



## Activity report

### Human Rights

#### CEC Human Rights Education

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Due to COVID-19, the 7<sup>th</sup> Summer School on Human Rights (SSHR) took place in an online format instead of being hosted by EKD in Berlin, Germany. The organisers, CEC (Thematic Group on Human Rights – CEC TG HR) and EKD (HR department) had to change the theme and, instead of “Freedom of Religion or Belief in the Public Sphere”, it was changed to “Challenges for Human Rights in the time of COVID-19 (*For freedom, Christ set us free. Galatians 5.1.*)” and took place from 7 to 10 July. The SSHR program delivered 9 webinars in 4 days. The program is available on the [CEC website](#). The Summer School 2020 gathered around 130 people over those 4 days. In 2019, in the physical meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, there were around 60 participants. An entirely new application for funding was submitted for Otto per Mille Baptiste. There was no need to submit a new funding application for Otto per Mille Valdese. The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain also supported the project financially. EKD agreed to re-host a physical meeting of the SSHR in 2021. The material is available on the CEC website in the Summer School section. Media visibility (look at the specific report on the project<sup>1</sup>) was significant. The follow up video will be produced about limitation of religious freedom in Europe during the pandemic. The CEC Thematic Group on Human Rights is working on it.

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The last panel of the project “Rising hate in time of COVID-19 - The experience of young people” took the initiative to continue the work and created its own network named [FoRel](#) - which has scheduled several webinars, the first one being “Young Women and Faith in our Secular and Pluralistic World”, taking place on 23 November at 18:00 CET.

As for 2021, EKD booked the venue for the next SSHR and Church of Sweden started the preparation process for SSHR 2022. The implementation of the projects will depend on the evolution of the current pandemic.

#### CEC Advocacy:

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1. **Syria:** To follow up of the ongoing theme on Persecution of Christians, CROCEU, COMECE, CEC and EPP Group for Interreligious and Intercultural dialogue prepared public

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<sup>1</sup> Draft report is prepared for the project partners and available in the office



WebEx/webinar on the topic – The next day in Syria: “Humanitarian Exceptions to EU Sanctions against Syria: Why They Don’t Work Out” on 11 November. The program is available on the [CEC website](#).

2. **Turkey:** On request of the CEC Presidency, CEC addressed the issue of conversion of museums into mosques in Turkey vis-à-vis UNESCO and the European External Action service addressing the issue of violation of the relevant provision of the 1972 UNESCO convention on the protection of the world cultural natural heritage. Further action on this issue will be taken only if requested explicitly by His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch.
3. **Armenia/Azerbaijan:** On request of the Armenian Apostolic Church and His Holiness Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, due to the escalation of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, CEC addressed the European Eastern Partnership section in the European External Action Service, the Special rapporteur on South Caucasus and the OSCE Minsk Group. CEC continues to monitor and to look for another suitable occasion to follow up.
4. **Belarus:** On request of the Church of Sweden and other churches, CEC addressed the situation of human rights violations in Belarus with the European External Action Service. CEC continues to monitor and to look for another suitable occasion to follow up.
5. **France:** In the wake of the terrorist attack in Nice and the killing of Samuel Paty, the CEC TG on HR monitors further legal developments of the new law against “separatism” announced on 2 October by French President Emmanuel Macron. CEC continues to monitor and to look for another suitable occasion to follow up if requested.

## Cooperation with partners

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1. The World Association for Christian Communication, LWF, CCME developed a toolkit on combating hate speech online. On 5 October, a webinar on the topic of “Breaking Down the Social Media Divides: A Guide for Individuals and Communities to Address Hate Online” took place. The report shares lessons from specific case studies and experiences in Europe to develop guidelines for individuals and those working particularly in small organisations and church communities to address hateful content in social media. CEC contributed to the



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webinar by showing the video on Hate Speech from the 2019 Summer School with short comments on the subject.

2. CEC contributed to the EU initiative on G20 Interfaith Forum during the Saudi Arabian Presidency in 2 public webinars: EU priorities/ for the G20/ moderation and with a speech at the webinar on Religious Freedom<sup>2</sup>. The [webinars](#) are available via this [link](#) and on CEC's Facebook page. The next presidency will be held by Italy.
3. CEC is a member of HRDN. In this capacity, it is active in the HRDN working group on Rule of Law and the preparation process of the EU NGO Forum 2020, which will take place on 10 December. This year, the forum will be devoted to the topic of "Digital Rights - Fundamental Rights and Freedoms in the Digital Sphere" within the EU Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan 2020 – 2024 framework. CEC advocated and helped developing the webinar on combating religious hatred online.

As a result of its expertise on human rights, CEC was invited to take part in the co-application consortium on the theme of protection of public spaces, which includes worship places. The main scope of the project is to provide training on the security of worship places, help churches develop security plans, guidance for law enforcement on Christianity and practices and a guide on crisis management situations. Consortium members are the European Jewish Congress, the European Buddhist Federation, Faith Matters and CEC. The theme of the project is "Safer and Stronger Communities in Europe" (SASCE). CEC has signed a pre-agreement with the European Jewish Congress in Brussels who is leading the application on this issue. Value of the project for CEC is around 370,000 EUR.

## Comment

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Due to increased advocacy activities related to country specific situations and fundraising related to EU funding, the CEC TG on HR delayed the development of an online conference on the protection of the worship places foreseen for November this year in Kosovo (1244) and didn't finalise project proposals on the themes for 2021/2022, which require additional funding from Otto per Mille.

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<sup>2</sup> Available on CEC Facebook page.