



# Conference of European Churches

## Governing Board Brussels, 20-22 November 2019

### Draft Minutes May 2019

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*Notes:*

*Youth observers participated in this meeting. On 14 May (afternoon) and 15 May (morning) a preliminary programme was arranged for the youth representatives. This included meetings with Council of Europe officials working on youth and other questions, presentations by the youth organisations on the contribution they could make to the work of CEC, and a review of the draft CEC Strategy Plan from the point of view of youth organisations.*

*During the afternoon of 15 May, before the start of the formal proceedings, the Governing Board visited the seat of the Council of Europe where a number of presentations were made on different aspects of the Council's work. A brief summary of these presentations is given in Appendix 10. After these presentations, there was a reception at the Council of Europe to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Conference of European Churches. During the reception Petr Kratochvil and Alison McDonald gave addresses about the past and future of CEC.*

*The formal proceedings opened on 16 May at 9 a.m. On 16 and 17 May the Governing Board met at the headquarters of the Union des Eglises Protestantes d'Alsace et de Lorraine, Quai St Thomas and on 18 May the meeting took place at the Eglise du Bouclier.*

*During the meeting, morning, evening and lunchtime prayers were led by Bishop Guli, Daniel Topalski, Karine Harutyunyan, Metropolitan Cleopas, Aleksandra Pistalo, Bishop Nicholas, Pierre Magne de la Croix (Pastor of Eglise du Bouclier) and Christian Krieger.*

## 1. Roll call and invitation of third parties

- 1.1 The President, in the chair, welcomed the Governing Board members, electoral reserve members, youth observers and staff to the meeting (see List of Participants in Appendix 1). He recalled that youth observers were present at this meeting by invitation and encouraged them to make an active contribution to the proceedings.
- 1.2 At the invitation of the Chair, each participant then introduced him- or herself briefly to the meeting.

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

- 3.1 The Chair was pleased to inform the Governing Board that Lea-Kathrin Schlenker was willing to act as the Board's link person with youth.
- 3.2 At his invitation, Lea-Kathrin Schlenker then made an oral summary of the reflections emerging from the preliminary meetings held by the youth representatives. She emphasised the following points:
  - Considering that most young church members know nothing about CEC, it is important to consider how to enhance communication with them, e.g. through social media;
  - Bearing in mind that youth organisations have extensive networks, it was important to develop mutual exchange of information between them and CEC, e.g. by establishing a youth desk at CEC;
  - A pool of youth experts should be built up so as to enable young people to make specific contributions to CEC's work, notably through the thematic groups;
  - It would be helpful to develop a practice whereby Governing Board members would from time to time attend Board meetings of the youth organisations.
- 3.3 Anders Gadegaard said that one of the aims of the Governing Board's communications taskforce (see item 13 below) was to extend CEC's existing

communications networks. He invited the youth representatives to give names of youth communicators to Naveen Qayyum (Communication Assistant).

3.4 Members expressed their support for developing the role of youth in the work in CEC along the lines suggested, while pointing out that resource limitations made it necessary to start in a modest way and build up progressively.

3.5 The following points were made in the discussion that followed:

In ecumenical practice “youth” is defined as people aged between 18 and 30.

Although young people tended not to be very interested in institutions as such they were keen to get involved with practical activities;

Bearing in mind that it was often not easy to get churches to nominate young experts for CEC activities, a youth network and a youth pool should help CEC to achieve its aim of including 20% youth in all working structures;

Although much could be achieved through social media, face-to-face meetings remained vital for building friendships as a basis for working together.

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

4.1 Christian Albecker, President of the Union of Protestant Churches in Alsace and Lorraine (*Union des Eglises Protestantes d’Alsace et de Lorraine*, UEPAL) welcomed the Governing Board to Quai St Thomas, seat of UEPAL. He made a powerpoint presentation summarising the history and main characteristics of UEPAL. Given the often painful history of Alsace-Lorraine and the particular status within France

of the churches, ecumenism and internationalism were part of the DNA of the churches of the Union. It was important to them that CEC maintained an office in Strasbourg and also that the Conference of Churches on the Rhine (KKR), a regional group of CPCE, was based here. There was a strong diaconal and social witness. Current challenges included the ageing of the church membership and the shortage of pastors although the number of lay ministers was increasing. There was a growing demand for theological training for lay people and new expressions of Church were developing in disadvantaged suburbs. There was also a growth in non-traditional churches and churches of migrant origin outside the UEPAL.

- 4.2 The Chair thanked President Albecker for his welcome and for the hospitality offered by UEPAL.

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

*Minutes of the General Assembly*

- 5.1 The Chair reported that the draft Minutes of the 2018 General Assembly in Novi Sad had, in accordance with the Constitution, been sent to member churches for their comments and corrections. As no requests for changes had been received, they could be added to the official register of CEC Minutes.

*Minutes of the Extraordinary General Assembly*

- 5.2 The Chair reported that the draft Minutes of the Extraordinary General Assembly of 5 October 2018 had also, in accordance with the Constitution, been sent to member churches for their comments and corrections. As no requests for changes had been received, they could be added to the official register of CEC Minutes.

*Minutes of the Governing Board, 22-24 November 2018*

- 5.3 Two corrections were requested to the draft Minutes (document 2NGB2018\_Doc4):
- Item 7, top of page 7: change United Protestant Church of Belgium to United Protestant Church *in* Belgium;
  - Item 13, page 18: change Chair of the Nominations Committee to *Acting* Chair of the Nominations Committee.

- 5.4 Subject to these two corrections, the Minutes were adopted.
- 5.5 The Chair then asked if there were any matters arising from the Minutes which were not already to be dealt with under subsequent agenda items.
- 5.6 With reference to the decision under item 18 of the November 2018 meeting, Andreas Aarflot said that he had still not seen, in the documentation for the present meeting, an indication of in-kind budgetary contributions.
- 5.7 Jelle Brouwer (Treasurer) regretted that, owing to the difficulty of identifying them precisely, it had not been possible to specify the in-kind contributions in the 2018 accounts. Every effort would be made to try and do so in future.
- 5.8 Andreas Aarflot went on to ask, with reference to decision (b) under item 13d of the November 2018 meeting (60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CEC), what had happened about the proposed CEC anniversary book. He regretted that the agreed procedure for deciding about this did not appear to have been followed.
- 5.9 In discussion, it was noted that although funding did not exist for a written publication, it would still be desirable to try and collect memories of the early days of CEC for publication by electronic means.
- 5.10 In response to a question from Archimandrite Nektarios, the General Secretary informed the Governing Board that the handbook giving information about member churches being prepared under the responsibility of Archbishop Yeznik (see item 8 of the Minutes of the November 2018 meeting) was currently being printed and would be circulated soon.
- 5.11 Finally, the Chair expressed the Governing Board's thanks to John Murray for his work in drafting the Minutes.

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 (60<sup>th</sup> 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

- 6.1 The President presented his report (see text in Appendix 3). He made the following additional remarks:
- churches are very concerned about the present critical circumstances in Europe;
  - it was very encouraging that CEC's relations with CCEE and COMECE were now developing in a promising manner;
  - two member churches were thinking of seconding staff members to CEC in the fairly near future.
- 6.2 Archimandrite Nektarios regretted that many documents, including the President's report, had not been circulated until the last moment. The Standing Orders provided that documents should be circulated at the latest seven days before meetings.
- 6.3 The President and the General Secretary expressed their regret at this situation.

6.4 The Chair expressed the Governing Board's gratitude to the President for the high level of commitment which he had shown to the work of CEC.

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

## 7. General Secretary's report

7.1 At the invitation of the Chair, the General Secretary, Fr Heikki Huttunen, presented his report (1GB2019\_Doc8).

7.2 The General Secretary drew particular attention to the following points:

- Concerning the consultation process on the draft Strategy Plan, it was disappointing that there had been almost no responses from Central and Eastern Europe, Southern Europe and the Orthodox churches; thought should be given to why this was the case;
- It would be important to find ways of reinforcing links with the UK churches after the probable departure of the UK from the EU;
- The continued growth in cooperation with CCME was to be warmly welcomed;
- The current shortage of administrative staff, due in particular - but not only - to the sick leave of Charlotte Van der Borght, made it very difficult to maintain efficient running of CEC.
- It was necessary to intensify cooperation with the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the planned WCC Assembly in Karlsruhe should offer good opportunities for this;
- Article 17 contacts with the EU have recently been more active with the Parliament than with the Commission and the Council.
- Finally, the General Secretary pointed out that his report also included reports by the executive staff members on their areas of work.



- 7.3 Concerning relations with WCC, the President commented that the WCC Assembly offered an opportunity to demonstrate that the European churches were more lively than was sometimes thought.
- 7.4 Andreas Aarflot raised the following points:  
According to the Constitution, it is the Governing Board that is supposed to “provide” CEC’s annual report;
- More careful consideration needed to be given to CEC’s compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR); the Governing Board could be liable for non-compliance;
  - the Budapest Assembly said that the Presidency should meet with any member church thinking of leaving CEC, as appeared to be the case with one member at present.
- 7.5 Concerning the annual report, the Chair concluded that even if this was primarily a public relations document, it did need be submitted to the Governing Board for final approval in future years.
- 7.6 Concerning GDPR, the General Secretary reported that CEC and CCME had recently appointed a joint data protection officer.
- 7.7 Concerning the Member Church that was reported to be thinking of leaving CEC, it was felt that even if it was not at all clear whether that church would in fact decide to leave, it was nonetheless desirable that the President or the General Secretary visited the authorities of that church at an early stage.
- 7.8 It was suggested that future reports by the General Secretary should contain some more reflective material in addition to factual accounts of work done. Moreover, the executive staff should be invited to report orally on their work.

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;  
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;
- b) **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;
- c) **took note** of the General Secretary’s report (document 1GB2019\_Doc8).

## 8. CCME Activities report

- 8.1 At the invitation of the Chair, Torsten Moritz, General Secretary, reported on the recent work of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe.
- 8.2 Torsten Moritz was pleased to report that cooperation with CEC was continuing to develop in a very promising manner. More and more things were being done jointly while the governance structures of the two bodies remained distinct. He was especially grateful to CEC for fulfilling its commitment to budgetary support to CCME for its work on behalf of CEC.
- 8.3 Torsten Moritz went on to highlight a number of current issues in the migration field, including:
- the Christmas statement signed by about 30 European personalities had been well received and attracted good media attention;
  - CCME had written to the EU Ministers of the Interior calling for a predictable rescue and disembarkation system for migrants in the Mediterranean Sea but there had been no response;
  - There was no sign of agreement on a common European asylum system;
  - CCME had held a joint event with COMECE on the question of asylum-seekers who convert to Christianity;
  - the number of migrants entering European countries had declined considerably but politicians continued to speak of a migration crisis;
  - It was important to build bridges between churches which took very different views of the migration situation.
  - CCME was planning an event on the theological approach to unity and diversity among historic European churches and churches of migrant origin.
- 8.4 The Chair thanked Torsten Moritz for his report on many issues of great importance and congratulated CCME on its work. The Chair went on to express his satisfaction that cooperation between CEC and CCME based on the Memorandum adopted by the two bodies had made great progress.

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

## 9. First presentation of public issues (see also item 16)

- 9.1 At the invitation of the Chair, Elizabeta Kitanovic (Executive Secretary) presented the Communiqué (see 1GB2019\_Doc3) adopted at the Conference entitled *Towards peaceful coexistence in the Middle East* held on 14 and 15 December 2018 at Cumberland Lodge (United Kingdom) and asked the Governing Board to consider whether it would wish to endorse it formally as a public issues statement.
- 9.2 Bishop Nicholas then presented two suggestions for public issues statements (see document 1GB2019\_Doc3a), namely:
- on democratic renewal in Europe;
  - for UN Peacekeeping Day, 29 May (given CEC's role as bridge-builder).
- 9.3 Although he thought that the Governing Board should avoid the danger of issuing numerous statements that were unlikely to have much impact, Bishop Nicholas was seriously concerned at the level of social discontent and Euroscepticism in many parts of Europe. What seemed to be needed was a new European "narrative" capable of engaging younger generations for whom the post-war reconciliation narrative was a matter of past history. Concerning UN Peacekeeping Day, he felt that it was important to say that peace should never be taken for granted; it is always important to work to sustain it.
- 9.4 There was general agreement that these were vital issues on which CEC should have something prophetic to say. On the other hand, although it seemed difficult to produce any worthwhile statement within the time frame of the present meeting, CEC should recommit itself to developing a new narrative on Europe.
- 9.5 The Chair suggested that something should be put on the website to the effect that CEC will pursue its work on the future of Europe with a view to contributing

to a new narrative relevant to contemporary concerns.

- 9.6 Concerning the question of peace, Lea-Kathrin Schlenker suggested issuing some form of statement, perhaps a video, at the time of the planned Peace Conference (Paris, 10-12 September 2019).
- 9.7 Finally, without prejudice to the plans to continue work on the future of Europe, Bishop Nicholas agreed to draft a very short statement highlighting the linked questions of peace and democratic renewal in Europe.

## 10. CEC Strategy Plan 2019-2023

- 10.1 The Chair recalled that member churches, organisations in partnership and youth representatives had been consulted about the draft Strategy Plan for the work of CEC during the period up to the next General Assembly (2019-2023). Their feedback was summarised in document 1GB2019\_Doc10a.
- 10.2 The Chair went on to list some of the general points emerging from the consultation process:
  - Churches welcomed the opportunity to express their views and generally considered that the draft Strategy was ambitious and inspiring and that the structure around three aims was helpful;
  - Some felt that the draft was not a true strategy but simply a long list of items; it lacked a clear identification of priorities; objectives and outcomes needed to be clarified.
  - The strategy did not make clear its relation to the objectives set out in the Constitution, nor to the guidelines laid down by the Novi Sad General Assembly (bearing in mind, however, that the General Assembly policy paper was, for reasons which had been pointed out before, rather general in character.
  - The role of organisations in partnership should be mentioned more specifically
- 10.3 The Chair then identified some of the more specific points which had been made:
  - Youth should in future be more involved in CEC's work;
  - Although questions such as the impact of modern technology on the world of work were clearly of great importance, social policy was not very visible in the Strategy;
  - Questions of populism and xenophobia were also not visible enough;
  - The work on the Future of Europe should continue;

- The theological work should be broadened to include evangelical/charismatic circles, possibly by working with the World Christian Forum,
- Considering current geopolitical developments, peace should be a core issue;
- The peace task force, the Charta Oecumenica, and questions of evangelism and mission were not visible enough in the Strategy.

10.4 In the discussion that followed, some members explained that their churches had not sent a formal response to the consultation about the draft Strategy because there was not enough time to get approval from their authorities.

10.5 Others felt that although there plenty of excellent proposals in the draft, it could not really be described as a strategy. A distinction needed to be made between a broad strategy, to be decided by the General Assembly, and a more detailed implementation plan to be drawn up by the Governing Board on the basis of the Strategy.

10.6 Finally, looking to the future, the Chair said that it had been suggested that the Governing Board should prepare a preliminary draft Strategy as a basis for more focussed discussion at the next General Assembly. Moreover, many were disappointed that the work of the thematic reference groups had not specifically presented at Novi Sad; space should be reserved for this kind of reporting at the next General Assembly.

10.7 Bishop Nicholas, who had chaired the Strategy and Policy Committee at the Novi Sad General Assembly, said that the Committee's task had indeed been very difficult because they had received no prior briefing. For the next General Assembly, a preliminary draft text should be prepared in advance as a basis for the Strategy and Policy Committee's work; only thus would it be possible for the General Assembly to give proper directions to the future Governing Board.

10.8 Agreeing, Andreas Aarflot recalled that, according to the Constitution, it was up to the General Assembly to fix CEC's strategic objectives.

10.9 The Chair then invited the Governing Board to engage in a general discussion of the draft Strategy Plan as revised in the light of the results of the consultation

process (document 1GB2019\_Doc10). In particular, it was important to know whether members agreed with the three overall aims specified in the draft:

- CEC promotes peace, justice and reconciliation in Europe;
- CEC strengthens ecumenical fellowship and promotes church renewal;
- CEC raises churches' voice in Europe and the European institutions.

He further drew attention to the areas of work specified under each aim. The question also arose as to whether the expertise of the staff corresponded to the requirements of implementing the Plan. In this connection he mentioned that there was hope of reinforcing the staff from 2020 by means of secondments.

10.10 The Chair further drew the Board's attention to the Appendices to document 1GB2019\_Doc10, setting out the staff's more detailed proposals for the work to be carried out between 2019 and 2023 under the different headings of the Strategy Plan, namely:

- Appendix 1 on economic and ecological justice and sustainable future;
- Appendix 2 on human rights;
- Appendix 3 on ecclesiology and mission;
- Appendix 4 on the churches' contribution to the Future of Europe;
- Appendix 5 on a) education, democracy and diversity, and b) science, new technologies and Christian ethics.

10.11 Each member of the executive staff then made a brief presentation of the area(s) of work for which they would be responsible.

10.12 In reply to a question from Archimandrite Nektarios about the proposal to work on mutual recognition of baptism, Katarina Pekridou (Executive Secretary) said that despite the diversity of opinion among the Orthodox churches in particular, it would be worth carrying out a careful examination of the issues arising.

10.13 Alison McDonald wondered whether the mention of "church renewal" in the title of Aim 2 was really justified by the contents.

10.14 Archimandrite Ignatios called for care with the language in Aim 2; it was important to avoid any suggestion that CEC should become a "super-church" or that it should duplicate the official theological dialogues.

- 10.15 Metropolitan Cleopas said that what brings the member churches of CEC together is “theology in action”, particularly helping those who are suffering.
- 10.16 Anders Gadegaard regretted the absence of an “outcomes” column; the Strategy should specify what results CEC intended to achieve through its work.
- 10.17 At a later stage of the meeting, the Chair invited the Governing Board to split up into groups, one to discuss each of the three Aims. Each group would be accompanied by a member of staff.
- 10.18 The groups then reported back to the plenary. In addition to a number of proposals for detailed changes of wording, the following broader points were made:
- In future the Governing Board should devote more time to discussing the content of the work;
  - As the full Strategy was rather complex, a short version should be prepared for public consumption.
- 10.19 The text of the Strategy Plan was then adopted unanimously (see Appendix 4).
- 10.20 The Chair noted that it might be worth devoting time at the next Governing Board meeting to a more in-depth discussion of the work to be carried out under the Strategy, with particular reference to the desired “achievements”. The Chair also noted that it had been suggested that, for each Aim, a “taskforce” of Governing Board members might be set up in order to keep in touch with the progress of the work and to support the staff.
- 10.21 Towards the end of the meeting, a shortened version of the Strategy Plan, intended for public consumption, was distributed to members.
- 10.22 Bishop Nicholas and Archimandrite Nektarios were requested to add a preamble and to make a few amendments to the text of the short version in the light of the discussion.

10.23 Subject to some final minor modifications, the text as revised by Bishop Nicholas and Archimandrite Nektarios was adopted unanimously (see Appendix 5).

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

- 13.1 Anders Gadegaard reported on the Taskforce set up to develop and review CEC's communications strategy. It had taken time to constitute the group. Informal discussions, including a thorough briefing from the communications staff, had been held between some members and the first formal meeting was planned for 2 July. He hoped to have more progress to report at the next meeting.

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



#### 14. Proposed Thematic Reference Groups

- 14.1 During a preliminary discussion of working mechanisms it was agreed that different areas of work might require different approaches. Standing Order 18 left a degree of flexibility in this respect and the Governing Board should therefore feel itself free to adapt the type of working mechanism to the needs of each area of work.
- 14.2 The Chair drew the attention of the Governing Board to the proposals prepared by the staff in document 1GB2019\_Doc14 and invited the staff members to present the proposals which each had made.
- 14.3 Katarina Pekridou (Executive Secretary) presented the proposal for a thematic group on ecclesiology and mission. She aimed to bring in members from circles going beyond those usually involved in CEC's work.
- 14.4 Peter Pavlovic (Study Secretary) presented the proposal for a thematic group on economic and ecological justice and sustainable future. The aim was to bring out clearly what specific contribution churches could make to this debate.
- 14.5 Valérie Duval-Poujol said that she agreed with the proposal but asked that it be reworded so as to fit in better with the changes that had been made to the wording of the Strategy Plan.
- 14.6 Sören Lenz presented two proposals:  
a) a group on education, democracy and diversity, and  
b) a group on science, new technologies and Christian ethics.
- 14.7 Elizabeta Kitanovic (Executive Secretary) presented the proposal for a thematic group on human rights. She commented that it was necessary to be able to respond to urgent requests from member churches on issues relating to human rights. It was necessary that members of this group brought real expertise to its work.
- 14.8 In the discussion that followed, the following general points were emphasised:

- Clear terms of reference should be drawn up for each group and these must be sent to member churches when asking them to nominate candidates;
- Working groups should be large enough to allow for the fact that, as showed by experience, not all members could attend each meeting;
- The title “thematic reference groups” used during the period since the Budapest General Assembly was felt to be excessively cumbersome, and it was therefore agreed to use the title “thematic groups” in future;
- Communication and cooperation between different thematic groups should be encouraged;
- Although it was very important, when determining the membership of the thematic groups, to ensure that the members possessed real expertise, it was also necessary to make every effort to respect the various balances laid down for the composition of CEC bodies;
- Bearing in mind the uneven performance of the thematic groups in the previous period of work, it would be important for the Governing Board to review the progress of the different thematic groups now being set up;
- Although the staff needed to be supported in their work by expert groups, some speakers would have wished for greater variety of working methods; moreover, the new groups looked too much like a continuation of what had gone before rather than a new start on the basis of a new Strategy.

14.9 Archimandrite Nektarios would have preferred this matter to have been discussed in closed session.

14.10 The Governing Board then voted on setting up the five thematic groups: Education, democracy and diversity; Ecclesiology and mission; Economic and ecological justice and sustainable future; Science, new technologies and Christian ethics; Human rights. The result of the vote was: 15 for, 1 against, 0 abstention.

14.11 The Chair then asked whether there was a proposal to set up a further thematic group on social justice and labour despite the fact that there was at present no staff member available to work in this area.

14.12 After discussion, it was agreed to return to this matter if and when an additional staff person became available.

14.13 The question of setting up short-term taskforces for some projects having been raised by some members, it was pointed out that a Peace Taskforce had already been set up and that additional taskforces could be set up in future if the need arose.

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

15.1 A number of members expressed concern that, although they were to have been adopted at the Novi Sad General Assembly, CEC’s Staff Regulations had still not been finalised.

15.2 Peter Pavlovic (Study Secretary) said that staff wanted the regulations to be approved as soon as possible so as to give them greater protection and legal certainty.

15.3 The General Secretary explained that this rather complex operation was now well advanced but for reasons set out in his report (see 1GB2019\_Doc8, section J) it had not been possible to complete it yet.

15.4 After some discussion, the Chair noted that the Staff regulations would be submitted to the Governing Board for approval as soon as they had been checked by the social bureau of Belgian employers (Securex). To speed up the process, the draft would be sent to Governing Board members as soon as it was ready so that they could send any observations by email to Andreas Aarflot.

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 (see also item 9)

16.1 Following the discussion held earlier, Bishop Nicholas presented a draft statement on the need for a renewal of democratic vision.

16.2 Subject to some minor amendments, the Statement was adopted unanimously.

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 Appendix 7).

## 17. Belgian law on ASBL

17.1 Andreas Aarflot presented document 1GB2019\_Doc12 on the new Belgian Law of 23 March 2019 introducing a New Code of Companies and Associations. Although many of the changes did not affect CEC, it might well be necessary to make a number of minor modifications to CEC's Constitution (e.g. listing the "founding members", appointing a statutory auditor). Belgian legal advice would be sought in order to be clear about any implications for CEC's working methods and Constitution. Given that the Law provided that any constitutional changes did not have to be made until 1 January 2024, it would be possible to deal with this matter at the 2023 General Assembly.

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

18.1 The Chair circulated document 1GB2019\_Doc2bis containing the draft agenda for the written General Assembly for 2019. The tasks of the General Assembly were, as usual, to approve the annual accounts, discharge the Governing Board, approve the budget and appoint the auditor. In response to a question, he said that member churches would be given very clear information about the procedure for the General Assembly and the designation of delegates. On this understanding, he invited the Governing Board to approve the agenda for the written General 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**

*Appointment of Deputy Treasurer*

- 21.1 The Chair informed the Governing Board that although the Budget Committee had appointed a Deputy Treasurer to assist the Treasurer, the person concerned had found it necessary to withdraw.
- 21.2 Frank Kopania proposed as Deputy Treasurer Mr Carsten Simmer, a professional auditor with an international finance company who served as Chair of the Finance Committee of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau. Mr Simmer, who was also a member of the Synod of the EKD, was willing to serve in this capacity if appointed.
- 21.3 The Governing Board voted unanimously to appoint Mr Carsten Simmer as Deputy Treasurer.

*Vacant seat on Budget Committee*

- 21.4 The Chair informed the Governing Board that there was a vacant seat on the Budget Committee. In order to respect the usual balances, this seat should be filled by a person from the Orthodox Churches, who were therefore invited to put forward a candidate.

*CEC Accounts 2018*

- 21.5 The Treasurer presented the CEC accounts for 2018 (document 1GB2018\_Doc11bis). He apologised for the late and incomplete presentation of documents on accounts and budget; the Treasurer and the Budget

had been working under great difficulty owing to the prolonged absence on sick leave of the staff member responsible for finance and administration. Although there had been an overall deficit of € 47,529, due primarily to the legal fees incurred for the work to make the Constitution fully compliant with Belgian law, this had not been as great as had been feared. In accordance with the decision of the Governing Board, the deficit had been covered from the General Assembly fund, but even so there was, as planned, € 80,000 in the fund for the next General Assembly. There had been a small shortfall in fees from member churches but meetings income and donations were higher than expected. There had been some small savings on salaries and meetings.

21.6 The Treasurer went on to present the balance sheet for 2017-2018 (see 1GB2019\_Doc

21.7 While understanding the difficulties under which the Treasurer and the Budget Committee had been working, several members regretted that it had not been possible to present the accounts properly. Given that the Board was required to adopt the accounts, it was very unsatisfactory not to have seen them fully and in advance. It was not sufficient to present the accounts on the screen during the meeting; it was necessary to work with hard copies.

21.8 The Governing Board voted unanimously to adopt the accounts for 2018.

#### *2019 Budget*

21.9 The Treasurer presented the draft budget for 2019, which had been drawn up on the basis of the decisions of the Novi Sad General Assembly and the staff's proposals for work during the coming year. A number of relatively limited economies were proposed, resulting in a surplus of about € 60,000.

21.10 Andreas Aarflot reminded the Governing Board that the Constitution required the budget to be adopted by the written General Assembly before the middle of the year. It was unfortunate, therefore, that the 2019 budget would not be adopted until sometime in September. He suggested that next year the Governing Board should examine the draft budget at an earlier date; moreover, it would be a good

idea, next year, to examine the budgets for the two coming years, 2020 and 2021.

21.11 The Governing Board voted to approve the draft budget for 2019: 18 for, 0 against, 1 abstention.

21.12 In the light of the discussion, the Chair suggested that the Governing Board lay down as 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.

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;
- d) **appointed** Mr Carsten Simmer as Deputy Treasurer.

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

22.1 Following on from the closed session, whose decisions are set out below, the President urged Governing Board members to draw the attention of potential candidates to the vacancy notice for the position of General Secretary. It was hoped that the appointment would be made at the next session of the Governing Board (20-22 November 2019).

The Governing Board, considering that the competences of the existing General Secretary did not correspond to the current challenges facing CEC, such as the need to develop new strategic orientations, and bearing in mind also that discussions with him on these matters during recent weeks had failed to make real progress:

- 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 Asssitant
- 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 (14<sup>th</sup> 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 (25<sup>th</sup> of April in Brussels).

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

#### 2) Presidency meeting in Leicester (29<sup>th</sup> 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 (26<sup>th</sup> 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 (28<sup>th</sup> 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 (7<sup>th</sup> 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 (8<sup>th</sup> 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 – 27<sup>th</sup> of June, 2019). I agreed to be part of the Christian delegation.

#### **4) TFEU Art 17 meeting (17<sup>th</sup> 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 (21<sup>th</sup> 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 (30<sup>th</sup> 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 (28<sup>th</sup> of February, Karlsruhe)**

In September 2021 (8-15<sup>th</sup>), 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 (6<sup>th</sup> 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 (19<sup>th</sup> 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 (20<sup>th</sup> 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 (27<sup>th</sup> 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 (8-9<sup>th</sup> 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 60<sup>th</sup> 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 succeeded in finding a German Landeskirche to second staff they can propose to success 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 (27<sup>th</sup> 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 (4<sup>th</sup> 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 (14-16<sup>th</sup> 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 70<sup>th</sup> 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 (5-8<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 (30<sup>th</sup> 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 (9-11<sup>th</sup> 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 (19<sup>th</sup> 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 (11<sup>th</sup> 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 (2-4<sup>th</sup> 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 Metropolis 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 Metropolis of Montenegro and littoral.

### **11) Conference on Europe day (9<sup>th</sup> 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 Héroutard (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				
<b>Background</b>	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.			
	<b>Promoting peace and reconciliation</b>	<b>Contributing to the Future of Europe</b>	<b>Working on education on democracy, diversity, and pluralism</b>	<b>Supporting interreligious dialogue</b>
<b>Objectives (WHAT)</b>	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.
<b>Main activities (HOW)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>2. Co-organise regional events and conferences aiming to clarify a churches' contributions to Europe's narrative, with churches from different regions in Europe.</li> <li>3. Organise a common seminar with CCEE on populism and how churches can deal with feeling of fears and dissatisfaction</li> <li>4. Organise a Summer school on "Freedom of Expression and Populism"</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consultation on cooperation and fellowship with migrant and minority ethnic churches.</li> <li>2. Consultation on inclusive ecclesiology.</li> <li>3. Conference on current developments in intercultural education and dialog policies. (COE)</li> <li>4. produce a guide for parishes on eradicating Christianophobia, Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia</li> <li>5. participate in the Steering Committee of Education policy and practice with the CDPPE</li> <li>6. monitor and contribute to current developments in intercultural education and dialogue policies (Council of Europe program Competences for a Democratic Culture)</li> <li>7. develop intercultural learning on the basis of an ecumenical project to enable Member Churches to become bridge builders</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>2. Liaise with other faith communities and networks in Human Rights Advocacy and Human Rights Education.</li> <li>3. Liaising with the Theology of Religions project of the CPCE and other relevant projects in the Member Churches of CEC.</li> <li>4. Cooperation with National Councils of Churches, the WCC Programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation, and the Christian World Communions.</li> <li>5. Establish a Committee on Interreligious dialogue in Europe, drawing from existing CEC networks including new partners from other faith communities.</li> </ol>
<b>Description (HOW)</b>	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
<b>Timeplan (WHEN)</b>	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	
<b>Staff (WHO)</b>	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			
<b>Background</b>	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.		
	<b>Working on ecclesiology and mission</b>	<b>Organising a study on Baptism</b>	<b>Strengthening Ecumenical Partnerships in Europe</b>
<b>Objectives (WHAT)</b>	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.
<b>Main Activities (HOW)</b>	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.
<b>(HOW)</b>	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.
<b>Timeplan (WHEN)</b>	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
<b>Staff (WHO)</b>	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
<b>Peter</b>		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)	
<b>Elizabeta</b>		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)						
<b>Katerina</b>				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
<b>Sören</b>						Consultation on bioethics (May)				Regional meetings on bioethics				International conference on Christian faith and artificial intelligence		
<b>Charlie</b>			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 60<sup>th</sup> 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 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 preparation of the 2019 (written) General Assembly

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.



7 October

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)).

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.

## Visit to the Council of Europe

1. Daniel Holtgen, Director of Communications and Spokesperson for the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General, welcomed the Governing Board to the Council of Europe. The Organisation was currently celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but this was also a time of political and financial crisis resulting from the illegal annexation of the Crimea by the Russian Federation.

The Council of Europe saw the churches as partners subscribing to very much the same values. Freedom of religion and belief was protected under the European Convention on Human Rights, although the Court had to balance this right with the rights laid down in other articles of the Convention.

The Council had adopted many important conventions on topics such as domestic violence, human trafficking and the sexual abuse of minors.

The gradual erosion of budgetary resources over recent years had, however, weakened the Organisation and he thought that churches could lobby member States to return at least to zero real growth. Especially in Western Europe, people tended to take our rights and freedoms for granted.

2. Christopher Reynolds, Education Department, presented the Council of Europe's work on competences for democratic culture. The aim of the Reference Framework for competences for democratic culture was to educate people in how to use democratic institutions. This work included human rights education and intercultural dialogue. 20 competences had been identified in four categories: values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding.

3. Antje Rothmund, Head of the Youth Department, speaking of the Council of Europe's long tradition of youth involvement, welcomed the participation of youth in the current meeting of CEC's Governing Board. In addition to transmitting the Council of Europe's values to younger generations, the Youth Department worked with youth ministries on youth policy issues. The European Youth

Foundation, co-managed by youth representatives and government officials, gave financial support to activities run by young people.

4. Françoise Kempf, Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, said that the Commissioner, who was wholly independent in her operations, was appointed for six years. The Commissioner carried out country visits during which she raised issues at the highest political level and also had hearings with NGO's. She also published reports and short comments on current issues. Information from churches about human rights issues was always welcome. Although it was never easy to identify the precise impact of the Commissioner's efforts, it was clear that international pressure did quite frequently achieve results in European countries.

5. Merete Bjerregaard, Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, spoke about the ongoing process of reform of the work of the European Court of Human Rights. Although the backlog of cases had been considerably reduced, it was worrying that a number of countries were questioning the principle that ECHR judgments have precedence over national courts.

The work on the development of human rights was currently dealing with: improving the implementation of social rights, publishing a handbook on alternatives to detention of immigrants, freedom of expression in relation to other human rights such as freedom of religion, civil society, human rights defenders and national human rights institutions, human rights in culturally diverse societies, combatting female genital mutilation and forced marriage, and the human rights of older persons.

In response to a question, she said that in an increasingly diverse society in which it was no longer the case that everyone subscribed to broadly the same values, there was an increase in conflicts of rights where the courts were called on to arbitrate. It was also important that such matters were openly discussed in society.

6. Katrin Uerpmann and Lee Hibbard, Bioethics Unit of the Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law, presented the Oviedo Convention on protecting human rights in the biomedical field. Current work dealt with medical treatment in end-of-life situations, and the situation of children, older people and migrants. An additional protocol was being developed on the dignity of persons involuntarily subjected to medical treatment. The participation of CEC in the bioethics committee was much appreciated.

7. Elizabeta Kitanovic (Executive Secretary) then presented the CEC publication on Religious Diversity in Europe and the Rights of Religious Minorities.