



Conference of European Churches
Governing Board
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Agreement of Cooperation between
the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF)
and
the Conference of European Churches (CEC)

***Strengthening the voice of Churches in Brussels –
Joint ELCF – CEC Project 1.1. – 30.6.2020***

In order to and enhance the advocacy work on European level of both **the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (ELCF)** and **the Conference of European Churches (CEC)**, the parties have agreed on pursuing the joint project ***Strengthening the voice of Churches in Brussels*** for the period 1 January to 30 June 2020 according to the details below.

Strengthening cooperation between ELCF and CEC is likely to promote ecumenical collaboration and create synergy effects and win-win situations for both parties, including other CEC Member Churches. The aim is a well-focused, defined, effective and strategic advocacy work on European level.

1

Background

The objectives of the work on European Affairs of ELCF are:

- To monitor relevant EU policy and legislative and try to influence the decision-making processes on both national and European level in issues of importance for the Church.
- To bring forward a Christian perspective in relevant EU Affairs, from human rights and freedom of religion or belief to migration and asylum policies, social affairs and climate change.

The Director General of the Church Council of ELCF is responsible for the work on European Affairs. The Legal Advisor for European Affairs (working in the Cabinet of the Director General) works full-time with planning, coordinating and implementing advocacy work on both national and European level. The Legal Advisor is also responsible for creating, maintaining and developing ELCF contacts to EU-institutions and other cooperation partners in Brussels, of which CEC is a key collaboration partner. In recent years, the Legal Advisor has visited Brussels frequently, but sporadically. A more regular, enhanced presence in Brussels and better coordinated advocacy work together with CEC could strengthen the voice of both ELCF and CEC on the European level and make the EU advocacy work of both parties more effective.

Momentum – project timing

This is the right *momentum* to strengthen EU advocacy work, because:

- In ELCF, there is an ongoing process in order to develop and make all activities more cost-effective and use resources more efficiently, creating synergy benefits wherever possible.
- One of the three key aims of the new strategy of CEC Strategy for 2019-2023 is to raise Churches' voice in Europe and the European Institutions.
- Relations to the new European Commission and to the new European Parliament need to be created and developed.
- The new Strategic Agenda for the EU (2019-2024) and the upcoming Work Programme of the new European Commission need to be analyzed from a Church perspective, and advocacy strategies planned and implemented accordingly.
- The open, regular and transparent dialogue between the EU and Churches according to Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty (TFEU) should be developed and further enhanced with the new dialogue partners (the new European Commission and the new European Parliament).

Description of the project

In order to strengthen the advocacy work of both ELCF and CEC the Legal Advisor for European Affairs, working in ELCF (with expertise and long-term experience of advocacy work on EU level and excellent networks and contacts in Brussels), will work two weeks each month in Brussels during the period 1.12.2019 – 30.6.2020.

2

The working time in Brussels is to be shared between ELCF and CEC as follows:

60 % for ELCF-related tasks, such as:

- Monitoring EU policies and legislation of relevance to ELCF and planning, coordination and execution of ELCF advocacy strategies.
- Creating, maintaining and strengthening contacts with representatives of EU-institutions and other cooperation partners and networks in Brussels.
- Tasks relating to the *Europe of Values*-concept.
- Monitoring and informing about EU funding possibilities for the Church sector.

40 % for tasks relating to CEC advocacy work at EU level, such as:

- Monitoring EU policies and legislation of relevance for CEC and its Member Churches.
- Monitoring and analyzing the new Strategic Agenda for the EU (2019-2024) and the upcoming Work Programme of the new European Commission. Planning, coordinating and assisting in implementing CEC advocacy strategies.
- Creating and developing contacts with the new European Commission, the new European Parliament and other potential cooperation partners.

- Contributing to developing and enhancing the dialogue between the EU and Churches according to Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty (TFEU) with the new European Commission and the new European Parliament.
- Contributing to the Article 17 meetings of CEC and coordinate the annual meeting of the EU policy and legislation work group.
- Arranging a *'Europe of Values'* discussion forum on the European level.
- Increasing the visibility of CEC.

All CEC-related tasks are to be carried out in close cooperation with the new General Secretary and CEC Staff Members.

The work done for ELCF is likely to strengthen the work of CEC – and the work done for CEC is likely to strengthen the work of ELCF. Thus, the project will undoubtedly create win-win situations and synergy effects for both parties.

Economic consequences, duties and responsibilities of the parties

ELCF remains the employer of the Legal Advisor. ELCF covers all salary costs, expenses for travelling between Helsinki and Brussels, accommodation and insurance costs. ELCF also covers additional expenses relating to tasks carried out for and on behalf of ELCF. ELCF provides the Legal Advisor with a mobile phone and PC.

CEC provides office space for the Legal Advisor in the CEC Brussels office, including office services. No rental fees will be paid for office space and office services. CEC does not participate in the salary costs of the Legal Advisor. CEC will cover expenses directly linked to CEC-related tasks, such as traveling and representation expenses, participation fees etc. Such costs and expenses are always to be agreed upon separately and well in advance with the CEC President/General Secretary.

3

The Director General of the Church Council of ELCF remains the superior of the Legal Advisor. In tasks related to CEC, the CEC President will act as the superior until the appointment of a new General Secretary. The Director General/ELCF and the President of CEC shall maintain regular contact in order to monitor and discuss the joint Project. The cooperation project may be terminated by either Party at any time without notice.

Reporting and evaluation of the project

The Legal Advisor will report monthly about activities relating to the Project to the Director General/ELCF and to the CEC–General Secretary. The Legal Advisor will collaborate with and report to CEC colleagues on a regular basis.

The Legal Advisor will attend meetings of the CEC collegium and, if appropriate, CEC Governing Board and Presidium meetings.

In June 2020, both Parties (the Director General/ELCF and the President and/or the General Secretary CEC) will evaluate the Project and discuss about a potential continuation of cooperation regarding advocacy work on the European level.

Strasbourg / Helsinki [30 November 2019]

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