers” and therefore are also “vulnerable” – even to actual death, in some places. However, if taken seriously, this new situation raises fresh possibilities in mission - not least in solidarity with those who find themselves on the wrong side of inequality and are therefore equally vulnerable. This part of our conference addresses the state of European Christian communities in relation to both our current realities of decline and the eschatological promise of the future reign of God. Therefore, we will engage with European Christian Communities in mission through the lens of ‘reality, grief and hope’. Reality, because, as Stefan Paas has shown, current research is often far from being related to what is actually happening, and because we need to learn to live in a new reality without the props we have relied on for more than a thousand years. Grief, because if only we could truly lament and mourn the passing of Christendom and all that was truly good about it, we might be free to re-envision and innovate future possibilities. Hope, because there are green shoots of something new emerging in many places and we must, as missiologists attend to them with appreciative, honest, critical and rich research.

Stefan Paas (Amsterdam)

Missional Christian Communities in Conditions of Marginality

What does it mean to be a missional Christian community in a context where missionary successes are few and far between? How can the church reinvent itself on a local level in such a context? For this to happen it is important to have a spirituality that does recognize the

hard facts, yet is not defeated by them. In my contribution I will focus on such a missional spirituality of small Christian communities in societies where not many people are interested in God and the church. I believe it is possible to be a joyful and energetic community especially in such circumstances.



Stefan Paas (b. 1969) is Professor of Missiology and Intercultural Theology at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Professor of Missiology at Theologische Hogeschool Kampen. He authored and co-authored a number of books, including *Church Planting in the Secular West* (2016), *Sharing Good News* (2017), and *Pilgrims and Priests* (in preparation).

Marie-Hélène Robert (Lyon)

Catholic Responses to the Vulnerability of the European Parish Church: Threads, Disruptions and Hopes

Are Catholic parishes in Europe more vulnerable now than at the beginning of the 20th century? Are they reduced to managing their decline or are they able to provide constructive responses to that decline? The reception of many non-European Christians, social mobility and the fragmentation of families challenge the traditional parish model. But a large number of continuities also appear: parishes promote a living associative world, are attentive to social vulnerabilities, rely on other ecclesial realities or target the public of their mission.

The Catholic parish model, “because it possesses great flexibility can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 28, 2013). A number of initiatives are spreading in the 21st century (training missionary disciples, pastoral care on the web, experiences inspired by the evangelical Churches). We will study the responses to the vulnerability of parishes in three complementary experiences in France.

Marie- Helene Robert, Professor of theology, missiologist, Faculty of theology, Catholic University of Lyon. Congregation of Our Lady of the Apostles



| 11:00-12:30 | Plenary Session 9

Chair: Katja Nikles (Aachen)

Religious Freedom in Missions *ad Vulnera*

There is growing awareness of the multiple intersections between Christian witness and harassment, discrimination, pressure, violence and persecution against Christians. Recent consultations and research have focused on “Christian Women Under Pressure for Their Faith”. On another note the emerging “Observatory on Freedom of Religion or Belief in the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries” is focusing on Portuguese speaking countries.

The former Portuguese colonies Angola and Mozambique have both experienced or are still experiencing post-colonial violations. This poses particular challenges to the Churches.

[Helene Fisher & Christof Sauer \(FTH Gießen/ ETF Leuven\)](#)

[Gendered Religious Persecution and its Repercussions for Missions and Vulnera in Europe](#)

Emerging understanding of gendered religious persecution in some of the world's most difficult countries for Christians offers timely insight into complex dynamics in which the Church and Missions have too often been unwittingly complicit due to limited visibility of complexities and unaddressed theological distortions. Fresh research into this deeply wounding global phenomena stands as both a warning and an avenue of hope for churches in Europe and Christian ministries based in Europe which are working in the most severely affected areas of the world. Drawing on the latest trends identified by World Watch Research as well as outcomes of *Christian Women under Pressure for their Faith*, we will explore practical opportunities for a holistic approach to bring healing and restoration to three populations: Christian refugees in Europe who have fled persecution, Christian refugees who are currently experiencing persecution in their countries of refuge and Christian populations outside of Europe with which European missions work.



Helene Fisher is Senior Specialist on Women and Persecution in Open Doors International and analyst for World Watch Research on Gendered Persecution Dynamics.

Christof Sauer is Professor of Religious Freedom and Research on Persecution of Christians at Giessen School of Theology in Germany and part time professor of Religious Studies and Missiology at the ETF in Leuven.



[Fernando Caldeira Da Silva \(University of South Africa\)](#)

[Postcolonial Violations of Religious Freedom in Mozambique and Angola and Neo-colonial Influences](#)

In the SADC region Angola and Mozambique demonstrate similarities and differences in issues pertaining to citizenship, human rights and religious freedom. The impact of Portuguese colonization continues to exert its influence in legislation and the social mindset, resulting in unique views and ways to apply international law regarding religious liberty. That is, the reinvention of a culturally Lusophone world is affecting human rights. However, other ideological forces have altered the colonial influence, effectively shaping legislation and the mindset behind politics and economics. It is under these circumstances that violations of religious freedom in Mozambique and Angola affect the witness of the churches and individual Christians.



Fernando Caldeira da Silva is the Deputy-director of the Religious Liberty Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance and the Director of the International Institute of Religious Freedom for the Community of Portuguese Language Countries and regions (CPLP) in the process to establish the IIRF-CPLP Observatory for religious freedom.

| 12:30-13:30 |

Lunch I

| 14:00-16:00 |

Corridor of Ideas: Parallel Paper Sessions III

| 16:30-18:00 |

Plenary Session 10

Chair: Klara Csiszar (St. Georgen)

Missions of Deep Solidarity and Renewal

Christian theology teaches us that solidarity is of existential importance for Christianity and for the whole human family. Interpreted theologically the concrete actions of Christians are a practical consequence of the divine existence, of the *Missio Dei* and God's "deep Solidarity" with humanity and all creation. The existential significance of the divine being and the highest act of love was demonstrated through the life of Christ. The aim of love demonstrated in and by Christ was to show that a life of fulfilment or a good life already has begun in this world in different dimensions of concrete solidarity. When solidarity is being practiced it connects communities, people, cultures and continents. Within the last 30 years Europe has adopted solidarity cooperation in order to ensure a better life for all citizens. In the same spirit Western Europe and its Christian communities advocated strongly for integration of the Eastern and Western part of Europe. But how does Eastern Europe understand solidarity and the influence of the "foreigner" – even when these foreigners are European – and how does, out of solidarity, a dialogue emerge about the future for a better world and not only for a better Eastern Europe?

Cristian Sonea (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca/Romania Faculty of Orthodox Theology)

The "Liturgy after the Liturgy" and Deep Solidarity. The Orthodox

Understanding of Christian Witness and its Implications for Human Society

The paper will investigate the orthodox understanding of mission as "liturgy after the Liturgy" and its consequences for the human life. The Eucharistic Liturgy understood as an experience of God where the community of saints reveal the absolute model of unity must be replicated in human society as another type of liturgy, a liturgy of solidarity. The research will present how starting from the Eucharistic community we can reach the wider community in solidarity.



Cristian Sonea is an Orthodox priest, belonging to the Romanian Orthodox Church, and an Assoc. Prof. of Orthodox Missiology at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology from “Babes-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca (Romania). His research interests include contemporary theology of orthodox mission and the common Christian witness. He is interested also in ecumenical theology, being involved actively in the ecumenical dialogues. Currently he is the vice-dean of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology from Cluj-Napoca.

Ladislav Nemet SVD (Bishop of Zrenjanin/Serbia, President of the Bishops’ Conference of the Saints Cyril and Methodius for Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Republic of Macedonia)

Solidarity Between East and West: Dependency or Renewal?

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, a new wave of solidarity came upon the countries of Eastern, South-Eastern and Central-Europe. Many international actors started realizing large investments in the countries of this part of Europe, trying to bridge the overwhelming gap between Western-European states and these regions. Who are the major actors within this movement of solidarity? What are the main results of this movement? Are the people in the beneficiary regions getting too much used to “outside help”, getting tied up with foreign investments? Are there strings attached to these acts of solidarity? How and what can new initiatives for dialogue between East and West like “*Piccolo gregge*” contribute to solidarity and renewal in Europe?



Ladislav Nemet SVD, Bishop of Zrenjanin, Serbia (b. 1956), served as religious of the Society of the Divine Word in different countries and continents. Before being appointed bishop in Serbia (2008), he used to teach for many years as professor of systematic theology in Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Poland. His research focuses on Christian anthropology, eschatology and missiology.

| 18:30-21:30 |

Dinner & Garden Party

OUTLOOK: 2020 IAMS CONFERENCE IN Sydney

Tuesday 27 August 2019

| 08:00-10:00 |

Breakfast

| 10:00-12:00 |

Farewell and Departure

Imprint

Conference Website, Information and Registration

<http://www.missionswissenschaft.eu/>

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- Jonas Adelin Jørgensen (Aarhus; NIME)
- Marie-Hélène Roberts (Lyon; AFOM)
- Dorottya Nagy (Amsterdam; CEEAMS)
- Bryan Lobo SJ (Rom; IACM Europe)
- Klara Csiszar (St.Georgen; IACM Europe)
- Nigel Rooms (Leicester; BIAPT Mission Studies)
- Katerina Pekridou (Brussels; CEC)

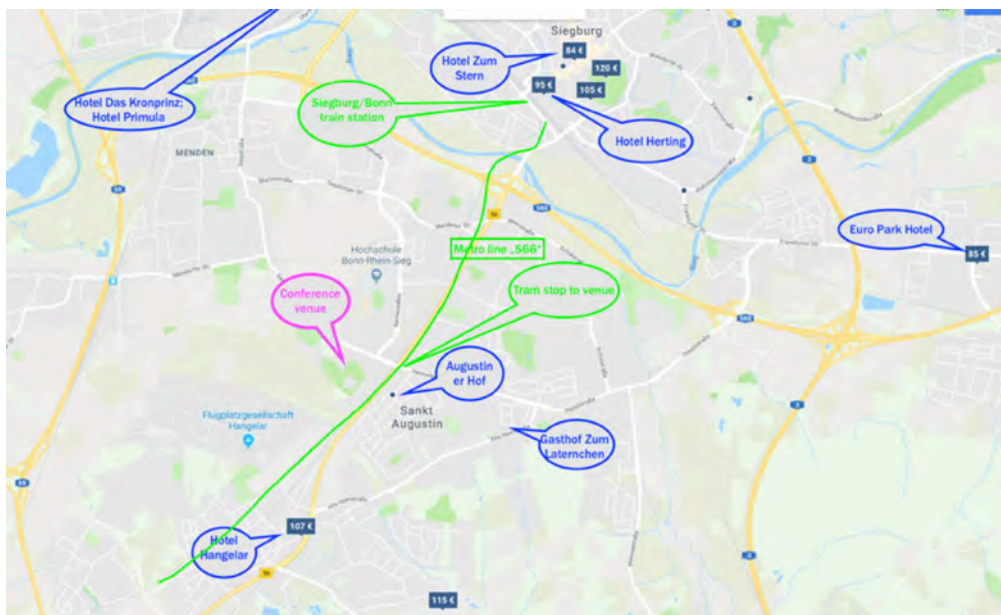
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- Nordic Institute of Mission and Ecumenical Research (NIME)
- Orthodox Mission Network (OMN)

Information regarding accommodation

Participants are requested to take care for their accommodation. The following list is merely indicative of options, the hotel location is shown on the map below.

name	address	distance to venue	web
Augustiner Hof	Uhlandstraße 8 53757 Sankt Augustin	10 minutes walking	www.augustinerhof.de
Hotel Hangelar	Lindenstraße 21 53757 Sankt Augustin	7 minuten to the tram, 1 or 2 stations + 7 minutes walking	www.hotel-hangelar.de
Gasthof "Zum Laternchen"	Alte Heerstraße 63 53757 Sankt Augustin	20 minutes walking	www.zum-laternchen.de
Hotel zum Stern	Markt 14-15 53721 Siegburg	5 minutes walking to Siegburg/Bonn station, 3 stops on the tram, 7 minutes walking	www.zumstern.hotel-siegburg.com
Euro Park Hotel	Reutherstraße 1A, 53773 Hennef (Sieg)	bus directly from hotel to venue	euro-park-hotel.de
Hotel Das Kronprinz	Poststraße 87, 53840 Troisdorf	1 station on the train, change at Siegburg/Bonn, 3 stations on tram, 7 minutes walk	daskronprinz.de
Hotel Primula	Am Bürgerhaus 16, 53840 Troisdorf	1 station on the train, change at Siegburg/Bonn, 3 stations on tram, 7 minutes walk	primula-troisdorf.de
Hotel Herting	Europapl. 16, 53721 Siegburg	3 stations on tram, 7 minutes walk	hotel-herting.de



Locating European Missions in a Wounded World in Deep Transformation

Arrival / Opening
Fri 23 Aug 2019

DAY 1 / Sat 24 Aug 2019

DAY 2 / Sun 25 Aug 2019

DAY 3 / Mon 26 Aug 2019

Departure
Tue 27 Aug 2019

	Naming Wounds and Transformations	Locating Baptism in Vulnerable and Transforming Europe	Missions to the Wounds Solidarity and Transformation	
9:00-10:30	② Geographies of Religion and Politics of the Wounds	⑥ Mapping Baptism in Territorial Churches and Nation Building	⑧ Christian Communities as Vulnerable Missions w/ IAMS Study Group	Breakfast Departure
11:00-12:30	③ Vulnerability as Socio-Cultural, Ethical and Theological Concept	⑦ a. Baptism in Multi-Faith Europe ⑦ b. Baptism and Secularization	⑨ Religious Freedom in Missions ad Vulnerera w/ IAMS Study Group	11:00-12:30
14:00-16:00	3-4 Parallel Papers Sessions	3-4 Parallel Papers Sessions	3-4 Parallel Papers Sessions	14:00-16:00
Arrival Opening Dinner	④ Complicity and Mission in a Wounded World w/ IAMS Study Group	Visit with Iraqi Migrant Community Syrian Catholic Church in Cologne Müllheim	⑩ Missions of Deep Solidarity and Renewal	16:30-18:00
① Locating Mission in a Wounded World in Deep Transformation (Opening Keynote)	⑤ European Platform of Missiological Networks Business Session	Evensong & Cultural Evening w/ Iraqi Migrant Church Choir <i>Sus of the Atramont</i> & Women's Schola <i>Arx Choralis Coeln</i>	Dinner & Garden Party Outlook IAMS Sydney 2020	19:00 or 20:00-22:00

Draft Schedule
Global Forum of Theological Educators
Orthodox Academy of Crete
May 20-24, 2019

Vision and Viability in Contexts: Theological Learning and Formation

Monday, May 20

	Arrivals	
	Moderator/Convenor:	Lester Ruiz
7:00	Formal welcome from the OAC and local ecclesiastical leaders	As available
8:00	Evening meal and Opening Program	

Tuesday, May 21

		Leader/Presenter
7:30-9:00	Breakfast	
	Moderator/Convenor:	David Esterline
9:00	Worship (preceded by brief welcome by GFTE for latecomers)	Rosalee Ewell
9:20	Bible study 1: Genesis 12-20: What does Abraham learn on the road? After the 20-25 minute introductory presentation, participants will share their personal stories related to or evoked by this text.	Havilah Dharamraj
10:30	Coffee / Tea Break + cookies and fruit etc.	

Framing questions for all topics: What is working? What isn't working? What might work? Presentations are not to be seen as definitive, but catalytic—and rooted in the regional and faith tradition contexts of the presenter. Following the 40-45 minute presentation, participants will have the opportunity to discuss around tables.

11:00-12:30	First session on the topic: How do our theological and educational methods shape outcomes?	Willie Jennings
1:00	Lunch	
	Moderator/Convenor:	Planning group member
2:00	Optional: tour of Orthodox Academy or tour of Gonia Monastery	
3:00	Second session on the topic: How do our theological and educational methods shape outcomes?	Oliver McMahan
4:30	Coffee / Tea Break	
5:00-6:30	Presentation and discussion on sustainability in theological education	Limuel Equina & Marilyn Naidoo
7:30	Evening meal	
	Remainder of the evening free for conversation Possible: Cretan music and dance	

Wednesday, May 22

7:30-9:00	Breakfast	
	Moderator/Convenor	Planning group member
9:00	Worship	Rosalee Ewell
9:20	Bible study 2: Luke 24: What do the disciples learn on the road to Emmaus?	Daniel Ayuch
10:30	Coffee / Tea Break	
11:00-12:30	First session on the topic: How do we recognize and foster vocation?	Davina Soh-Ng
1:00	Lunch	
	Moderator/Convenor	Planning group member
2:00	Optional: tour of Orthodox Academy or tour of Gonia Monastery	
3:00	Second session on the topic: How do we recognize and foster vocation?	Nicta Lubaala
4:30	Coffee / Tea Break	
5:00-6:30	Presentation and discussion on human migration and the church's response	Liberato Bautista Gioacchino Campese
7:30	Evening meal	
	Panel: GFTE—Prospective Retrospective, Katerina Pekridou, Leader	Daniel Aleshire, Manfred Kohl, Wonsuk Ma

Thursday, May 23

7:30-9:00	Breakfast	
	Moderator/Convenor	Planning group member
9:00	Worship	Rosalee Ewell
9:20	Bible study 3. Mark 7:24-30. What did Jesus learn on the road?	Laurie Brink
10:30	Coffee / Tea Break	
11:00-12:30	First session on the topic: How do we further missional fidelity in changing, challenging contexts?	
1:00	Lunch	
	Moderator/Convenor	Planning group member
3:00	Second session on the topic: How do we further missional fidelity in changing, challenging contexts?	Milton Acosta
4:30	Coffee / Tea Break	
5:00	<i>Summary - wrap up - next?</i>	

	Listening Report	David Baer, et al
7:30	Evening meal	
	Remainder of the evening free	

Friday, May 24

7:30-9:00	Breakfast	
	Departures Or: optional excursion or program	

Presenters / Bible study leaders for GFTE 2019 in Crete:

Havilah Dharamraj, Evangelical. India: SAIACS, Bangalore, Dean and Professor of Old Testament

Daniel Ayuch, Orthodox. Lebanon: University of Balamand, Institute of Theology, Damascus, Professor of New Testament

Laurie Brink, Roman Catholic. United States: Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Professor of New Testament

Davina Soh-Ng, Pentecostal. Singapore: ACTS College, Professor

Nicta Lubaala, Independent. Kenya: Organization of African Instituted Churches, General Secretary

Willie Jennings, Protestant. United States: Yale Divinity School, Professor of Systematic Theology and Africana Studies

Oliver McMahan, Pentecostal. United States: Pentecostal Theological Seminary (Cleveland, TN), VP for Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness and Professor of Counseling

Milton Acosta, Evangelical. Colombia: Fundación Universitaria Seminario Bíblico de Colombia, Professor of Old Testament

Limuel Equina, Protestant. Philippines: Association of Theological Schools of South East Asia (ATESEA), Executive Director

Marilyn Naidoo, Protestant. South Africa. Professor of Practical Theology, University of South Africa

Liberato Bautista, Protestant. Unites States/Philippines: United Methodist Church, Assistant General Secretary for UN and International Affairs

Gioacchino Campese, Roman Catholic. Italy: Scalabrinian Institute for Migration Studies, Urbaniana University, Rome



Conference of European Churches

CEC Peace Conference 2019 10-12 September 2019, Paris, France

2019 marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Conference of European Churches (CEC). It also marks the 100th anniversary of the Paris Peace Conference. Given CEC's ongoing role of promoting reconciliation and building peace, the Thematic Reference Group (TRG) Peacebuilding & Reconciliation prior to the Novi Sad General Assembly has been mandated to plan in the autumn of this year a significant international conference, with a twin focus on the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and the current global and European situation.

A working group consisting of members of the previous TRG, Dr Johnston McMaster from the Methodist Church in Ireland, Ms Catherine Tsavdaridou (previous moderator) from the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as a local contact, Rev. Claire Sixt-Gateuille from the United Protestant Church in France, continued this mandate to prepare the conference, with the voluntary work of Rev. Dr Alwyn Pettersen from the Church of England and administrative support from Ms Charlie Belot at CEC office.

It is clear that there are important lessons to be learned. We cannot ignore the past, but are responsible for how we remember it. For our memories have a profound impact on the present and furthermore colour our future actions and shape our common life in the Europe of the 21st century within a globalised and interdependent world.

The proposed 2019 CEC Peace Conference will reflect on the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference and learn lessons from it. It will explore ways in which a deeper understanding of the present, still coloured by the times of the divisive iron curtain and the current challenges to identity in different regions of Europe, may be gained. It will then examine ways in which peace building and a deeper security in a fragile world may be better effected nowadays.

Reconciliation for peace as desired by God and as experienced in the different but reconciled churches of CEC can then become a central leitmotif for CEC in its wider engagement in society.

The conference will take place between the 10th -12th September 2019 at the Institut Protestant de Théologie in Paris, France

Speakers will include H.E. Metropolitan Emmanuel of France; Professor Jan Öberg; OKR'in i. R. Antje Heider-Rottwilm; and Rev. Dr Björn Cedersjo.

Invitations to participate in the conference have been circulated to CEC member churches after the Easter Break (30 April 2019).