



## Conference of European Churches Governing Board

Brussels, 20-22 November 2019

### Thematic area Human Rights Report on activities

1. The Summer School on Human Rights took place in Lisbon from 17 - 20 June 2019. The theme was "Freedom of Expression and Populism". The project was hosted by COPIC (Portuguese Christian Council of Churches). There was large participation from Portugal and Spain, and a total of 63 participants, coming from 17 countries. Program and material are available online: (<https://www.ceceurope.org/presentations-from-6th-summer-school-on-human-rights-lisbon/>)

2. The Conference on Populism and Human Rights took place in Malaga from 17-19 of October 2019. The project was hosted by the Spanish Evangelical Church and Ecumenical Centre Los Rubios. The conference "Alternative to Populism from a Human Rights Perspective" discussed the influence of populism on democracy, human rights and rule of law. It is foreseen to have the book on Human Rights and Populism as an additional outcome. There were 44 participants, coming from 15 countries. For more see the conference statement (<http://www.ceceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/20191019-DM-Communique-CEC-Conference-on-Populism.pdf>).

3. The Executive Secretary for Human Rights contributed as a speaker to the EEAS (European External Action Service) program on Exchange of Religion in Society. The Executive Secretary for Human Rights talked about CEC work in the Western Balkans region and the role of the churches in building peaceful societies through human rights work. The debate is available online.

4. The Executive Secretary for Human Rights gave a presentation on the Rights of Religious Minorities at IRLA (International Religious Liberty Association) expert meeting which took place in Morocco. She was invited to join the work of this network in the future. It was discussed that the next IRLA meeting in 2020 is organised in Brussels. IRLA sponsored the Malaga conference. They have expressed the wish to join CEC as Organisation in Partnership.

5. Ecumenical Patriarchate and Interfaith Alliance organised the workshop “The Role of Religious Leaders in Addressing Hate Crime” in Paris. The Executive Secretary for Human Rights was asked to assist in developing a concept program for the workshop and moderated a panel discussion.

6. KAICIID (King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue) organised the event “The Power of Words - The Role of Religion, Media, and Policy in Countering Hate Speech”. Executive secretary for Human Rights was one of the speakers and participated in the panel debate on CEC work on Hate Speech and Hate Crime.

7. OSCE/ODIHR (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) organised a meeting in Geneva on Hate speech and hate Crime: “Addressing Intolerance, Discrimination and Hate Crime”. The Executive Secretary was a speaker and updated human rights experts on hate crime against churches and Christian communities in Europe.

8. Book “Human Rights, Religious Freedom and Faces of Faith”:  
This project follows up of the first Human Rights Manual published in 2013 and will be published by Globethics. Editors are Göran Gunner, Pamela Slotte (2013-2018 CEC TRG members) and Elizabeta Kitanovic. This project started in 2016 and met several challenges.

Available online:

[https://www.globethics.net/documents/4289936/17575651/GE\\_CEC\\_6\\_isbn9782889313211.pdf](https://www.globethics.net/documents/4289936/17575651/GE_CEC_6_isbn9782889313211.pdf)

9. Through EPRID (European Platform against Religious Intolerance and Discrimination) CEC participated in the establishment of the EP intragroup on religious freedom. So far there are around 60 MEPs who supported the creation of this group.

10. CEC has been requested to deal with the situation regarding the registration process for minority churches in North Macedonia.

11. Due to the sensitive situation in Kosovo (UN Security Council Resolution 1244<sup>1</sup>) the visit of church leadership from Kosovo to EU institutions is postponed. The legal adviser from the diocese sent the latest update on the situation there.

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<sup>1</sup> Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999) on the situation relating Kosovo: <https://peacemaker.un.org/kosovo-resolution1244>

12. CEC follows up on the situation in Montenegro since the SDP (Social Democratic Party) party included in its program the re-establishment of Montenegrin Orthodox Church, this is causing direct interference of the Montenegrin state in internal church affairs.

13. CEC is monitoring and following up on the Case of Spanish Pastors.

14. The Executive Secretary or Human Rights was invited by the Human Rights Unit of the Dutch Foreign Office to speak at 7th meeting of the Istanbul Process. Due to the overlap of dates with CEC/CCEE dialogue, CEC had to decline from participation at the conference.

15. Upon invitation of the European Commission, the Executive Secretary for Human Rights attended the conference on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

*Appendix 1: Declaration from the Paris Workshop "The Role of Faith Leaders in Combatting Hate Crime"*

*Appendix 2: Evaluation summary of the 6<sup>th</sup> Summer School on Human Rights*



**Paris Workshop**  
**“The Role of Faith Leaders in Combatting Hate Crime”**

**Declaration**

Love and respect are the principles shared by all religions and faiths. We are born blind to color, ethnicity, gender and any other dissimilarities between us human beings. But today, despite the connections between the world’s communities, through technology and the exposure to other cultures, hate crime is more than ever before on the rise, and threatens all the good that a united human race could achieve. In this sense, preserving peace in our communities by combating hate crime is pivotal in promoting progress and well-being in the world we live in. We must be aware of the dangerous link between hate crimes, violence, and radicalization.

To meet this challenge, we must work together to develop effective solutions. As faith leaders we believe that combatting hate crime is a unifying issue that brings people together across nations, cultures and religions. We have the opportunities, awareness, resources and wisdom required to perform this moral human duty of ours.

Firmly believing in the importance of preserving peace and stability in our communities, we, the faith leaders participating today in this conference in Paris, declare that we will take the following and in our respective communities:

1. To unite the voice of faith leaders in order to engage them, with humility and self-criticism, in positive actions to collaborate and contribute constructively, together with international organizations and the civil society, to developing peaceful and prosperous communities by: taking primary responsibility for educating our faithful regarding the significance of:
  - a) the power of speech which can lead to violence, which in turn leads to dehumanization, rising religious and racial hatred which may lead to to atrocity crimes and violence
  - i. b) the memory of and responsibility for past atrocities, in order to build a good future (*memoria culturale*);
2. To advocate a universal concept of human dignity, through education and communication, in the role of religious leadership:
  - a. that differences and disparities do not justify any form of hate crime; and
  - b. that awareness and understanding of the other is the foundation on which safer communities are built.
3. To promote and reinforce dialogue by religious leaders, thus drawing on their respective spiritual resources to promote community safety and security in the public sphere by:
  - a. campaign together in the public sphere against religious hatred;
  - b. to increase positive religious narrative on the web.
4. To build and strengthen effective partnerships between religious leaders at all levels to:
  - a. address the root cause of hate crimes in our communities;



INTERFAITH  
ALLIANCE  
FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

## Appendix 1

- b. to implement Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to prevent incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes
5. To inspire religious and faith leaders on all levels and in all religious communities to unite their spiritual, practical and educational efforts by:
  - a. speaking the language of love and hope;
  - b. dealing more actively, and in an integrated manner, with response to hate crime;
  - c. and helping victims and their families by recognising their suffering and giving them the opportunity to express themselves.

Today, we reaffirm our commitment to do everything we can to influence our communities, whether religious or otherwise, and together to combat hate crime in the communities we live in.

*Announced in Paris, France, 9 September 2019*

### Summary of Evaluation forms 6th Summer School on Human Rights 17-20 June 2019 – Lisbon, Portugal

Organised by the Conference of European Churches in partnership with the Portuguese Council of Christian Churches (COPIC)

This evaluation summary was based on the 15 evaluations forms received at the end of the Summer School. This represents 23.3% of the participants present during the event.

#### Appreciation on:

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	No answer
Course content	78.6%	21.4%	0%	0%	-
Course presentations	64.3%	35.7%	0%	0%	-
Level of difficulty	42.8%	28.6%	14.3%	0%	14.3%
Course generally	71.4%	21.4%	0%	0%	7.2%

#### What was good about the course?

- Very interesting topic, lectures and well-structured presentations, easy to follow.
- People, discussions, lectures, the “open” atmosphere, a welcoming attitude from the programme committee.
- It brought together subjects which are relevant, controversial and hardly spoken about by church leaders like fake news, populism and religious freedom.
- Ecumenical participants, shared info and expertise.
- Bringing in exceptional expertise in subjects so important and fundamental for our lives in our context today in the world, Europe and Portugal.
- Everything
- Opportunity for networking, valuable inputs and good insights
- The program was well planned, it continued smoothly from one topic to another and things were related to each other (no jumping from one topic to totally different). The language of the presentations was understandable. It was good to have speakers from so many backgrounds and also hear different experiences from different countries.
- Information, discussion and wide perspective
- A good information about a lot aspect very interesting.
- A lot of information, inspiring, different angels.
- Themes, networking, new ways to see things

- Competence of speakers, kindness of hosts, the change to get to know the situation of Portugal
- The organisation and logistics, including all the information needed. The varied programme and excellent quality of most speakers. The rights mix of church representatives and experts and the friendly atmosphere.

### What was not so good?

- It was not so good when the speaker didn't speak English, and translation was needed (loss of time, difficult to pay attention).
- There had been a couple of hardship: a) to follow the topic we are not familiar with and to follow an exercise, e.g. judging and case concerning Human Rights.
- To stay away far from the city centre and too big room for the seminars/lectures.
- Everything was so expected, not perfect but really good. So be encouraged in continuing doing such seminars. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to attend it.
- Not quite enough time for discussion and debate
- Native-English speakers are so quick speakers that sometimes it is difficult to follow. I also hope for some kind of database where the presentations of the summer school could be found afterwards.
- More round tables and workshops
- Too big house, low light
- I think that is also very interesting the version on a populist. The very important populist movement in Europe in the Catalan independents' movement and it is an aspect to speak.
- Very intensive and much speaker in very short time
- We didn't have time for sports and activities. Healthy practices like walking together is good both for body and mind.
- Staying almost all day in a room with artificial light and sometimes title didn't exactly correspond to the content of the presentation.
- Different points:
  - The name: it was not really a summer school, more of a conference. I would either rename it or add more workshops and practical learning to make it a summer school. (But I understand that there are financial reasons as well).
  - The participants: related to the previous remark. For a summer school, I would expect young people, students and the like.
  - The moderators: For panels to be really good, the key is a good moderator: with a strong opinion, yet giving space primarily to the speakers (Here, some moderators were excellent, others gave lectures of their own, others did not even introduce the speakers)
  - The venue: while it was great that everything was in one place, some small changes would dramatically increase the overall impression: a smaller room (this seemed empty even with all participants present); to arrange the tables next to each other, so that the speakers do not sit at opposite ends of the room)

### Which issues weren't given enough time?

- There was no time to include information about how freedom of assembling for worship has been suppressed on the north of Mozambique. Maybe just as well the situation there is graphic.
- Details of ECHR judgments, surveillance and monitoring, European guidelines
- Maybe biblical input could have a bit more time
- Maybe speech and fake news, referred to other non-religious groups (woman-LGBTB-Jews-disabled-etc.)
- Anthropological and philosophical background of hate as evolutionary asset to survive. From there it must be possible to open a theological perspective that is more than descriptive.
- Populism inside church and press participation on events like this
- Overall, I found the programme balanced. However, I would add more practical exercises of the type we had with the lawyer from the CoE (a psychologist: what to do if you have a racist in the congregation? A journalist: how to counter hate speech in the church media – simply practical things)

### Were some given too much time?

- My opinion was that the time was equally divided among the rich diversity of themes and in general people kept their space and time, which needs pleasure to listen to their speech.
- A little too long at the church in town
- No, everything was legitimate

### In your opinion, what did you learn on the course? Much or little? Did you find the course useful for you and/or for your church/organisation?

- Yes, I did learn a lot on the course; it was an interesting, well-structured and presented course. I feel I gained a good deal at knowledge, information. I had good discussions and I feel I can use all this input for teaching, writing and promoting the discussion in my church.
- I found it useful, especially new facts about several things and issues
- The learning content on the legal context of human rights and freedom in Portugal and its former colonies for me, was one subject which I know so little and now because of this seminar I could research and learn more about this important aspect of church history.
- Yes
- It will be useful for my church and also for my professional activity. I've learned a lot. Fruitful was not only to listen to the panellist and discussion but also my private conversation with other participants.
- I have also organised events like this – organisation and management were great! Thank you



- There was a lot of information to process in my own head. I learned a lot about freedom of expression/hate speech etc. and it was good to have a chance to discuss the subject and the situation/experiences in different countries with the participants. What we learn from the sessions comes more alive when we put it into different local contexts. I haven't yet figured out how to use all the information from the summer school in my church, but I will take time to write some kind of summary or two at least for our church newspaper and social media. I am also hoping to share the information with the priests in my area/diocese. Populism is rising also in Finland and there is a polarisation, especially when we speak about refugees, so we need tools to face the question in our churches' everyday life. I think I benefited of this course and I will share the info as wisely as I can.
- I believe that most of the info I got were there already. What was new and profitable was putting all that in a new and more comprehensive perspective.
- Much, yes. But the problem of my country now is the nationalism and the populism is every day. (not sure about this last word).
- I learned the most about populism, the think and tick identity. Also on surveillance.
- It's important to think about people. I mean we meet different people and that help us being more relevant with each other and that it is a basic question but a very important one. Faith is above all a matter of tolerance so...
- Very good in giving the basic definition of hate speech, fake news, populism. I learned much about the legal definition and tools for freedom of expression. I made contacts with experts which I can refer to, once back home.

### How did everything work out in general (materials, schedules, etc.)?

- Good
- In general, it was satisfactory given the tight schedule and the density of information, if there was more time it would have been perfect.
- Very well
- It worked fine
- Excellent
- Fine
- Excellent with materials. If I needed anything, it was provided. The group organizing the summer school (both CEC and the Portuguese) – you are wonderful people, thank you very much for having us, making us so comfortable and welcome.
- You could have some volunteers, and youth from Portuguese churches to help with the logistics and a way to integrate the “new generation” within this issues. It's a win-win situation.

### Anything else you want to say?

- It was very good we had an excursion
- Suggestions for other themes in the future:
  - “The End of the World?” Climate, Religion and HR

## Appendix 2

- “What is a Human Being?” Religious/Theological responses to AI-technology and HR
- Compassion and Dignity in a time of fear
- Such seminars are powerful tools for us church leader to update our information and better inform others. I hope that more programs such this can be realized in Lisbon and congrats Dr Elizabeta on this endeavour.
- This type of school is important for the churches
- I wanted to express once again my admiration for the organizing team. I know from my own experience how difficult it is to organize events of this type. And this one was smooth!

Made by Charlie Belot on 01/07/2019.