



CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES

GOVERNING BOARD

Strasbourg, 15-18 May 2019

DRAFT DECISIONS

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1. Roll call and invitation of third parties

The Governing Board **took note** of the list of participants and extended a special welcome to the youth observers (see Appendix 1).

2. Taking note of agenda

The Governing Board **took note** of the agenda for the present meeting (see Appendix 2).

3. Common programme with youth representatives

The Governing Board:

- a) **agreed** that Lea-Kathrin Schlenker would act as link person between the Governing Board and youth representatives and requested her to start setting up a “youth desk” within CEC;
- b) **requested** Lea-Kathrin Schlenker and the youth organisations in partnership to suggest names of young people with communications skills who could contribute to the work of CEC’s communications taskforce (see also item 13 below);
- c) **decided** to set up a pool of youth experts willing to contribute to the different areas of CEC’s work;
- d) **expressed their willingness** to accept invitations to attend the board meetings of youth organisations;
- e) **decided** to invite youth representatives to another Governing Board meeting in about two years’ time.

4. Word of welcome from UEPAL President Christian Albecker

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5. Minutes of the previous meeting (November 2018), 2018 Novi Sad General Assembly and Extraordinary General Assembly (5 October 2018)

The Governing Board:

- a) subject to two minor corrections, **adopted** the Minutes of its last meeting (November 2018), as set out in document 2NGB2018_Doc4;

b) with reference to the discussion under item 12 of the November 2018 meeting (Budget and Accounts) **noted** that although it had not yet proved possible to indicate in-kind contributions in the accounts, every effort would be made to do so in the future;

c) with reference to decision (b) under item 13d of the November 2018 meeting (60th Anniversary of CEC), **noted** that although it had not been possible to produce an anniversary book it would still be desirable to try and collect memories of the early days of CEC for electronic publication;

d) with reference to the handbook giving information about Member Churches being prepared under the responsibility of Archbishop Yeznik (see Minutes of the November 2018 meeting of the Governing Board, item 8), **was informed** by the General Secretary that the handbook was currently being printed;

e) **agreed** to add the Minutes of the General Assembly in Novi Sad from 30 May to 6 June 2018 to the official register of CEC Minutes;

f) **agreed** to add the Minutes of the Extraordinary General Assembly (5 October 2018) to the official register of CEC Minutes.

6. President's report

The Governing Board **received** the President's report (see Appendix 3).

7. General Secretary's report

The Governing Board:

a) **noted** that in future the annual report of CEC should, in accordance with Article 8.9 of the Constitution, be submitted to the Governing Board for approval;

b) having been informed that one Member Church appeared to be thinking of terminating its membership of CEC, **requested** the President and the General Secretary to consider making a visit to the authorities of that Church;

c) **expressed the wish** that, in future, staff members should be invited to make oral progress reports on the areas of work for which each was responsible;

d) **took note** of the General Secretary's report.

8. CCME Activities report

The Governing Board **received with thanks** a detailed oral report from Torsten Moritz, General Secretary of CCME.

9. First presentation of public issues

(see under item 16)

10. CEC Strategy Plan 2019-2023

The Governing Board:

a) **took note** of the feedback from the consultation of Member Churches, national councils of churches and organisations in partnership concerning the draft Strategy Plan (see document 1GB2019_Doc10a);

b) **expressed regret** that it had not been possible at the Novi Sad Assembly in 2018 to engage in an in depth discussion of CEC's future strategic priorities and therefore **decided** to agree at its next meeting on a methodology and a timeline for preparing for a more thorough discussion of CEC's future strategy at the 2023 General Assembly;

c) **examined** the revised draft Strategy Plan drawn up in the light of the feedback from the consultation (see document 1GB2019_Doc10);

d) **took note** of the document prepared by staff members setting out their ideas for future work in the various areas covered by the Strategy Plan (Appendix 1 to 1GB2019_Doc10);

e) **adopted** the final text of the Strategy Plan as further revised during the meeting (see Appendix 4);

f) **adopted** a short summary presentation of the Strategy Plan designed for public information (see Appendix 5).

11. Personnel Committee (closed session)

12. CEC Strategy Plan 2019-2023, continued

(subsumed under item 10)

13. Communication Strategy

The Governing Board **took note** of a progress report by Anders Gadegaard.

14. Proposed Thematic Reference Groups

The Governing Board:

a) **took note** of the proposals prepared by the staff for setting up thematic reference groups for the period up to the 2023 General Assembly (see document 1GB2019_Doc14);

b) **decided** that such groups would in future be entitled “thematic groups” instead of “thematic reference groups”;

c) **decided** to set up thematic groups in each of the following areas:

- Education, democracy and diversity
- Ecclesiology and mission
- Economic and ecological justice and sustainable future
- Science, new technologies and Christian ethics
- Human rights;

d) **noted** that the General Secretary would write to Member Churches in the near future inviting them to propose candidates for membership of the thematic groups and **noted** that the Governing Board would agree on the membership of each group at its next meeting;

e) **decided** to review the progress of each thematic group at mid-term;

f) **agreed** to add a further thematic group on social justice and labour if additional staff resources became available for this work.

g) **requested** the General Secretary, when writing to Member Churches, to specify as clearly as possible the terms of reference of each thematic group;

h) **took note** that the establishment of a peace task force has already been decided by the previous Governing Board

i) **took note** that other task forces might need to be set up for specific future tasks

15. CEC Work/Staff Regulations

The Governing Board:

- a) **noted** that the text of the draft staff regulations was currently being checked by the social bureau of Belgian employers ("Securex);
- b) **decided** to circulate the draft to Governing Board members in the near future, inviting them to send any comments to Andreas Aarflot;
- c) **noted** that the staff regulations would then be submitted to the Governing Board for final approval at the next meeting;

16. Approval of public issues

The Governing Board:

- a) **formally endorsed** the Communiqué of the Conference held at Cumberland Lodge (United Kingdom) on 14-15 December 2018 entitled "Towards peaceful coexistence in the Middle East" (see Appendix 6);
- b) **adopted** a Statement on the need for a renewal of democratic vision (see Appendix7).

17. Belgian law on ASBL

The Governing Board:

- a) **took note** of the report by Andreas Aarflot on the Belgian Law of 23 March 2019 introducing a New Code of Companies and Associations (see 1GB2019_Doc12);
- b) **noted** that compliance with the new Law might require some fairly limited changes to the Constitution of CEC and that these could be made at the General Assembly in 2023;
- c) further **noted** that this would also be the appropriate time to review the relationship between CEC and CCME.

18. Written Assembly

The Governing Board:

- a) **adopted** the agenda of the (written) General Assembly for 2019 (see Appendix 8) and **authorised** the Treasurer to finalise the amount of the remuneration of the statutory auditor;

b) **agreed** on the timeline for the preparation of the 2019 (written) General Assembly (see Appendix 9).

19. CEC Strategy Plan 2019-2023, continued

(subsumed under item 10)

20. Proposal of Thematic Reference Groups

(see item 14)

21. Budget and Accounts

The Governing Board:

a) **adopted** the CEC accounts for 2018 (see document 1GB2019_Doc11);

b) **approved** the draft budget for 2019 and **agreed** to submit it for adoption to the 2019 written General Assembly (see document 1GB2019_Doc11a) ;

c) **agreed** that it should be a major priority for the General Secretary to ensure that accounts and budgets were submitted to the Governing Board in a clear form, in good time and in full accordance with requirements of the CEC Constitution and Belgian law.

22. Evaluation of the General Secretary (*closed session*)

The Governing Board:

a) **decided** unanimously to dismiss Fr Heikki Huttunen from his position as General Secretary with effect from 20 May 2019;

b) **decided** unanimously to notify Fr Heikki Huttunen on 20 May 2019 that his contract with CEC will be terminated at the end of a thirteen-week period of notice (according to Belgian Law, this period starts on 27 May 2019, the Monday after notification);

c) **agreed** unanimously to discharge Fr Heikki Huttunen from his duties during the thirteen week notice period;

d) unanimously **authorised** the Presidency to negotiate the terms of dismissal with Fr Heikki Huttunen during this thirteen-week period;

e) unanimously **authorised** the Presidency, within the limit of existing budgetary resources, to put in place an interim solution for fulfilling the tasks normally carried out by the General Secretary;

f) **agreed** to finalise the vacancy notice by written consultation.

Participants List

- Rev Christian **Krieger**, Union of Protestant Churches in Alsace-Lorraine (President)
- H.E. Metropolitan **Cleopas** of Sweden and All Scandinavia, Ecumenical Patriarchate (Vice President)
- Rt Revd Dr **Guli** Francis-Dehqani, Church of England (Vice President)

Members

- Mr Andreas Henriksen **Aarflot**, Church of Norway
- Rt Revd Nicholas **Baines**, Church of England
- Rev Jelle **Brouwer**, United Protestant Church in Belgium
- Rev Anne **Burghardt**, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Dr Valérie **Duval-Poujol**, Federation of Evangelical Baptist Churches of France
- Rev Dr Vilmos **Fischl**, Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary
Electoral reserve for Ms Zsuzsanna Répás, Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia
- Dean Anders Borre **Gadegaard**, Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Denmark
- Ms Karine **Harutyunyan**, Armenian Apostolic Church
Electoral reserve for Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, Armenian Apostolic Church
- Very Rev Archimandrite **Nektarios** Ioannou, Church of Cyprus
- OKR Frank **Kopania**, Evangelical Church in Germany
- Prof Petr **Kratochvil**, Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren
- Rev Alison **McDonald**, Church of Scotland
- Dr Aleksandra **Pistalo**, Serbian Orthodox Church
- Ms Lea-Kathrin **Schlenker**, Evangelical Church in Germany
- Very Rev Archimandrite **Ignatios** Sotiriadis, Church of Greece
- Rev Dr Daniel **Topalski**, United Methodist Church Central and Southern Europe
Electoral Reserve for Ms Emma Johnson, Methodist Church of Great Britain

Apologies

- Bishop **Hovakim** Manukyan, Armenian Apostolic Church
- Ms Emma **Johnson**, Methodist Church of Great Britain
- H.E. Metropolitan **Joseph** of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Southern and Western Europe
- Ms Zsuzsanna **Répás**, Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia

Staff

- Ms Véronique **Engels**, Assistant to the General Secretary
- Very Reverend Protopresbyter Heikki Theodoros **Huttunen**, General Secretary
- Dr Elizabeta **Kitanović**, Executive Secretary
- Rev Sören **Lenz**, Executive Secretary
- Rev Dr Peter **Pavlovič**, Study Secretary
- Ms Katerina (Aikaterini) **Pekridou**, Executive Secretary
- Ms Naveen **Qayyum**, Communication Assitant
- Dr Torsten **Moritz**, General Secretary, Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe
- Ms Barbara **Weber**, Assistant

Guest

- Mr Emanuele **De Bettini**, Vice-Chair, World Student Christian Federation Europe
- Mr Konstantinos **Gkourlias**, Church of Greece
(2018 GA Steward)
- Very Rev Archimandrite **Iakovos** Andriopoulos, Church of Greece
Electoral Reserve
- Mr Claver Davy **Iginareza**, New Life Church
(2018 GA Steward)
- Mr Tuomo **Mäkelä**, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
Electoral Reserve
- Ms Maria **Mountraki**, Orthodox Church of Finland
Electoral Reserve
- Mr Gijsbert **Steenbeek**, Protestant Church in the Netherlands
(2018 GA Steward)
- Ms Angelita **Tomaselli**, Chairperson, Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe

Minute taker

- Rev John **Murray**

Updated 13 June 2019

Agenda

1. Roll Call & invitation of third parties
2. Taking note of Agenda
3. Common programme with Youth representatives
4. Word of Welcome from UEPAL President Christian Albecker
5. Minutes previous meeting (November 2018), 2018 Novi Sad General Assembly (GA) & Extraordinary General Assembly – 5 October 2018 (EGA)
6. President's Report
7. General Secretary's Report
8. CCME Activities Report
9. First presentation of Public Issues
10. CEC Strategy Plan 2019 -2023
11. Personnel Committee (closed session)
12. CEC Strategy Plan 2019 -2023 ctd

13. Communication Strategy

14. Proposal of Thematic Reference Groups (TRG)

15. CEC Work/Staff Regulations

16. Approval of Public Issues

17. Belgian law on ASBL

18. Written assembly

19. CEC Strategy Plan 2019 -2023 ctd.

20. Proposal of Thematic Reference Groups (TRG)

21. Budget and Accounts

President's Report

- check against delivery -

THE WORK WITHIN CEC

1) General Secretary and Staff

I continue to have regular contacts with the General Secretary. We also take all opportunities given by meeting we attend both, to discuss the ongoing work of CEC. We had a full working day in January (14th in Brussels) to do an evaluation of our cooperation. We discussed several issues of the office management. I raised prior goals for the coming 6 months: management of office, develop the necessary member fees strategy, strengthen the work in the frame of Art. 17 TFEU. We had a second full working day on the strategy plan (25th of April in Brussels).

With the General Secretary, I've met the collegium (10th of April) to analyse the results of the consultation on the strategy plan and to work on their proposals.

2) Presidency meeting in Leicester (29th of March, Leicester - UK)

In presence of the treasurer and the chair of the Personnel Committee, we discussed the situation of CEC and prepared the agenda for the Governing Board. The presidency had a discussion in a close session with the General Secretary.

At the end of the afternoon we participate in an ecumenical service held in Leicester Cathedral on the supposed day of Brexit. Bishop Guli gave a stimulating message, calling to encounter and cooperation (available [here](#)).

3) Meeting with H.G. Bishop Porfyrios of Neapolis and Father Nektarios (26th of November, Brussels)

The purpose was a debriefing of the tension we had in the GB when we discussed the proposition for the nomination committee, especially the strong words about "the same movie". I explained how the proposal of the nomination committee were made, in accordance to standing orders, with no secret hand behind. If the way to proceed was frustrating for some, it has to be considered as a blunder on my side. I asked Fr. Nektarios to think about accepting the opened position in Budget Committee. We also discussed several other issues, among them the Ukrainian situation.

INSTITUTIONAL MEETINGS

1) Meeting UEPAL – Churches on the Rhine – CEC (28th of November, Strasbourg)

Sören Lenz gave a first report and evaluation of the functioning of the Strasbourg office. He raises several possibilities to work toward the European institution based in Strasbourg. We discussed also the issue of the financial support given by mainly Churches belonging to the Conference of the Churches along the Rhine. One Church already suspended their contribution to finance Strasbourg office. Short meeting with the collegium.

2) Meeting with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I (7th of January, Istanbul)

With the General Secretary I met the Ecumenical Patriarchate in attendance of Metropolitan Elpidoforos, director theological Halki seminary. We had the opportunity to present the implementation of the General assembly of Novi Sad, in particular the three aims of the drafted strategy plan.

We also had a brief overview of the CEC Member Churches, and the issue of the orthodox commitment in CEC. We raised the question of the new autocephalous Ukraine orthodox Church. It seems clear for the patriarchate that the Ukraine Church will apply to become member of CEC and he agreed that this will need to take time to avoid tension within the orthodox members.

The patriarchate underlined his commitment to CEC's work and agreed on hosting a CEC event in the future (spring 2020). He wishes to publish a paper on the patriarchate's commitment in history to CEC in the frame of the editorial project of the theological faculty of Halki, in order to regain theological activity.

3) Meeting with Secretary General of WCC (8th of January, Frankfurt)

On the way back from Istanbul, the General Secretary and I met with the Secretary general of WCC, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit. We shared the strategical work of both ecumenical organisations, figured out how to cooperate efficiently, agreed to work on a cooperation agreement, had an overview of the ecumenical situation, exchanged on the Ukrainian issue and its implication for both organisations, and discussed the implication of CEC in the WCC General Assembly in Karlsruhe.

We also spoke about the project of WCC to plan a conference in Paris organised in the frame of their dialogue with IJCIC (International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations) on the theme "The Normalization of Hatred: Challenges to Jews and Christians Today" (26 – 27th of June, 2019). I agreed to be part of the Christian delegation.

4) TFEU Art 17 meeting (17th of January, Brussels)

I took the initiative to invite to the CEC office representatives working in Brussels for a Member Church or Member Churches (those having an office, or coming regularly to Brussels in the frame of Art. 17 TFEU). The Secretary General of CPCE also attended the meeting. We made an evaluation of the functioning of the dialogue with European institutions.

As for the coming new legislature period, there is an uncertainty how the dialogue will be structured, it was also a prospective meeting. My goal was also to initiate a more cooperative work to strengthen CEC's Member Churches voice and therefore to figure out a common strategy.

CEC's Initiative was unanimously welcomed. The need of a better cooperation was obvious and generally shared, even if there are differences in the final goals. We decided to have regularly such kind of meeting, on a rhythm needed. Next to work on general strategy goals in the dialogue over the legislator in order to have more or less a common voice.

We also agreed to prepare the paper for EU Presidency together (CEC office is in charge of the work, but involves, consults, concerts CROCEU, EKD office, Lena Kumlin, Diocese in Europe, etc.).

5) Budget Committee (21th of January, Brussels)

I share with you the outcome of a difficult Budget Committee meeting.

The General Secretary couldn't joint the committee because he was in Bucharest for the meeting in the foreign office in the frame of the EU Presidency of Romania. CEC's finance officer sick leave since October continues to complicate the financial management of CEC. During the meeting, most of our questions couldn't be answered.

Since our Governing Board, the Assembly Planning coordinator was asked to figure out a fine-tuned expenditures budget for 2019. He did it by asking the executive staff about their needs. The result is a foreseen deficit in 2019 of more or less 100 000€. The Budget Committee recommended to the General Secretary in discussion with the executive staff to find out how to avoid this deficit.

The treasurer is well on track and do a good job. I'm confident about his work. Furthermore, Church of Norway Bishop Atle Sommerfeldt, brings very good expertise to the Budget Committee. His leader temperament and financial expertise will be very helpful for CEC. We decide to meet again in March to finalise a balanced budget proposal and finalise recommendations for the Governing Board in May.

6) Meeting with COMECE (30th of January, Brussels)

In attendance of Bishop Jean-Claude Hollerich (President) and Bishop Noel Treanor (Vice-President), we discussed 3 points. Ecumenical visibility on EU institutions, Art. 17 TFEU, on what CEC and COMECE could agree, the main challenges for Christians in Europe for the coming years. We decided to organise an ecumenical celebration in the Brussel Parliament in the frame of the 2020 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity presided by both president and with Brother Alois as guest speaker. We also agreed on a common Easter statement linked to context of the coming EU election. We also have agreed on a common strategy to strengthen the efficiency of the Art. 17 dialogue for the coming parliamentary period. CEC's strategic plan, which I presented to discuss the coming challenges, was welcomed and appreciated. Over all, I have to say that Monseigneur Hollerich is deeply ecumenical. He is aware of the situation of the churches in secular countries, and therefore encounters not in an overhanging position, but on an equal level with others. He really seeks to show unity to be more credible in calling for European unity. By the way he told us that Olivier Poquillon, General Secretary of COMECE, will end his mandate at the end of Summer 2019 (confidential).

7) WCC, assembly planning meeting (28th of February, Karlsruhe)

In September 2021 (8-15th), the General Assembly of WCC will be take place in Karlsruhe (Germany). It will be the third assembly on European ground (after Amsterdam in 1948 and Uppsala in 1968). With Sören Lenz, I attended a hosting church meeting during which Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber underlined the will of EKD to give, not a German, but a European dimension to that event. We discussed several issues: the role western European churches play in the ecumenical agenda, the way to involve local churches in that event, how to use that opportunity to encourage a new generation of ecumenical actors. There is an expectation that CEC organises a pre-assembly in spring 2021, and a demand that CEC be represented in the Assembly planning committee and in the hosting committee.

8) Visit Mg Hollerich, president of COMECE (6th of March, Luxemburg)

On his invitation, I visited Mg Hollerich, President of COMECE. The Bishop was keen to be very open, realistic and honest in the exchange. We discussed the situation in Luxembourg from different angles (realities and projects of the Catholic Church, its relations with Protestants, relations with the state since the end of the concordat, etc.). We also discussed the Catholic Church, COMECE (its organisation, functioning, resources, developments with the appointment of a new General Secretary, etc.), CCEE, CEC. We have agreed to intensify our collaboration where possible, also at the level of the Presidency, in particular by making the presentation visits after the European elections together. On the subjects that gave rise to different approaches between CEC and COMECE (question of Catholic representation, holding the EU seminar with or

without the humanists), Mg Hollerich agreed with the point of view I was making (a proportional representation of Catholicism is difficult to obtain, it is the lot of the majority Church, to privilege the organization of the Art. 17 TFEU dialogue with humanists, subject to an animation that keeps the debate on the question on the agenda).

9) Meeting with Montenegrin delegation (19th of March, Brussels)

Fr. Velibor Dzomic and Fr. Nikifor Milovic. We were given a lengthy presentation of the situation of discrimination that the Church is facing because of a drafted law. Under the guise of a law intended to guarantee religious freedom, the Orthodox Church in Montenegro, which canonically belongs to the Patriarchate of the Serbian orthodox church, but has an autonomous status in Montenegro, is threatened with being deprived of its legal status in Montenegro and its oldest properties.

10) Meeting with National Council EPUB (20th of March, Brussels)

The meeting offered the opportunity to thank for the commitment of Jelle Brouwer, and provided an opportunity to recall the framework of our request for a seconded staff. The National Council agreed on it in principle. He would like a part of the time to return to the EPUB, both as a participation in groups of ethical and social reflection, as resource persons for the Council and the Church. There are several expectations, such as to inform on current European events, provide dossiers on ethical and societal issues, helping to make ecclesial and social issues accessible.

We proposed two options covering two thematic fields, one for a position on peace, future of Europe for a theologian profile with a training or sensitivity on political science, the other on a social justice and AI position for a theologian profile with a training or sociological and economic sensitivity. The EPUB will decide on her position by mid-April and think about possible candidates. A starting at the end of the year or beginning of 2020 is foreseen. A note will be sent to us for the additional costs inherent to the status of pastor (housing etc.).

11) Meeting with Bishops of Lutheran Church of Finland (27th of march, Strasbourg)

The conference of Finnish Lutheran Bishops travelled to Strasbourg for a three-day seminar. In the Frame of their visit to Council of Europe and European Parliament, the General Secretary, Sören Lenz and myself presented CEC's work toward the European institution. I took the opportunity to have a special meeting with Lena Kumlin, officer for EU matters. She informed me about a potential project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland to have a part-time office in Brussels to do a better network toward the EU Parliament and Commission. There is a possible connection with CEC (hosting her office, e.g. preparing CEC's paper for EU presidencies, and following up).

12) Staff secondment by the Swiss Protestant Church

Having heard about a possible secondment of a part-time staff position for the Strasbourg office, I had several discussions to bring the issue forward. We have clarified how the secondment is possible, because it would come from the Church of Zurich, but it is only the Swiss Protestant Church who is member of CEC. It seems that there is now a realistic possibility.

13) ExCom of CCME (8-9th of May, Brussels)

I participate in the ExCom of CCME. President Lemma welcomed the fact that it is the first so high representation of CEC in ExCom of CCME, having both, the vice-president and the president. The ExCom is more an operational body, composed of members in their church very committed to concrete work about and with migrants and refugees. I presented CEC's work since the general assembly, especially the strategy plan. We also explained how CEC will celebrate its 60th anniversary. I remembered the way to go forward in the reflection to implement CEC-CCME agreement. Until CCME's General Assembly in 2020, we will focus on intensifying the implementation of the agreement. Toward a common General Assembly in 2023, we have then to evaluate where we stand and to prepare the draft of the future cooperation.

14) Seconded staff position from CPCE

CPCE is now a registered ASBL in Austria. After having mainly work on an academic level, especially on deepening the theological understanding of communion and the communion among its Member Churches. CPCE's governing body and presidency is now seeking to play a greater role toward the European institutions.

The General Secretary informed CEC that CPCE did not succeed in finding a German Landeskirche to second staff they can propose to succeed to Frank Dieter Fischbach. We agreed on cooperation with several ideas:

- General Secretary of CPCE will be associated to CEC's task force Art 17.
- CEC will try on its own to find an opportunity for staff secondment to take over the position of Frank Dieter Fischbach.
- To engage Katerina Pekridou more to the theological work of CPCE.
- the General Secretary from CPCE and CEC will meet regularly.
- To invite the General Secretary for a Governing Board.

REPRESENTATION, CONFERENCES AND OTHER EVENTS

1) Conference shaping the future of work (27th of November Brussels)

The conference was opened by Vice-President, Ms. Mairead McGuinness. It first reflects on the understanding of work from an inter-religious perspective, how define work? And who is a worker? Then the conference discussed the issue of the access to work in times of transformation. Do we face a jobless future, or can we expect new opportunities for decent work for all? The conference was well prepared by Frank Dieter Fischbach, in cooperation with COMECE.

2) Christmas statement CEC-CCME (4 December, Brussels)

The first Vice president of European's parliament, Mms Mc Guinness, received the Christmas Statement worked out in cooperation with CCME and signed by 30 church leader from the broader Europe. The statement underlined the meaningful need of safe passages (e.g. resettlement, humanitarian visa, realistic labour migration policies) and search and rescue on the way to Europe. It also reaffirms the notions of the Tampere summit, in particular the "absolute respect of the right to seek asylum" and "the full and inclusive application of the Geneva Convention" as guiding principles of asylum policy today. Ms Mc Guinness welcomed the statement.

3) Religion and Human Rights within the EU, a shared responsibility (4th of December, Brussels)

Meeting was well prepared and chaired by the first Vice president of European's parliament, Ms Mc Guinness. In presence of a few MP's, several contributions, even a humanist one, figured out a global picture. During the debate, CEC raises the concern of the Spanish Evangelical Church and the situation of religious minorities in Bulgaria. The non-confessional representatives were well prepared and took very a large part of the discussion during the debate raising their fundamental criticism against faith organization focused on gender discrimination, the sensitive report to human rights. The first Vice president of European's parliament conclude the seminar in encouraging to dialogue, to encounter.

4) Conference "Towards Peaceful Coexistence in the Middle East: Challenges and Opportunities", Cumberland Lodge (14-16th of December)

I attended the Conference "Towards Peaceful Coexistence in the Middle East: Challenges and Opportunities" and had the opportunity to do an opening speech. I took the opportunity to affirm our solidarity with the Member Churches in the United Kingdom and Ireland. I also underlined our concern about the situation of the middle east churches, quoting the CEC-CCME Christmas statement and the GB public issue on the

70th anniversary of the human rights declaration. The discussion went to reflect the different understanding of expression: freedom of conscious (free choice of religion ≠ free not to have a religion); freedom of religion (free choice of religion ≠ free to worship and practice religion); freedom to be different (minorities rights ≠ acknowledgement of citizenship).

With Rev Dr Patrick Schnabel, we were introduced to Her Majesty in the frame of a Christmas carol in the Royal Chapel of All Saints in Windsor park.

5) Third Forum on modern slavery (5-8th of January, Istanbul)

A high-level conference, hosted by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Session I: forming modern slavery, human rights and legal framework. Session II: forced migration and human trafficking. Session III: practitioners and Grassroots action.

The conference showed somehow deep commitment orthodox churches to social and societal justice. The terminology “modern slavery” covers several realities, such as child labour, child trafficking, prostitution... There is a clear expectation towards the religious authorities, because they are not seen linked or depending on GDP, financial, economic or political interest, and are just moved by love, friendship, a vision of a just society, dignity...

The agenda include a celebration of Theophany on the 6th of January with the overhanding of the document of autocephaly to the new elected bishop of the new Ukraine orthodox Church, which I didn't attend.

6) Holocaust remembrance-day in EU Parliament (30th of January, Brussels)

The president of the EU Parliament, Antonio Tajani, welcomed for the first Holocaust Remembrance Day which takes place in the European Parliament chamber, during the plenary session. To keep memory alive and to fight relentlessly every possible form of hatred, discrimination and anti-Semitism, he invited Dr Charlotte Knobloch, President of the Jewish Community of Munich and Upper Bavaria, to give her Testimony. Remembering her own fate, she spoke about the new forms of anti-Semitism which lead many of Jewish people to feel unsecure in European countries.

7) Visit to Finland (9-11th of February, Helsinki)

CEC General Secretary Fr Heikki Huttunen, CEC President Rev. Christian Krieger and Ms. María Mountraki, electoral reserve of CEC Governing Board visited CEC Member Churches in Finland, strengthening relations and discussing common concerns.

The group congratulated Bishop Kaisamari Hintikka, who has been consecrated recently as the new bishop in the diocese of Espoo in Finland. Bishop Hintikka has previously

served as Assistant General Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Director of the Department for Theology and Public Witness at the Lutheran World Federation.

The group also met with Archbishop Leo of Helsinki and All Finland, Bishop Emeritus Munib Younan from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, Mari-Anna Auvinen, General Secretary of the Finnish Ecumenical Council, Ms Lena Kumlin, legal adviser on EU affairs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and Rev. Dr Tomi Karttunen among others.

8) Seminar on AI (19th of March, Brussels)

Well prepared seminar. The last of the legislative period. A few MPs attended. Succession of speeches of 6 minutes. A debate which did not end with a contestation of churches and religions by humanists.

9) Pastoral meeting (11th of April, Kehl)

Presentation of CEC's work toward the European institutions and the flyer "Europe is our future" produced for the EU parliament's election.

10) International scientific conference on freedom of religion or belief in Montenegro (2-4th of May, Podgorica)

A draft law on religious freedom by the Montenegrin government to replace the audited law from 1977, presents serious difficulties in regard to international human rights standards. These problems include registration procedures, discrimination on the basis of citizenship and the existence of territorial requirements for registration, illegitimate interference in the autonomy of churches or religious communities, and violations of property rights. On the invitation of the orthodox Metropolate of Montenegro and littoral, CEC organised a conference to analyse and to discuss the draft law in order to identify which political rather than legal process can bring the government of Montenegro to reconsider it. All participants, lawyers, academics, theologians, were aware that specifically in the Balkans there is a particular interference of political and ecclesial dimensions. CEC's support in the organization of the conference and the advocacy work is very appreciated by the orthodox Metropolate of Montenegro and littoral.

11) Conference on Europe day (9th of May, Lille)

I joined a round table on the theme "Europe and justice" in the protestant church in Lille. Reflecting on the understanding of justice, I discussed how Human rights – right for Asylum and Freedom of religion or belief – continue to be challenged in modern Europe. Father Nektarios spoke about justice on social sustainability, and Monseigneur Hérouard (President of social committee of COMECE) presented the COMECE publication *Shaping the future of work*.

CEC Strategy Plan 2020-2023

Together in Hope and Witness				
AIM 1 CEC Promotes peace, justice and reconciliation in Europe				
Background	Europe is facing a number of social and political challenges that threaten the cohesion and stability of the European project. Attacks on pluralism, increased dissatisfaction with political institutions, fear of migration, and the worries about climate change, to name but a few, characterise the political debate. The Charta Ecumenica constitutes the ecumenical commitment to a reconciled Europe and engages churches to contribute actively to peace and justice. CEC's mission is to bear witness to an ecumenical vision of unity in reconciled diversity and to promote churches' work for justice and peace in Europe and beyond. The basis for CEC's commitment is the Gospel, and theological discernment permeates all of its work. This includes engaging in dialogue with the world religions and moral convictions, according to the commitments of the Charta Ecumenica. The objective of AIM 1 is to assist the CEC Member Churches to reach an informed understanding of the European processes and to increase their influence in the European political debate.			
	Promoting peace and reconciliation	Contributing to the Future of Europe	Working on education on democracy, diversity, and pluralism	Supporting interreligious dialogue
Objectives (WHAT)	CEC will undertake work on current issues related to peace, security and reconciliation in Europe, and provide relevant resources to its Member Churches. In doing so, it will monitor the European debate regarding security and military policies, strengthen the Christian voice against the increasing militarisation of EU, advocate against further research and production of nuclear weapons, and challenge the use of autonomous weapons. CEC will provide a theologically grounded understanding on how to respond to polarisation and will strengthen competences in the field of conflict mediation and reconciliation by promoting non-violent solutions. CEC will work on the multi-faceted phenomenon of populism, e.g. by examining nationalism in relation to ecclesiology, and the experience of marginalisation and non-participation in civil society in relation to democracy.	CEC will continue the process "Future of Europe" and facilitate churches' contribution that discussion in a dialogue with the European political institutions. CEC will offer Member Churches a forum for sharing their regional, confessional and cultural diversity and raising churches' concerns about current social and political challenges.	CEC will accompany member churches in their work on diversity and pluralism, and strengthen the possibility of discussing those concepts. Enable members churches to become bridge builders, as well as to enter into interreligious dialogue. CEC wants to play an active part in the Council of Europe program on education and democracy. With active participation as an observer in the Steering Committee for Education policy and practice of the CoE CEC would contribute to develop education programs when it comes to intercultural and interreligious education policies and practices.	CEC will revisit its work on developing a Theology of Religions to overcome distorted perceptions of interreligious dialogue, and to address fear, and respond to Islamophobia and Antisemitism. CEC will engage in identifying and using theological and spiritual resources that inspire respect for other religious traditions. CEC will accompany Member Churches and NCCs to facilitate learning about other religions and exchange in order to overcome prejudices and fear, and to explore the common task with other faith communities for promoting mutual respect and peace-making an standing for justice in the world.
Main activities (HOW)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CEC Peace Conference on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Paris Peace Conference. The Conference will explore the hard lessons from the European and global past and identify the current threats to peace. 2. CEC Peace Taskforce. Its main goal will be to act as mediators of peace in the wider European and local contexts. It will therefore provide conflict mediation based on Christian principles and training in peacebuilding and peace-making. 3. Strengthen partnerships with Organisations in Partnership and other relevant actors that bring expertise in the field, e.g. intentional partnership with Church and Peace on the question of arms trade and militarisation in Europe. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work jointly with churches from specific regions in Europe on their specific concerns related to current historical situations (e.g. follow up of Brexit, integration of western Balkan countries to the EU etc.) and developments of the continent. 2. Co-organise regional events and conferences aiming to clarify a churches' contributions to Europe's narrative, with churches from different regions in Europe. 3. Organise a common seminar with CCEE on populism and how churches can deal with feeling of fears and dissatisfaction 4. Organise a Summer school on "Freedom of Expression and Populism" 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consultation on cooperation and fellowship with migrant and minority ethnic churches. 2. Consultation on inclusive ecclesiology. 3. Conference on current developments in intercultural education and dialog policies. (COE) 4. produce a guide for parishes on eradicating Christianophobia, Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia 5. participate in the Steering Committee of Education policy and practice with the CDPPE 6. monitor and contribute to current developments in intercultural education and dialogue policies (Council of Europe program Competences for a Democratic Culture) 7. develop intercultural learning on the basis of an ecumenical project to enable Member Churches to become bridge builders 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Join the network of church officers in Europe working on interfaith matters to exchange experiences, share good practices, and strengthen interfaith work in times of migration. 2. Liaise with other faith communities and networks in Human Rights Advocacy and Human Rights Education. 3. Liaising with the Theology of Religions project of the CPCE and other relevant projects in the Member Churches of CEC. 4. Cooperation with National Councils of Churches, the WCC Programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation, and the Christian World Communions. 5. Establish a Committee on Interreligious dialogue in Europe, drawing from existing CEC networks including new partners from other faith communities.
Description (HOW)	Ad 2: Identifying potential or persistent conflicts in Europe where	Regional meeting	Ad. 1: in cooperation with <i>CCME and CWM/WCC</i> . Ad. 2: in cooperation with <i>Faith and Order/WCC</i> . Ad.3: based on the programme: <i>competences for democratic culture</i> . Ad. 7-8: in cooperation with <i>Intereuropean Commission on Church and School (ICCS) and the Christian International NGOs</i>	Ad. 1: in cooperation with WCC
Timeplan (WHEN)	10-12 September 2019 at the Institut Protestant de Théologie, in Paris, France.		Ad. 1: Spring 2021 Ad. 2: Autumn 2021 Ad. 3: ? Ad. 4: Autumn 2019	
Staff (WHO)	Ad 1: Alwyn Pettersen Ad 2: Catherine Tsavdaridou (TRG Working group) Ad 3:	Ad 1-3: Secoded staff Ad 4: Elizabeta	Ad 1-2: Katerina Ad. 3 + 5-8: Sören Ad 4: Elizabeta	Katerina

CEC Strategy Plan 2020-2023

Together in Hope and Witness			
AIM 2 CEC strengthens ecumenical fellowship and promotes church renewal			
Background	Communion has been the hermeneutical framework for comprehending the nature and mission of the Church. Despite differences in understanding and applying the concept, and divisions over a number of theological questions, the churches ascribing to it have developed a common theological language and share considerable common ground, as demonstrated in the agreements of more than fifty years of official dialogues. Increased migration in Europe has been changing the ecclesial landscape: European churches with historical longevity have spread into new contexts, vibrant Evangelical and Pentecostal churches are growing, charismatic movements are emerging, and ancient Oriental churches are finding a new home in European societies. In view of the current reality, CEC is called to provide the forum for its Member Churches to examine their understanding of Church unity and witness in dialogue with the 'migrant' and 'minority ethnic' churches in Europe.		
	Working on ecclesiology and mission	Organising a study on Baptism	Strengthening Ecumenical Partnerships in Europe
Objectives (WHAT)	CEC will enhance theological exchange between its Member Churches and facilitate theological dialogue with non-Member Churches. It will explore how ecclesial, political and cultural belonging intersect, and provide resources to overcome divisions with regard to the relationship of church and nation/state. In doing so, CEC will contribute a uniquely informed European perspective on ecclesiology and mission.	CEC will organise a consultation and dialogue process with the objective of reaching an agreement on the mutual recognition of baptism among its Member Churches.	A. CEC will re-establish regular work with the CCEE and COMECE. B. CEC will Clarify and strengthen relations with WCC.
Main Activities (HOW)	1. Annual consultation with the ecumenical officers of the CEC Member Churches and secretaries for theology of the World Christian Communions. 2. Work of the Committee on Ecclesiology & Mission (regular meetings, study group on Church-nation/state relationship, consultations, publications, unity blog). 3. Project on mapping of bilaterals and regional dialogues.	1. Seminar on the anthropology of the baptised Christian. 2. Seminar on baptism in canon law in different church traditions.	1. Regular meetings with COMECE and CCEE. 2. European pre-Assembly in view of the WCC Assembly in 2021, and active participation in the actual Assembly. 3. Participation in the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (Joint WCC-CEC Publication on PJP). 4. Evaluation together with CCEE of the reception of the <i>Charta Ecumenica</i> and further implementation of the guidelines.
(HOW)	1. Identifying priorities and key questions in the areas of ecclesiology and mission, and especially responding to the challenge of secularisation. 2. Taking stock of ecumenical agreements and developments and promoting their reception. 3. Providing a multilateral platform for ecumenical dialogue on the European level.	1. Examining a wide spectrum of topics related to baptism (theological understanding of baptism, baptismal order, baptism in canon law, inter-confessional marriage and baptism, baptism and migration) and their relevance in different local contexts. 2. Inviting research and reflection on these topics from different parts of Europe and feeding it into the CEC Study process.	Strengthening partnerships with the Global Christian Forum, the European Evangelical Alliance, the Pentecostal European Fellowship, the World Christian Communions, the European Christian Convention.
Timeplan (WHEN)	1. Autumn 2019, Autumn 2020, Autumn 2021, Autumn 2022 2. Committee meeting and Consultation on Church unity together with 'migrant' and 'minority ethnic' churches. Cooperation with Faith & Order (Winter 2020); International Conference on Church unity, Summer 2020; Committee meeting and Consultation on Christian witness and secularisation. Cooperation with mission organisations (November 2020); Committee meeting and Consultation on the Church as Communion. Cooperation with EEA & PEF. (Spring 2021); Committee meeting and Consultation on Church and nation/state relationship (Winter 2021); Committee meeting and Consultation on concepts of proselytism and ethical witness. Cooperation with GCF, (Spring 2022); Committee meeting in preparation for the GA (Winter 2022).	1. Winter 2020, 2. February 2021, *The goal of reaching agreement extends beyond 2023.	1. Once a year 2. March 2021 3. September 2021
Staff (WHO)	Katerina	Katerina	Ad 1: General Secretary and Presidency Ad 2: Ad 3: Katerina and Peter Ad 4: Katerina

CEC Strategy Plan 2020-2023

Together in Hope and Witness					
AIM 3 CEC raises churches' voice in Europe and the European Institutions					
Background	In several European Institutions CEC has got a particular status (TFEU Art. 17, participatory status in the Council of Europe and membership of the UN ECOSOC committee), as well as at the UN and OSCE. CEC uses European institutions in Brussels, Strasbourg, Vienna, Warsaw and Geneva for its advocacy work in various sectoral policies like ecology, economic justice and sustainability, human rights (in particular freedom of religion or belief, migration, bioethics and artificial intelligence), social justice and education. A high level of requests for advocacy are regularly received by CEC's member churches and its organisations in partnership. As art. 17 of TFEU invites churches for open, transparent and regular dialogue there is mutual influence of EU policies vis-à-vis churches. At the same time CEC member churches are invited to bring their own rich experience and initiate concrete actions to the European Institutions. The work of the European Institutions will be agreed soon for the period 2019-2023 and CEC should closely monitor its developments and propose certain actions to its members.				
	Promoting economic and ecological justice and sustainable future	Monitoring and reflecting theologically science, bioethics and technology	Defending the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers	Promoting Human Rights education and advocacy	Promoting social justice
Objectives (WHAT)	A. Networking and churches' engagement in care for creation, ecological justice and sustainable future to increase engagement of CEC Member Churches in the care for creation and sustainable development and to strengthen a joint churches' contribution responding to climate change and sustainable future B. Public theology, eco-theology and liturgy to highlight a particular role for churches in addressing care for creation, sustainable development, economic and ecological justice in word and prayers C. Churches' contribution to a sustainable future to ensure a qualified voice of churches and faith based actors in addressing challenge of climate change and ecological destruction. D. Advocacy and dialogue with the political institutions to 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.	A. Follow-up and communication to our Member Churches on the actual development in science and technology and human rights. CEC should bring different ethical and theological approaches into the discussion to enable member Churches to develop a theological and critical understanding. B. Analyse the current understanding of christian faith and scientific progress. Analysis and formulation of the upcoming ethical questions and problems in regarding the different theological and ethical approach. understand the background and the aims of policy makers in a European context.	A. Continuing its consistent policy, CEC through CCME will advocate and network to enable safe and legal access to EU for those in need of protection and defend international refugee protection in EU. B. CEC will advocate for a clear, transparent and accessible system on immigration based on the human dignity and human rights of the migrants as well as solidarity. C. CEC through CCME will promote the values of human dignity, social equality and inclusivity for all inhabitants of Europe, regardless of their legal status.	A. CEC Human Rights Advocacy program monitors developments in the area of human rights, with particular interest in freedom of religion or belief. High level political and legal expertise is developed for advocacy in different juridical and political contexts within and outside of the EU. B. CEC Human Rights Education program offers an experts' platform dealing with the latest developments of the new international legislative frameworks. This offers legal update for the staff dealing with human rights in the CEC member churches. This programme has also interfaith perspective.	The CEC constitution defines one of the aims of the organization to build "a humane, social and sustainable Europe" (Art.2.1.2), and commits CEC to work in the area of "social responsibility and human rights" (Art.2.1.3). In the 2018 Novi Sad General Assembly Message the task to engage on social issues is highlighted several times. With its work on social and employment issues CEC addresses the developments and the corresponding policies on the European level and facilitates the theological and social-ethical exchange and cooperation of CEC Member churches.
Main of Activities (HOW)	1. Conference Churches contribution to a sustainable society. (ECEN) 2. ECEN Assemblies. 3. 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. 4. Elaborating and deepening theological arguments in eco-theology and environmental ethics. 5. 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.	1. Cross border consultations on bioethics with an interdisciplinary focus. Developing didactic tools with and for "believers" with the aim to have a broad and profound discussion on actual bioethical questions. An inspiration could be the ongoing discussion on "public debate" in the bioethics Steering Committee of the council of Europe and enter with them in critical debate. 2. Regional meetings on Science, technology and bioethics which focus on a broad grassroots based exchange. CEC could contribute with an purely ecumenical even intercultural "input" for such regional meetings. 3. International and interdisciplinary conference on Christian faith and artificial intelligence mainly focused on the actual most discussed topics (Lethal autonomous weapons (LAWS), Artificial intelligence in Health Care and Automated driving systems).	1. CEC will continue its close cooperation with CCME, in accordance with the agreement between the two organisations. 2. CEC will act together with CCME in implementing programmes on migration. 3. CEC will promote solidarity and networking among its member Churches, NCCs and Organisations in Partnership to address discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, gender or social status. 4. CEC will provide spaces for dialogue where divergent views on migration exist between member.	1. Activities in advocacy are based on the requests coming directly from the CEC Member Churches. CEC provides high level expertise to the member churches in cases where they are involved in defending their own interest vis-a-vis the respective government. This program includes projects on Standing up for Minority Rights which was initiated in 2016 – conferences and publications of video and print. 2. CEC Summer School on Human Rights runs each consecutive year. Every year there are different subjects to be tackled taking into account timely developments and discussions in the area of human rights law. The Sumer School is a gathering of expert level colleagues from CEC Member Churches, NCCs, Organisations in Partnership and other partners in faith based organisations and the civil society.	1. CEC monitors the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its 20 principles, and relates it to the social work and thinking of its Member Churches. 2. CEC facilitates the CALL (Church Action on Labour and Life) network, which networks on economic and employment issues in Europe, and organizes campaigns on them. 3. CEC creates possibilities for exchanging expertise among members and empowers the network on economic and employment issues. 4. CEC participates in the European Sunday Alliance.
Description (HOW)	Offering through ECEN a communication platform and opportunity for networking.	* Developing an exchange platform on Artificial Intelligence and New technologies based on a new communication possibilities (Webinar, social networks etc.) * organising the mentioned meetings above * organize regular meetings with policy makers and experts at the Council of Europe and other European Institutions * encourage research work in this areas and participate in research work on HR and Artificial Intelligence with an ecumenical perspective	In the frame of the agreement with CCME		
Timeplan (WHEN)	1. May 2019 2. 2020 + 2022	1. May 2020 Consultation on Bioethics 2. May 2021 International Conference on Faith, Human dignity and Artificial Intelligence ("Future conference") 3. 2020 - 2022 Regional exchange meetings			
Staff (WHO)	Peter	Sören + seconded staff?	Torsten	Elizabeta	Seconded staff

	2019				2020				2021				2022			
	Jan-March	April-June	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-March	April-June	July-Sept	Oct-Dec
Peter		Conference Churches contribution to a sustainable society. (May). ECEN.	Conference on Eco-theology and environmental ethics ECOTHEE (Sept.)				ECEN 2020 (August-Sept)								ECEN 2022 (August-Sept)	
Elizabeta		Summer School on Human Rights (19-20 June, Portugal)		Publication of Human Rights training manual + Conference Malaga (Oct.)		Summer School on Human Rights (June, Germany)				Summer School on Human Rights (June, Slovenia)						
Katerina				Annual meeting of ecumenical officers	International conference on Church unity			Better understanding of historical background of Annual meeting of ecumenical officers	Seminar on the anthropology of the baptised Christian.	Consultation on cooperation and fellowship		Consultation inclusive ecclesiology Annual meeting of ecumenical officers	Seminar on baptism and inter-confessional marriage			Annual meeting of ecumenical officers
Sören						Consultation on bioethics (May)				Regional meetings on bioethics				International conference on Christian faith and artificial intelligence		
Charlie			Peace Conference 10-12 Sept.													

WCC GA, Karlsruhe (Sept.)

- Charlie
- Elizabeta
- Katerina
- Peter
- Sören

Together in Hope and Witness

"You shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8)

CEC Strategy 2019-2023

In its 60th year, the Conference of European Churches (CEC) aims to fulfil its vocation to promote Christian engagement in the changing life of our Continent. Bringing 114 churches together in common mission and witness, CEC's strategy for the next four years engages with the challenges and opportunities of contemporary Europe.

CEC's strategy is structured around three aims.

Aim 1

CEC promotes peace, justice and reconciliation in Europe

Europe is facing a number of social and political challenges that threaten the cohesion and stability of the European project. Attacks on pluralism, increased dissatisfaction with political institutions, fear of migration, and the worries about climate change, to name but a few, characterise the political debate. The Charta Œcumenica constitutes the ecumenical commitment to a reconciled Europe and engages churches to contribute actively to peace and justice. CEC's mission is to bear witness to an ecumenical vision of unity in reconciled diversity and to promote churches' work for justice and peace in Europe and beyond. The basis for CEC's commitment is the Gospel, and theological discernment permeates all of its work. This includes engaging in dialogue with the world religions and moral convictions, according to the commitments of the Charta Œcumenica. The objective of AIM 1 is to assist the CEC Member Churches to reach an informed understanding of the European processes and to increase their influence in the European political debate.

Specific goals:

- Promoting peace and reconciliation
- Contributing to the future of Europe
- Working on education on democracy, diversity, and pluralism
- Supporting interreligious dialogue

Aim 2

CEC strengthens ecumenical fellowship and promotes the mission of the Church

Communion has been the hermeneutical framework for comprehending the nature and mission of the Church. Despite differences in understanding and applying the concept, and divisions over a number of theological questions, the churches subscribing to it have developed a common theological language and share considerable common ground, as demonstrated in the agreements of more than fifty years of official dialogues. Increased migration in Europe has been changing the ecclesial landscape: European churches with historical longevity have spread into new contexts, vibrant Evangelical and Pentecostal churches have grown, charismatic movements have emerged, and Oriental Orthodox churches are present in European societies. In view of the current reality, CEC is called to provide a forum for its Member Churches to examine their understanding of Church unity and witness in relationship with the 'migrant' and 'minority ethnic' churches in Europe.

Specific goals:

- Working on ecclesiology and mission
- Organising a study on baptism
- Strengthening ecumenical partnerships in Europe and with WCC

Aim 3

CEC raises churches' voice in Europe and the European Institutions

CEC has a participatory status as a member of the Conference of International NGOs in the Council of Europe, Strasbourg. CEC engages with European institutions, notably in Brussels and Strasbourg, in its advocacy work, which covers various sectoral policies eg ecology, economic justice and sustainability, human rights, social justice and education. CEC regularly receives many requests for advocacy from its Member Churches and organisations in partnership. Art. 17 of TFEU creates an opportunity for open, transparent and regular dialogue between the European Union and churches. At the same time, Member Churches contribute their own rich experience, concerns and concrete proposals to CEC. CEC will closely monitor developments in European institutions, inviting its members to engage and act.

Specific goals:

- Promoting economic and ecological justice and sustainable future
- Monitoring and reflecting theologically on science, bioethics and technology
- Defending the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- Promoting human rights education and advocacy
- Promoting social justice

The Governing Board further commits itself to

- Develop CEC's communication strategy
- Increase the involvement of members churches in CEC's work
- Work toward increased youth participation (20 percent in different groups)
- Secure gender and denomination balance according to CEC Constitution/Standing Orders
- Continue to work with and through CCME

Public issues Statement

Towards peaceful coexistence in the Middle East

On 14./15. December 2018, some 50 representatives of Churches, aid organisations, politics and academia have gathered at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Great Park, to explore avenues towards peaceful coexistence in the Middle East. The Conference 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:

Conference Communiqué

The Conference,
aware of

- the history of Christianity in the Middle East, faithful to the Gospel, going back to its earliest days;*
- the contribution of all religions to the cultural richness of the region, in particular that of the three Abrahamic religions;*
- periods of peaceful coexistence in history of people of different faiths and of the different peoples domiciled in the region;*
- the dramatic exodus of Christians of all church traditions from their homelands in the Middle East due to conflict and war, religious discrimination and persecution as well as economic destitution;*
- the need of the remaining Christians for safety and peace, as well as their calling onto their brothers and sisters in other parts of the world to see, hear and act;*
- Europe's historic and present relationship with the Middle East, which has contributed to the current situation and calls for ongoing readiness to respond;*

draws the following conclusions:

- From the early 20th century with its great distortions, many people in the Middle East never had the time and opportunity for achieving peace and reconciliation, both of which need determination, attention and resources;*

– Peaceful coexistence in the 21st century must be based on a separation of powers, citizenship, equality before the law, non-discrimination, social justice, full participation, and mutual respect;

– Religious communities and their leaders have a responsibility for putting human dignity at the centre, advocating for neighbourly love, non-violent conflict resolution and an active process of reconciliation. Forgiveness and the postulate 'love thy enemy' can be a specific Christian contribution to peace processes and the reconstruction of societies;

– Religious communities can draw upon valuable experiences in education, specifically peace education. Mixed denominational schools play an important part in bringing up young people in a spirit of friendship, involving mothers and fathers in reaching a new understanding of education, and by doing so setting an example for the education system as a whole.

and makes the following recommendations:

– States must be the homestead of all its inhabitants, regardless of faith, conviction and ethnicity, establishing full and equal citizenship;

– States must develop a deeper understanding of human dignity, guarantee and implement human rights, including Freedom of Religion or Belief. In a pluralistic society the religious diversity and cultural richness of its citizens must become visible in the private and in the public sphere.

– Religious communities should distinguish between the religious significance of their holy lands or places and territorial power over them. Sharing cultural sites must not be seen as a matter of competition, but of commonality;

– Religious communities should deepen their theological understanding of coexistence, allowing for an absolute belief in their religious truth as well as a respect for other ways to serve God and humankind;

– Religious communities should work towards a holistic vision of justice for all, overcoming indifference, ignorance and fear.

– Religious communities should create spaces for encounters, especially for the younger generations, so that they may grow up in a spirit of friendship, not of prejudice and hatred;

– Religious communities should engage in interreligious dialogue, bearing witness to individual dignity and working for the common good, aware that a peace note will not come from the sword, but the softly spoken word;

– States and societies in Europe and other parts of the world must not forget about the plight of the peoples in the region and in particular its Christian communities; ongoing conflict and seemingly insurmountable obstacles must not lead to disinterest and fatalism, but to increased efforts at mediation and support;

– States and societies in Europe and other parts of the world must also become aware of the manifold economic dimensions of the conflicts in the Middle East and their entanglement in them;

– States and societies in Europe and other parts of the world should become more actively engaged in promoting peace and reconciliation in the Middle East, not only on ethical grounds, but also as the conflicts have an impact on many other regions in the world;

– Churches in Europe and other parts of the world must show true sisterhood with the Churches in the Middle East, expressing solidarity in prayer, advocacy, and practical support.

The conference also notes that the need for peaceful coexistence is also a challenge for Europe, which has become a new home – temporary or permanent – to many refugees from the Middle East, increasing the religious pluralism in Europe. In this context, European Churches can learn from the wisdom and experience of their sister Churches in the Middle East

Statement by CEC Governing Board

History teaches us that when peace is taken for granted it becomes endangered.

Europe faces challenge and change. Churches recognise the need for a renewal of democratic vision, attention to political and economic institutions, the recovery of memory, and an expansion of civil society. Given the imminence of the European elections, political change and the celebration on 29 May of UN Peacekeeping, CEC urges all Member Churches to pay attention to the language of public discourse, invest in listening to our societies, and work for peace and reconciliation among increasingly divided people.

CEC will be taking forward work to explore and encourage a renewed ownership of our common life in Europe, rooted in Christian faith and our common history.

Strasbourg, 19 May 2019

Agenda for the 2019 (written) General Assembly

Agenda of the General Assembly 2019

1. Approval of the annual accounts 2018

According to the CEC Const. Art. 7 (3) and 14 (4), each year, within six (6) months following the end of the financial year, the Governing Board shall submit the draft annual accounts to the General Assembly for approval.

The Governing Board move that

- this General Assembly decides to approve the annual accounts 2018.

2. Discharge of the Governing Board

According to the CEC Const. Art. 7 (3), the General Assembly shall grant discharge to the Governing Board regarding the exercise of their mandate during the past financial year.

The Governing Board move that

- this General Assembly decides to grant discharge to the Governing Board regarding to the exercise of their mandate during the financial year of 2018.

3. Approval of the budget for 2019

According to the CEC Const. Art. 7 (3) and 14 (4), each year, within six (6) months following the end of the financial year, the Governing Board shall submit the draft budget to the General Assembly for approval.

The Governing Board move that

- this General Assembly approves the budget for 2019.

4. Appointment of an external accountant to audit the annual accounts

According to the CEC Const. Art. 14 (4), if the law so requires, the General Assembly shall appoint a statutory auditor, chosen among the members of the Belgian Institut des Réviseurs d'Entreprise / Instituut der Bedrijfsrevisoren, for a term of three (3) years. If the Conference is not required by law to appoint a statutory auditor, the General Assembly shall still appoint an external accountant to audit the annual accounts.

According to the CEC Const. 7 (3) the General Assembly shall, if applicable, appoint and dismiss a statutory auditor or an external accountant, determine the remuneration and grant discharge to that person or those persons regarding the exercise of the mandate during the past financial year.

CEC is not required by law to appoint a statutory auditor. The General Assembly is therefore required to appoint an external accountant to audit the annual accounts and fix his/her remuneration.

The Governing Board move that

- this General Assembly appoints Renaud de Borman as an external accountant to audit the annual accounts for 2019 and fixes the remuneration at the amount of 1,850 euro.

Timeline for the written General Assembly of CEC 2019

3 June	The Governing Board sends convening notice with supporting documents (Const. Art. 7b (1))
3 July	Deadline for comments from Delegates (Const. Art. 7b (5))
17 July (latest)	The Governing Board replies to questions from Delegates (<u>within two weeks of their receipt</u> , Const. Art. 7b (5))
24 July	The Governing Board sends to all Delegates the final version of the agenda, the motions tabled and the documents to be approved, including a summary of all questions received and answers given. This communication shall include a ballot paper with a numbered list of motions, and with the options to agree, reject or abstain for every motion thus tabled individually (Const. Art. 7b (6)).
3 August	Final day to vote. The ballot paper shall be returned, duly completed and signed, to the registered office of the Conference (email is possible) (Const. Art. 7b (7)).
5 August	Check if more than half of the Members has returned the ballot paper. If not, the GA will not have had the required quorum (Const. Art. 7b (8))
6 August	Start the procedure again. This second written procedure shall validly take place irrespective of the number of Members participating.
6 September	Deadline for comments from Member Churches (Const. Art. 7b (5))
20 Sept. (latest)	The Governing Board replies to the questions from Member Churches (<u>within two weeks of their receipt</u> , Const. Art. 7b (5))
26 Sept.	The Governing Board sends to all Delegates the final version of the agenda, the motions tabled and the documents to be approved, including a summary of all questions received and answers given. This communication shall include a ballot paper with a numbered list of motions, and with the options to agree, reject or abstain for every motion thus tabled individually (Const. Art. 7b (6)).
7 October	Final day to vote. The ballot paper shall be returned, duly completed and signed, to the registered office of the Conference (email is possible). A simple majority is sufficient.