



Governing Board, Online 18-19 Nov 2020
Agenda Item: 3
Document Name:
2GB2020_DOC3 DRAFT MINUTES JUN2020
Purpose: For approval

DRAFT MINUTES

*Prayers were led by Bishop Nicholas Baines at the end of the morning session and by Bishop Guli Francis-Dehqani at the end of the afternoon session.
Given the limitations of an on-line meeting, all sessions were chaired by the President.*

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1. Roll Call

1.1 The President welcomed members and staff to the on-line meeting of the Governing Board. He extended a particular welcome to Fr Iakovos Andriopoulos who was attending for the first time as proxy for Archimandrite Ignatios Sotiriadis.

1.2 He went on to say that although the current covid-19 pandemic had led to many restrictions it had also given rise to creative solutions. As it would be difficult to hold real debates at this on-line meeting, the agenda had been restricted to items where decisions were urgently needed.

The Governing Board **established** that the meeting was quorate (see Appendix 1 for the list of participants).

2. Taking note of Agenda

The Governing Board **took note** of the proposed agenda (see Appendix 2).

3. Minutes previous meeting (November 2019)

The Governing Board:

a) **corrected** paragraph 19.4 so as to delete the sentence reading "Moreover, the General Secretary would need to propose the name of an Assembly Coordinator, who was usually someone from the host country" and replace it by "Moreover, the Assembly Coordinator shall be appointed in accordance with Standing Order 11 (1), which provides that "the Governing Board shall in particular appoint an Assembly Coordinator, either from the existing staff or as a temporary position on the staff";

b) **corrected** the list of participants (Appendix 1) so as to indicate the affiliation of Rev Jelle Brouwer as "United Protestant Church in Belgium" instead of "United Protestant Church of Belgium";

c) subject to these two corrections, **adopted** the Minutes of its previous meeting, held in Brussels from 20 to 22 November 2019 (see document 1GB2020_Doc3, corrected).

4. Minutes 2019 written General Assembly (W-GA)

4.1 Andreas Aarflot reminded the Governing Board that it had been necessary to convene the written General Assembly twice in 2019 because, on the first occasion, the quorum had not been attained.

The Governing Board **agreed** to add the Minutes of the written General Assemblies held on 3 August 2019 and 7 October 2019 (see document 1GB2020_Doc4) to the official register of Minutes.

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5. President's Report

5.1 The President presented his report (document 1GB2020_Doc5), highlighting the following points:

- the new General Secretary, Jørgen Skov Sørensen, had made a promising start to his work; his current reflections on CEC's organization and functioning opened up the prospect of a fruitful debate on its profile and strategic orientations;
- the lockdown in response to the covid-19 pandemic had caused considerable delay in making progress with the operational phase of CEC's strategic plan; there were now not much more than two years for substantive work before the next General Assembly;
- only time would tell what might be the financial impact of the pandemic on CEC's finances. The Secretary General has initiated a consultation of members to assess the financial impact in 2020 and beyond.

5.2 In response to a question, the President explained that it had taken some time to decide, with legal advice, what form of contract under Belgian law would be most appropriate for the General Secretary.

5.3 With reference to paragraph III.15 of the President's report, Valérie Duval-Poujol urged the Governing Board to take particular note of the fact that the President, together with the President of COMECE, had had a private audience with Pope Francis during which they had engaged in a wide-ranging discussion of current issues and also of the two bodies' efforts to convey a Christian input to the European institutions.

5.4 Bishop Nicholas, supported by the President, underlined again how grateful the Governing Board needed to be to Véronique Engels (Assistant to the General Secretary) for the remarkable and highly professional efforts she had made to keep CEC functioning efficiently during the vacancy of the post of General Secretary.

The Governing Board:

- a) **received** the report of the President (document 1GB2020_Doc5);
- b) **thanked** the President and Véronique Engels for their exceptional efforts to maintain the work of CEC during a challenging period of transition.

6. Report from the General Secretary

6.1 The General Secretary presented his report (document 1GB2020_Doc6). He pointed out that the written report incorporated activity reports by the members of the executive staff.

6.2 In his presentation, the General Secretary underlined the following points:
- he was grateful to the Governing Board for having placed their trust in him, to the President for his advice and guidance and to the staff for their warm welcome.

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- one of the most urgent tasks to which he had applied himself was to regain financial accountability and to clarify administrative procedures. In this connection, the appointment of Georgios Maglis to the new post of Head of Finance, Administration and Payroll had been an important step forward.
- during the covid-19 pandemic, measures had been taken to enable CEC's work to continue: staff working from home, meetings postponed or moved on line, materials circulated, preparing for the reopening of society and institutions.
- he looked forward to discussing future orientations for CEC at the next Governing Board meeting, focusing inter alia on questions of ownership, coherence and visibility.
- among the things which make CEC distinctive are its foundation and heritage of hope and courage, its reflections on Christ crucified and risen and its being invigorated through worship and spiritual fellowship.

6.3 The President thanked the General Secretary and the staff for an interesting and detailed report.

6.4 Petr Kratochvil thanked the General Secretary for a very useful report identifying the challenges faced by CEC. He looked forward to hearing the General Secretary's ideas about how CEC could respond to these challenges and invited him to prepare a paper to this effect in advance of the next Governing Board meeting.

6.5 Alison McDonald, sharing this view, pointed out that Governing Board members would be needing good arguments in the near future for defending the fee contribution of their churches to CEC. The General Secretary had highlighted the need to enhance Member Churches' ownership of CEC, as well as the coherence and visibility of its work; these were areas to which member Churches attached particular importance.

The Governing Board:

- a) **received** the report of the General Secretary (1GB2020_Doc6);
- b) **requested** the General Secretary to circulate, in advance of the next Governing Board meeting, a discussion paper setting out ideas for the future organisation and work of CEC, developing inter alia the themes of ownership, coherence and visibility as sketched out in pages 4 and 5 of his report;
- c) **congratulated** the General Secretary on a promising start to his work.

7. Budget and Accounts

7.1 Jelle Brouwer (Treasurer) presented the audited accounts for 2019 (see document 1GB2020_Doc7a) together with the Recommendations of the Budget Committee (1GB2020_Doc7). The overall result, a result of app. € 26 000, was better than expected. He paid tribute to the support of the General Secretary and said that the appointment to a new

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post of Head of Finance, Administration and Payroll had made it possible to work far more efficiently than during the previous year.

7.2 Andreas Aarflot welcomed the new, simplified presentation of the accounts and confirmed that they were in accordance with Belgian legal requirements.

7.3 The Treasurer went on to present the budgets for both 2020 and 2021 (see document 1GB2020_Doc7b), both of which now needed to be submitted to the written General Assembly. Because of the uncertainties resulting from the pandemic, it would, in the first place, be necessary to review the 2020 budget, and, in the second place, it was very difficult to predict what the financial situation would be in 2021.

7.4 Anders Gadegaard could not support the reduction in the communications staff. He could not see how it was possible to increase CEC's visibility at the same time as reducing the communications staff. He added that the restructuring of the budget made it difficult to make comparisons with the 2019 budget.

7.5 Some felt, however, that the real need was to communicate better, in a more focused way, which did not necessarily mean that it was required to hire more staff.

7.6 Some members pointed out that, as the covid-19 crisis might lead to a reduction in Member Churches' contributions to the CEC budget, it would be prudent to consider possible scenarios for reduced expenditure in 2021.

7.7 Andreas Aarflot pointed out that, according to the Constitution, a draft Staffing Plan should be presented to the Governing Board at the same time as the budget. It would be important to respect this provision in future.

7.8 The Treasurer undertook to review all aspects of the presentation of the accounts and budget with the help of the General Secretary and the Head of Finance, Administration and Payroll.

7.9 The Governing Board voted as follows on a motion to a) submit the audited accounts for 2019 for approval by the written General Assembly, b) approve the budget for 2020, and c) approve the budget for 2021: 17 for, 0 against and 2 abstentions. Agreed.

7.10 The President thanked the Treasurer for his hard work during the past six months. He also took the opportunity to present Georgios Maglis, the recently appointed Head of Finance, Administration and Payroll.

The Governing Board:

a) **approved** the budget for 2020 (see document 1GB2020_Doc7b);

b) **approved** the budget for 2021 (see document 1GB2020_Doc7b);

c) **agreed** to submit the audited accounts for 2019 (see Appendix to document 1GB2020_Doc7a) for approval by the written General Assembly;

d) **noted** that, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the Staffing Plan must in future be approved by the Governing Board at the same time as the budget.

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8. Written General Assembly 2020

8.1 The President said that the draft agenda for the 2020 written General Assembly (document 1GB2020_Doc8b) was the same as for the 2019 written assembly except that this time it was necessary to approve the budgets for two years, 2020 and 2021.

8.2 In response to a question, Andreas Aarflot confirmed that, except in any cases where the delegates had changed, the same ballot paper could be used on both occasions should it prove necessary to proceed to a second written general assembly because of the lack of a quorum on the first occasion.

8.3 The Governing Board voted as follows on a motion: a) to approve the timeline for the 2020 Written General Assembly (document 1GB2020_Doc8a), and b) to adopt the agenda for the 2020 Written General Assembly: 18 for, one abstention. Agreed.

8.4 The Governing Board voted as follows on a motion to approve the use of the same ballot paper on both occasions should it prove necessary to proceed to a second written general assembly because of the lack of a quorum on the first occasion: 17 for, two abstentions. Agreed.

- a) **approved** the timeline for the 2020 Written General Assembly (document 1GB2020_Doc8a);
- b) **adopted** the agenda for the 2020 Written General Assembly (document 1GB2020_Doc8b);
- c) **agreed** that, except in any cases where the delegates had changed, the same ballot paper could be used on both occasions should it prove necessary to proceed to a second written general assembly.

9. CCME Activities Report

9.1 Torsten Moritz, General Secretary of CCME (Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe) gave an oral report on the current migration situation and the work of the Organisation.

- The Governing Board:
- a) **received** with thanks the oral report of the General Secretary of CCME;
- b) **requested** the General Secretary of CCME in future to circulate a written report in advance of the Governing Board meeting.

10. First presentation of Public Issues

8.3 The President informed the Governing Board that proposals had been submitted for issuing public issues statements on the following questions:

- a) Covid-19 and consequences for churches in Europe;
- b) Ongoing migration to Cyprus and Greece;
- c) Religious freedom in times of pandemic.

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8.4 The President went on to say that as CEC had already issued, jointly with COMECE, a press release on the covid-19 pandemic, and had also referred to the matter in the joint Easter message (see section II.C of his report), there did not seem to be a real need for a further statement at this time. Moreover, the Thematic Group on Human Rights had produced a reference text on the question of the prohibition of celebrations in the light of the fundamental right to freedom of religion, a matter which would be considered more fully at the next Human Rights Summer School. It might also be felt, therefore, that the Governing Board did not need to issue an additional statement on the matter.

8.5 Concerning the possibility of a statement on migration to Cyprus and Greece, Torsten Moritz said that this was indeed a very complicated and serious situation. Malta was also affected in a similar way. Some countries had offered to take refugees from Greece, but there was less awareness of the situation in Cyprus.

8.6 Archimandrite Nektarios emphasized that Cyprus had the highest rate of migrants per head of population of any European country. The situation was being politicized by Turkey and some European countries were using the pandemic as an excuse for closing their borders.

8.7 Fr Iakovos regretted that the pandemic had distracted international attention from the serious refugee situation in Greece. The government was working with the churches to relieve the situation of refugees but many found themselves in limbo while waiting for their cases to be processed; the resulting uncertainty had serious implications for their mental health.

8.8 The President commented that this situation was a massive challenge to solidarity among European countries. Nonetheless, the consensus was that the Governing Board was not at present sufficiently informed to justify making a public issues statement on the matter.

The Governing Board **decided** not to issue any public issues statement on this occasion.

11. Towards 2023 General Assembly of CEC

11.1 Noting that a number of other organizations, such as the World Council of Churches, had decided to defer their planned assemblies because of the substantial delays to their work resulting from the pandemic lockdowns, the President asked the Governing Board to consider whether or not CEC ought to postpone its next General Assembly, currently planned for 2023, to 2024.

11.2 Andreas Aarflot pointed out that the Constitution required CEC to hold its next General Assembly not later than 2023. Moreover, CEC and CCME had envisaged to hold their 2023 General Assemblies jointly.

11.3A number of speakers felt that, despite this, it would be preferable to find a way of postponing the General Assembly so as to allow time to make sufficient progress with the work mandated by the last General Assembly.

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11.4 The majority of speakers considered, however, that it was important not to defer this opportunity for all Member Churches to meet. Given the rather short time available, together with the fact that travel might still be restricted, not to mention the need to avoid excessive travel because of the climate crisis, it might be best to maintain the date of 2023 but to organize a somewhat smaller assembly with a more tightly focused agenda.

11.5 Noting that there was a majority to maintain the date of 2023, the President went on to ask whether the Governing Board wished to accept the invitation from the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church of Estonia to hold the 2023 General Assembly in Tallinn, Estonia (see document 1GB2020_Doc11a).

11.6 Anna Burghardt said that the invitation followed on from consultations among the Nordic-Baltic Member Churches.

11.7 The Governing Board voted as follows on a motion to accept the invitation to hold the 2023 General Assembly in Tallinn, Estonia: 17 for, two abstentions. Agreed.

11.8 The President then invited the Governing Board to decide on the approximate date for the 2023 General Assembly.

11.9 After some discussion, the Governing Board voted unanimously to hold the 2023 General Assembly between the end of May and the middle of June, bearing in mind the Eastern and Western dates of Pentecost.

11.10 The President invited the Governing Board to approve the provisional timeline for preparation of the 2023 General Assembly as set out in document 1GB2020_Doc11b.

11.11 Andreas Aarflot said that the legal advisors should be appointed at the same time as the members of the Assembly Planning Committee.

11.12 With this addition, the provisional timeline was approved unanimously.

The Governing Board:

- a) **decided** to hold the next physical General Assembly in 2023, as planned;
- b) **agreed** that the 2023 General Assembly should take place at dates between the end of May and the middle of June, bearing in mind the Eastern and Western dates of Pentecost;
- c) **recalled** that a joint CEC and CCME General Assembly is envisaged for 2023 in the Agreement between CEC and CCME 2018-2024;
- d) **decided** to accept the invitation from the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church of Estonia to hold the 2023 General Assembly in Tallinn, Estonia (see document 1GB2020_Doc11a);
- e) **approved** the provisional timeline for preparation of the 2023 General Assembly as set out in document 1GB2020_Doc11b.

12 Personnel Committee

This item having been dealt with in closed session, a short minute will be distributed as a restricted addendum to the main Minutes.

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Meeting in closed session, the Governing Board:

- a) **took note** of the oral report by Frank Kopania on the online meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 4 June 2020;
- b) concerning the repayment of a loan made by CEC to the former General Secretary, Fr Heikki Huttunen, **mandated** the President to pursue the issue in the best interests of CEC;
- c) **insisted** that no such loans should be made in future without the express agreement of the Governing Board and on the basis of a legally sound written document.

13 Cooperation with Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

This item having been dealt with in closed session, a short minute will be distributed as a restricted addendum to the main Minutes.

Meeting in closed session, the Governing Board:

- a) **extended** the duration of the current Agreement of Cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland on Strengthening the Voice of the Churches in Brussels (see document 1GB2020_Doc13a) for a period of six months up to 31 December 2020;
- b) **made the following amendments** to the text of the Agreement:
 - the second bullet point near the top of page 2 to read: “Coordinating a CEC Task Force on EU legislation and policy in cooperation with the EKD Brussels Office and with participation from other relevant church offices in Brussels”, thus reconfirming the decision of the Governing Board, November 2019, namely “to request the General Secretary to convene a group of legal experts which should include an Orthodox member, to monitor EU legislation and policy from the point of view of churches”;
 - the last sentence of the second paragraph under “Economic consequences, duties and responsibilities of the parties” to read “The Senior EU Policy Advisor will attend meetings of the CEC Collegium and, if deemed appropriate by the bodies concerned, CEC Governing Board and Presidency meetings”;
- c) **agreed** to review the agreement at its meeting November 2020 with a view to deciding on future needs and possibilities.

14 Nominations Committee

14.4 Metropolitan Cleopas reported on the on-line meeting of the Nominations Committee held on 4 June 2020.

14.5 The Nominations Committee had agreed unanimously to recommend that Bishop Hovakim Manukyan be appointed to the Budget Committee (see candidature in document 1GB2020_Doc14b) and that Ms Sofie Larsen Kure be appointed to the Thematic Group on Economic and Ecological Justice and Sustainable Future (see candidature in document 1GB2020_Doc14a).

14.6 The Governing Board voted unanimously to accept these nominations.



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The Governing Board:

- a) **appointed** Bishop Hovakim Manukyan to the Budget Committee;
- b) **appointed** Ms Sofie Larsen Kure to the Thematic Group on Economic and Ecological Justice and Sustainable Future.

15 Approval of Public Issues

None (see item 10 above).

Closing of the meeting

In closing the meeting, the President thanked all the members and staff for making this on-line meeting work effectively. He looked forward, however, to returning to physical meetings in the future.



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Appendix 1

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
- Fr **Iakovos** Andriopoulos, Church of Greece
*Electoral Reserve of Very Rev Archimandrite **Ignatios** Sotiriadis, Church of Greece*
- 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
- Dean Anders Borre **Gadegaard**, Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Denmark
- 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 Zsuzsanna **Répás**, Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia
- Ms Lea-Kathrin **Schlenker**, Evangelical Church in Germany
- Ms Emma **Weaver**, Methodist Church of Great Britain

Apologies

- Very Rev Archimandrite **Ignatios** Sotiriadis, Church of Greece
- H.E. Metropolitan **Joseph** of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Southern and Western Europe



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Staff

- Ms Véronique **Engels**, Assistant to the General Secretary
- Dr Elizabeta **Kitanović**, Executive Secretary
- Ms Lena **Kumlin**, Senior EU Policy Advisor
- Rev Sören **Lenz**, Executive Secretary
- Mr Georgios **Maglis**, Head of Finance, Administration & Payroll
- Rev Dr Peter **Pavlovič**, Study Secretary
- Ms Katerina (Aikaterini) **Pekridou**, Executive Secretary
- Ms Naveen **Qayyum**, Communication Assitant
- Dr Jørgen Skov **Sørensen**, General Secretary

Guest

- Dr Torsten **Moritz**, General Secretary

Minute taker

- Rev John **Murray**



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Appendix 2

AGENDA

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