



## **Guidelines for Public Statements by the Governing Board**

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### **Introduction**

Public statements are a means for CEC to respond to critical issues on the European and ecumenical agenda. In the performance of its functions, the Governing Board may issue statements on an issue or concern with which the Governing Board or its constituent churches may be confronted. While such statements may have great significance and influence as the expression of the judgment or concern of so widely representative a Christian body in Europe, their authority will consist only in the weight which they carry by their own truth and wisdom. The issuance of such statements shall not imply that the Conference of European Churches as such has, or can have, any constitutional authority over the constituent churches or right to speak for them.

### **Purpose**

A public statement issued by the Governing Board of CEC may articulate different purposes:

- A joint or specific ecumenical position of the Churches
- A call for joint action
- An expression of Solidarity with/from Churches



## **Criteria**

A public statement issued by the Governing Board of CEC may take the form of a pastoral letter and appeal to member churches, or an appeal to governments and intergovernmental bodies. It should be emphasized that a public statement by the Governing Board is only one among several ways of dealing with such matters.

The main criteria used in selecting issues on which public statements are made by the Governing Board:

- Create a space to react on urgent issues
- issues of international and ecumenical significance;
- areas and issues on which the CEC has had direct involvement and long-standing commitment;
- emerging issues of international concern to which the attention of the member churches should be called for action;
- critical and developing political situations which demand the CEC to make known its judgment and lend its spiritual and moral voice;
- expectations from the member churches that CEC should speak;

Every effort should be made to reduce the number of public issues on which statements are made by the Governing Board. There shall be no more than 5 public statements per regular meeting of the Governing Board.

## **Procedure**

- The members of the Governing Board or the member churches propose to the General Secretary at least 20 days before the meeting a list of not more than 3 issues on which they consider that issuing a statement is timely and significant. A clear rationale for why a statement should be developed on such issue should also be stated.
- The staff of CEC, under the guidance of the General Secretary and in consultation with the presidency, reviews these proposals in light of the criteria and rationale and, at a first session, proposes a shortlist of 5 issues for the Governing Board to consider. In presenting the short list, the General



Secretary may indicate relevant actions or ongoing work being undertaken by CEC.

- The members of the Board will also receive during that session a first draft for a statement on each issue and be able to comment and propose changes. Suggestions on the selected topics and amendments to the draft statements shall be given after this first discussion to the drafting group for revision. Members of the Governing Board may be assigned to work with staff on the drafting of the statements.
- During a second session the Governing Board will receive the revised drafts for further study. The final draft shall be at the disposal of the members of the Governing Board at least one hour before the beginning of the meeting in which the final text is adopted.
- If in the opinion of the Governing Board amendments deserve further study or consultation, or are considered to be at variance with the policies and procedures of CEC, the Governing Board may rule that another course of action be followed.