

13th CEC Assembly Report



Lyon, France 15-21 July 2009



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"Called to One Hope in Christ"

Report of the 13th Assembly of the
Conference of European Churches (CEC)

Lyon, France, 15-21 July 2009



cec

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Edited by Smaranda Dochia

Geneva, 2010



Table of contents

Foreword (HE Emmanuel of France, President of CEC)	6
Editor's note (by Smaranda Dochia)	7
 Part One: A narrative report	
CEC after 50 years of history	8
The process towards the Assembly	10
“Called to One Hope in Christ” in Lyon – Opening Actions	13
Reporting “From Trondheim to Lyon”	15
Assembly theme: key-note speech and panel	17
Visions for the future	19
Workshops at the Assembly	22
Hearings & Agora	24
Celebrating 50 years of European Ecumenism	25
Public issues statements	27
Insights of the committee work results	28
Worship and prayers	32
Evaluation of the Assembly	33
Conclusions	40
 Part Two: Sermons & Speeches	
<u>Wednesday, 15 July 2009</u>	
Gathering Service	
Sermon by H.B. Anastasios	42
Testimony by Dr. Victoria Kamondji	45
Greetings by Rev. Jean Arnold de Clermont	47
Welcome by Cardinal Philippe Barbarin	49
Words of welcome by Father Athanase Iskos	50
 Business Plenary	
Bishop Martin Schindehütte	51
 <u>Thursday, 16 July 2009</u>	
Business Plenary	
Panel remarks by Rev Jean Arnold de Clermont	56
 Thematic Plenary	
Key-note speech by H.B. Patriarch Daniel	59
Panel discussion papers by:	
Dr. Munib A. Younan	64
Ms Ani Ghazarian	67
Ms. Anthea Cox	69



Friday, 17 July 2009

Bible study by Bishop Wolfgang Huber	71
Youth presentation	77

Sunday, 19 July 2009 - CEC 50th Anniversary

Dr. Alexandros Papaderos	79
The Rt Rev John Arnold	83
Ms Marjolaine Chevallier	85
Pastorin Antje Heider-Rottwilm	88
H.A.H. Batholomew	93

Monday, 20 July 2009

Sermon by the Very Rev. Margarete Isberg	97
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Part Three: Final Assembly Documents

Message from the 13th CEC Assembly	100
Assembly Policy Reference Report	102
Public Issues Statements:	
- Called to value migrant people	110
- Called to promote ethical principles in financial and economic structures	112
- Called to strengthen human rights, religious freedom and relationships	114
- Called to a better stewardship of creation	115
- Called to a world free of nuclear weapons	116
- Churches called to stand in solidarity with the Roma minority in Europe	117
Motion on the revision of CEC structure adopted by the Assembly	119
Assembly Financial Report	120
New Central Committee & Constitutional working group	125



Foreword

Called to One Hope in Christ, the theme of the Conference of European Churches' 13th Assembly, was the affirmation which was woven throughout our meeting together. In its Golden Jubilee year, 50 years of CEC's service to the churches in Europe was affirmed and celebrated. From the 15th – 21st of July 2009 in Lyon, France, 800 participants from throughout Europe including 306 delegates from our member churches, gathered together to pray, celebrate, debate, reflect and work towards the future of CEC in the world of today and tomorrow.

The role of an Assembly in the life of CEC is to officially sum up what has been done over the past six years, create a vision for the coming years, and to complete the official business of CEC regarding membership of committees, policy statements, reflections and the introduction of constitutional bye-laws and other proposals as appropriate.

We had the opportunity to utilize a wider consultation process which involved member churches and associated organizations contributing to and participating in regional confessional preparatory meetings for the Assembly. A Future Conference was held before the Assembly and participants were asked to envision the ecumenical movement in 2029; how do we move towards deeper unity, the unity which is ours in Jesus Christ.

Along with CEC's Golden Jubilee, the Assembly also celebrated the 10th anniversary of the integration of the European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society (EECCS), now the Church and Society Commission of CEC, into CEC. The process of the integration of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and CEC continues with the highlighting of the European Churches Responding to Migration 2010.

During this Assembly we faced our need for improvements through challenges to meet the needs of today; moving Christ's vision forward into the future. We dealt with the challenges within our own current structure via the creation of the CEC Revision Group culminating in a special constitutional Assembly to be called in 2013. We affirmed our commitments to those who are marginalized in our societies, to human rights and religious freedoms for all, for the need for ethical principles in our economic and financial situations, to our stewardship and care for our environments and prayer for peace through a world free of nuclear weapons.

Throughout the Assembly we were grounded in prayer with the music and services celebrating the sustaining strength of all our traditions.

And now, by the grace of God may this report be more than mere words for each of us, may the breath of the Holy Spirit flow through us all turning these words into actions thus enabling our common stand, our ***One Hope in Christ***, to be made visible in the lives of our churches, in the ecumenical movement, and us all.

✠ *Metropolitan Emmanuel of France*
CEC President



Editor's note

This report consists of three different parts: a narrative report, a collection of speeches and sermons from the Assembly and a section dedicated to all documents approved by the Assembly.

The narrative report takes the reader through the story of the 13th CEC Assembly. It presents the process towards the Assembly, the ideas behind it, some results of the consultation with CEC Member Churches, the happenings of the Assembly in Lyon and ends with evaluations and conclusions.

This narrative part of the report is based on results of the consultation process prior to the Lyon Assembly, on press releases published during the Assembly by the press office and on evaluations collected from the participants in Lyon and through the online evaluation launched in September 2009.

Various pictures accompany the first part of this report, illustrating the life of the Assembly in Lyon.

For this and the mentioned resources above, I would like to thank the Assembly photographers: **Johan Ehrning Daniel Barton and Giorgio Rainelli**; the writing team of the 13th CEC Assembly Press Office (**David Bradwell, Theodore Gill, Gérald Machabert, Silke Römhild**) and **Stephen Brown** from ENI/Ecumenical News International as well as **Luca Negro**, former CEC Secretary for Communication. I extend my special thanks to **Ruthann Gill**, who is currently working in the CEC Communications office by herself and has helped me finalise this report as it stands before you now.

Smaranda Dochia



Sharing hopes and visions for the future after 50 years of history

The Conference of European Churches (CEC) held its 13th Assembly in a special moment of its existence. In 2009, CEC reached its Golden Jubilee – 50 years of service to the churches of Europe. From the 15 – 21 July 2009, 800 participants from all over Europe were called to Lyon, France to celebrate CEC's 50th anniversary and to share our “One Hope in Christ.”

The story of CEC can be shared in many ways: through photos, music, books, drama, memories or interviews. For the 50th anniversary we had them all. One of the most metaphoric and brief descriptions of the history of CEC was made by the Moderator of the Assembly, Dr. Alison Elliott, at the opening of the anniversary evening:

“For a birthday we need a cake with candles: 50 candles. 20 of the candles (that's 40 %) are pink, the rest blue. 10 are shorter and slimmer than the rest. Another 15 are elaborately carved. They are grouped in three places on the cake apart from each other but linked with strengths of spun sugar. Three of them stand for the three ecumenical assemblies, another 11 for the commitments we've made through the *Charta Oecumenica*, 7 for the CEC regions of Europe. Others represent the bridges that CEC has built, the doors that it has opened, the boats it has launched and sailed in. There are candles for our partners: the Roman Catholic Church, Pentecostals churches, the Muslim community, the European institutions. Some remind us of those who are not present: those on the margins who are always overlooked and the migrants who are friends that we are yet to meet. All are candles of hope and of reconciliation. This cake is easier to describe than to bake - with the ingredients that we can provide. Its candles may be blown out but we believe that they are the special kind that will light up again perhaps in a different configuration. So, in these days of potential and uncertainty: Happy birthday, CEC!”

Fifty years of existence for the Conference of European Churches is no small achievement for this pan- European fellowship having emerged from the ruins of World War II. It was in 1959 that a few visionary church leaders recognized the need to rebuild friendship and trust between those who had so recently been enemies.

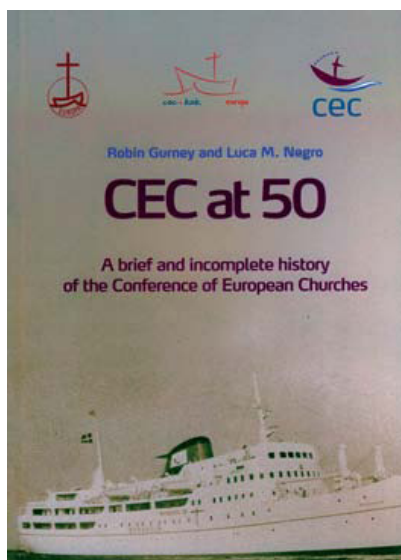


As we celebrated its 50th anniversary, in these days of uncertainty, CEC continues to be challenged. Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin wall, Europe is facing new challenges. In the midst of financial crises, of environmental changes, of changing frameworks in our societies, the European churches have a very important role in shaping the future of Europe. During the current tumultuous phase of history, with the economic landscape changing daily, the role of CEC is questioned.



When debating about the role of Christian churches in the Europe of today, we ought to look back at the challenges that the pioneers, founder members of CEC, had 50 years ago. The first General Secretary, “Rev. Dr Glenn Garfield Williams, whose association with CEC went back to 1959, theorized that:

“The roots of the tree strike back to the last period of World War II, when, even before the dust of the last battle in Europe of that fearful conflict had settled, ecumenical efforts were under way to build bridges between churches of the former enemy nations. From a devastated Europe, with millions of stateless people on the move and the continent beginning to divide itself into eastern and western blocks, the process of reconciliation of peoples, churches and leaders became dominant. Who better to tackle such an issue than the Christian churches? Indeed could Christian warmth and fellowship bridge the gap which was beginning to unfold into the ‘cold war’?”¹



This being said, the Conference of European Churches was founded in 1959 with the very aim of enabling churches in Europe to become instruments of peace and understanding as well as promoting reconciliation, dialogue and friendship between churches and people. And this is how, for 50 years now, CEC has been working to build bridges between eastern and western blocks, between minority and majority churches, between the generations, between women and men, between Christian denominations. Reconciliation, unity in Christ, peace in the world, witnessing together are a only few of the key issues that made up the work of CEC.



In 2009, the Conference of European Churches is an organization with 120 Member Churches and three offices in Geneva, Brussels and Strasbourg, in service of its Member Churches and partners. CEC is an organization which is growing. Besides a general secretariat, CEC has two commissions: Churches and Dialogue (CiD) and Church and Society (CSC). Since 1999 CEC and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) have been working on a process of integration. There are more issues to be dealt with and more areas of interrelated work.

¹ Robin Gurney and Luca M. Negro, “CEC at 50. A brief and incomplete history of the Conference of European Churches”, published by the CEC in 2009, page 11.



Towards the Assembly: A Future Conference

Reflecting on the past, analysing the present and generating a vision for the ecumenical future of Europe were the aims of the “Future Conference” held in Lyon, France, from 10-12 September 2008. Some 80 participants from 23 countries and from all Christian denominations involved with CEC took part in the Future Conference together with sociologists, communicators and representatives of the European Institutions. Women and men were equally represented, and the participation of youth and members of “migrant churches” was particularly visible.

Among the challenges mentioned during the discussions, were the need for a credible witness of churches in the public sphere, to find a “prophetic voice” in changing times, to tackle issues such as secularization, growing individualism, rebirth of nationalism and extreme regionalism, the gap between rich and poor, unemployment, climate change, migration, and new ethical issues.

Visions expressed for the ecumenical scene in 2029 also included: one ecumenical body in Europe, the recognition of baptism and the sharing of communion among all churches, majority churches supporting minority

churches, and solid bridges with Muslim communities.



As tools for facing the challenges and achieving the visions, participants mentioned the need to foster ecumenical cooperation and interreligious dialogue, to ensure wide ecumenical formation, to involve all churches (including Roman Catholics and Evangelicals) in the ecumenical bodies, to use CEC as a forum where challenging and dividing issues could be discussed, to involve the grassroots of the churches, to work for the integration of Europe beyond the EU and to create links of solidarity with all regions of the world.

Towards the Assembly: A wider consultation process

A brand new homepage for the 13th Assembly of CEC (www.assembly.ceceurope.org) was the key for a lot of the communication before, during and after the CEC Assembly. The assembly theme, agenda and all documents are still available on the site. Several interactive functions of the Assembly website made it possible to contribute to the Assembly process and leave comments. During the assembly, the homepage was constantly updated with stories, pictures and articles from the meeting in Lyon.

With its 13th Assembly, CEC took the opportunity to look at the organization as a whole, trying to build up a new vision, based on common understanding, commitment and trust. In order to do this, a consultation process with Member Churches and associated organizations started six months before the Assembly in Lyon.

More than thirty CEC Member Churches participated in the consultation process in view of the Assembly either sending their own contribution to CEC or by participating in one of the regional / confessional preparatory meetings.



The Member Churches of CEC participating in the pre-Assembly consultation considered the 50th anniversary of CEC as an excellent opportunity to reflect on the future of the organisation. Moreover, the responses² received acknowledged that the Lyon Assembly came at a particularly critical time in the life of CEC and its Member Churches. Various points are to be considered here:

1. Role & responsibility of CEC:

Europe is both an important historical site of divisions among the churches and a place where the evolution of ecumenical community has been especially rich. The European churches therefore have a particular responsibility to promote a vision of dynamic ecumenical progress, characterized by encounters, sharing, dialogue and mutual challenge, with a view more to living in the communion given us by our Lord, recognizing one another, than to a formal search for unity or uniformity.



The Berlin Wall and many other barriers have fallen. In a way, it is a more open Europe today, and in a different way a much more closed Europe. The Church wants to be a *listening church* that has the courage to be honest about the conditions of faith in the contemporary world. This makes greater

demands on us as churches to act, to defend the vulnerable and weak.

We share our longing for respect, justice and responsibility for our world with many people of other faiths and care for others. The similarities between people far outweigh their differences. The Church's task is to provide balance in the community and to join all humanity in shaping a common good.

Member Churches need CEC to:

- maintain and preserve the link among the Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant church families
- feed the ecumenical dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church and within the World Council of Churches (WCC) with European perspectives and insights,
- express common positions towards the political European institutions,
- reflect and discuss the profile of Christian identity in the context of 21st century's Europe,
- bear common witness to the Gospel of resurrection within the globalized world.

2. Visibility:

The responses also suggested that CEC needs to demonstrate the value of its work more clearly. With the ecclesiastical, ecumenical and political landscape of Europe much changed since CEC's foundation, the organisation needs "to work harder to promote to Member Churches the value of membership in CEC, of what membership in CEC can bring of value to Member Churches, of how membership in CEC enables the voices of individual churches to be stronger within Europe, of how the voice of the Church can be much more effective when it is expressed collectively." It is CEC's aim to make the voice of the churches' witness heard in the cultural, social and political development of Europe, and to create an ecumenical platform for the theological and ethical debate and our spiritual living together.

² The next paragraphs represent a summary of the responses received from the CEC Member Churches as part of the consultation process. To read the original responses please visit:

<http://assembly.ceceurope.org/index.php?id=440>



Communication with Member Churches must be strengthened. The communication should not be restricted to reports from the meetings that have taken place. In the future, the members must have the possibility to accomplish a dialogue regarding the ongoing processes and have an opportunity to act. It requires new forms of sharing and exchange of experience. Improve internal communication and thereby increase the influences from the Member Churches.

3. Finances:

At the time of the Assembly, Member Churches faced growing pressures for financial downsizing, leading them to re-examine existing priorities as well as methods of working. CEC has limited resources. It is therefore important to prioritize the work. What is it that CEC focuses on that no one else does? It is time to look into the future at how resources are allocated.

Against a global financial crisis and the reality of a significant economic downturn across Europe, the financial pressures faced by CEC and its Member Churches may be intensified in the period 2009-2015.

4. Structure and internal co-operation:

In 2009, Member Churches felt that the institutional developments of CEC in the past years require a new reflection on the overall and global vision of CEC as well as on its functioning and the instruments of collaboration and dialogue among Member Churches. Due to the various developments, the juridical texts of CEC seem no longer adapted and have to be rewritten.

Churches acknowledged that adequate attention must be paid to the cohesion of the organization, the degree of interaction between the CEC Commissions and to what extent the General Secretary is to coordinate the various parts of CEC, reinforcing the overall coherence of the entire organization.

One must pay a lot of attention to the good cooperation, to its development and to the solving of the existing internal problems. It is important to give a lot of consideration to the integration of CCME and how this is to be realized in practice.

Concerns were expressed in relation to the numerous running, but uncompleted, programs of CEC, at the time of the Assembly, as well as about the levels of transparency and accountability concerning the decision making process. It was thus recommended that a critical review of the criteria for launching and implementing programmes and actions be done. At the same time various questions are rhetorically asked by CEC Member Churches:

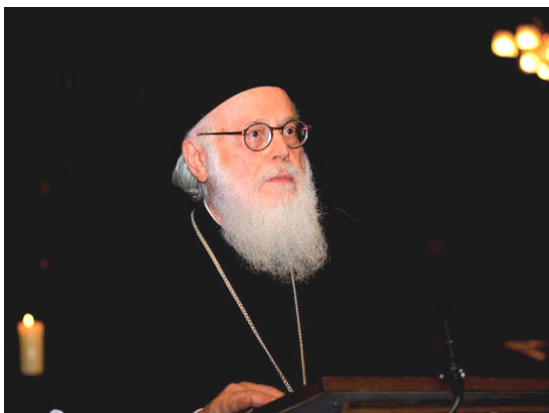
- What is the role and function of the Commissions in CEC?
- What is the link between them, how is the coherence of their work ensured?
- There are common issues that concern both CSC and CCME which means that their mission is overlapping. At the same time, some CCME issues often have a theological relevance while CiD issues also reflect ways churches position themselves in their society, or CSC work and its ethical standpoints often need to be based on a theological rationale.
- How is the collaboration between the three Commissions intended and organized?
- How is the division of work and responsibilities foreseen between the Presidium, the Central Committee and the Commissions?

It is clear that, since the end of Europe's divisions, centrifugal forces and diverging theological and confessional interests and emphases are increasing. The Member Churches' concern is that the witness of the churches in the cultural, social and political developments be effectively heard in the European Union and also in the whole of Europe. At the same time the theological and ethical discourse must be strengthened.



Eight hundred participants from all over Europe, “Called to One Hope in Christ”

It was in the context of this consultation that 300 delegates representing some 120 churches from throughout Europe gathered for the CEC Assembly, in Lyon. Of the 300 delegates, 41 were young people. 170 delegates were male, 130 female. 109 were lay people, 191 ordained. There were 25 delegates who were from a minority ethnic group, or who represented a migrant church. More than 500 other people attended the Assembly, including 58 delegated representatives of associated organisations, members of CEC staff and co-opted staff, local volunteers, visitors, guests and journalists. A stewarding team of 49 young people helped with the smooth running of the Assembly.



“As Christians we dare to hope”, stated the Message to the churches approved at the close of the 13th CEC Assembly in Lyon. These words echo what the Archbishop Anastasios of Albania said in his sermon at the Gathering Service of the Assembly. The service was held in the 14th-century Franciscan church of St Bonaventure where delegates and visitors were welcomed by Roman Catholic Cardinal Philippe Barbarin, Archbishop of Lyon, and Father Athanase Iskos, an Orthodox priest who spoke on behalf of the local interchurch council.

His Beatitude Anastasios, Orthodox Archbishop of Tirana and All Albania and Vice-President of CEC, preached on the Assembly theme “Called to One Hope in Christ.” Despite the depressing nature of daily news and a widespread attitude of fatalism, he said, “as Christians, we dare to hope.” The Archbishop continued, “The hope of our call in Christ does not make us romantic visionaries of an ill-defined future. Hope, accompanied by unshakable faith and unfeigned love, activates all the gifts our God has given us for a creative presence in the events of history.” Such hope opens us not only to contemporary demands and our immediate community but to the promised kingdom of heaven: “We live the local, gazing at the eternal.”



The service also featured a personal testimony by Dr Victoria Kamondji, Vice-President of the Protestant Federation of France. Born in Sierra Leone and possessing a rich familiarity with migrant religious communities in Europe, she described the basis of her own hope in Christ as the experience of “belonging.” This confidence, she added, has taken “its most concrete form in the church and was shown in a love that transcended social, cultural, racial and language difficulties.”



Official beginning of the Assembly

The Opening Plenary of the 13th CEC Assembly was made up of two parts. A business session appointed the first Assembly Committees as well as the Assembly Moderators. Former Moderator of the Church of Scotland General Assembly, Dr Alison Elliott was appointed as the Moderator the 13th CEC Assembly. Two Vice-Moderators were also appointed: His Grace Bishop Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Rev. Arlington Trotman, a Wesleyan minister originally from Barbados and now living in Britain and Moderator of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME).



Dr. Alison Elliott, therefore officially opened the Assembly by describing CEC as an organization which “looks at some of the most intractable and important questions that there are – about the way in which people can live together in community whether that community is a community of churches or a community of political units. These are questions that run deep, they touch on people’s identity, they are nurtured by the rich heritage that we have as Christians in Europe and they give rise to visions of what could be inspired and sustained by our faith and by the great hope which we have (or are called to) in Christ. CEC is also blessed with an excellent staff of dedicated people and they have prepared this Assembly for us as a feast of worship, of celebration, of reflection and of decision-making. It’s now up to us, with God’s guidance to turn that preparation into a memorable Assembly that will strengthen the churches in Europe for the years ahead.”



For the second part of the Opening Plenary various local and national political and religious personalities welcomed the participants of the CEC Assembly to Lyon and respectively to France. Gérard Collomb, Sénateur-maire of Lyon, was the first one to welcome CEC participants to Lyon. Mr. Collomb spoke about the long standing vocation of his town in the area of inter-religious dialogue, among others, with P. Paul Couturier initiating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Speaking about the laity marking the French religious and political landscape, Mr. Collomb explained that “in the construction of a humanist society, the spiritual aspect has its importance” and reminded the Assembly about the last ecumenical or interreligious meeting having taken place in Lyon in the past years.

Sharing his concept of laity, Mr. Michel Mercier, minister representing the French government, quoted articles from the Lisbon treaty announcing a permanent dialogue of the European Union with the churches and religious communities.

President of CEC, the French Reformed minister Jean-Arnold de Clermont, said that the Assembly needed to echo the hope that God has for Europe, affirming the importance of the development of the interreligious dialogue as part of the European intercultural dialogue. He expressed his hope with regards to the focus of the Assembly – sustainable



development and relationships with other Christian churches. He said: “Issues of poverty and the millennium commitments challenge us to live in a sustainable way. Churches need to make sure that the poorest of the poor are not left on the roadside.” He also expressed his hope that CEC would be able to work closer with the Catholic Church and evangelical churches.



Seven Assembly Committees were elected to ensure the functioning of the entire meeting. The Credentials Committee had the task of verifying that all delegates present were there

in their own right and that they received their voting cards and ballot papers. The tellers were there to count all votes. The Message Committee drew up a final message from the Assembly to the CEC Member Churches. The Nominations Committee was given the task to make proposals for the election of other Assembly Committees and the new Central Committee of CEC. The Public Issues Committee worked hard on issuing six different statements on the value of migrant people, about the financial crisis, on human rights and religious freedom, supporting a better stewardship of creation or a world free of nuclear weapons and in solidarity with the Roma minority in Europe. The members of the Policy Reference Committee offered the Assembly the policy lines for the work of CEC from 2009- 2015, integrated in the Assembly Policy Reference Report. The Finance Committee evaluated the financial situation of CEC and projected budgets for the future. Without these committees the Assembly could not have functioned. All the members of these committees worked hard for the entire duration of the meeting.

“From Trondheim to Lyon”: CEC leadership reviewing the past six years of activity

Dialogues among churches, engagement with European institutions and advocacy for migrants were key activities of CEC in the six years since its 12th Assembly in Trondheim, Norway. During a Thursday morning panel discussion on the achievements of the Conference of European Churches since 2003, directors of the three CEC Commissions and the CEC General Secretary commented on the “reception” or “acceptance” by churches of decisions taken by international ecumenical bodies.

Jean-Arnold de Clermont, President of CEC since 2003, described the organization as an instrument permitting churches to meet together, discover a common spirit and speak a shared word within the context of Europe. He admitted that the many different emphases within CEC work against a clear public image, yet he encouraged the Assembly to live out

the churches’ responsibility to challenge their societies on such issues as migration, globalization and human dignity.

After six years of presidency, Rev. de Clermont explained the form that CEC took in the course of time: “For 50 years, the dialogue between churches represented the CEC work that allowed us to reflect on what it means to be Christians together in the European society. Through the Church and Society Commission, CEC has a public voice and to be present in the construction of the European Union. With the integration process of the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe we have become aware that through the question of migration we belong to a globalized world.”



Doris Peschke, General Secretary of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), which is in a process of

integration with CEC, provided an example of the significance of shared identity in pursuing her commission's responsibility: "What is our calling? Despite the churches' careful involvement, there is still public confusion" concerning why Christian groups are involved in debates over the resettling of refugees and legislation concerning migration. "Too often," she concluded, "there has been a failure on our part to communicate our churches' position effectively to the media."

The discussion had an emphasis on the work of CCME which is really about "bringing together the persons in the churches working in a very difficult and controversial area: working with migrants and refugees, working with ethnic minority people, into a commission where they can exchange their experience and work. The churches need to act more forcefully when it comes to issues of the rights of migrants, the life of families of *third country nationals in the EU*, but essentially we talk about people living with us in our societies and communities", explained Doris Peschke. "CCME sees the *dignity of every human being created in the image of God* as a guiding principle for the work of our commission."

Asked to evaluate the activities of CEC for the past six years, the panelists expressed regret over goals that remain unachieved including a common position on gender issues, closer relations with the Roma minority in Europe and resolution of the suspension of CEC membership by the Russian Orthodox Church.



Colin Williams, CEC General Secretary since December 2005, noted that his initial impression

of CEC was "amazement that so much is achieved by so few." In his travels and at consultations across the continent, he finds among Christians "an eager desire for common action in fulfillment of a common purpose. There is a longing for the ecumenical movement to lead in Europe, to achieve something worthwhile."



"It is essential to consider the process of reception during the course of a dialogue," remarked the CEC Churches

in Dialogue Commission director, Rev. Dr. Viorel Ionita. He added that "reflection is profoundly important" at every level and should form the groundwork for understanding documents and proposals wherever they are formulated. Clearly expressed theological explanations of actions are necessary in all CEC commissions.

Asked how ecumenical agreements and other initiatives may best be communicated so that Christians at the local level incorporate them



in their thinking and actions Rev. Rüdiger Noll, director of CEC's Church and Society commission, said: "Paper

never works" as the sole means of communicating ecumenical positions. "Direct, personal contacts are necessary. It is the duty of all of us" at gatherings like the CEC assembly "to reach out to the people in our Member Churches across Europe."

Looking at the past six years and at the same time planning for the future, the panelists spoke about the mutual commitment between CEC and its Member Churches. On this topic, Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont observed: "Member Churches should be asked the question: does the CEC project really belong



to you? Do you have an investment, not only financial but also spiritual in this project which is CEC? Certainly CEC must make its project plan easier to read, more coherent, perhaps

simpler and better expressed in terms of priorities and commitments which we share. This is the very purpose of our Assembly.”

“Hope is born out of faith and manifests itself through love”

“Hope is born out of faith and manifests itself through love” was the theme of the keynote address by the Patriarch of Romania at CEC’s Assembly offered on Thursday 16 July 2009. The theological exposition was delivered by His Beatitude Daniel who, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church.



Patriarch Daniel explained that “Jesus Christ alone is the source of true hope.” His Beatitude asserted that Christian life is, above all else, “a spiritual struggle, a crucifixion of selfish passions.” Our aim is the victory of humble love over egotism and materialism as well as the discovery of a communion of love shared by brothers and sisters in Christ. This struggle, paraphrasing Ephesians 6:12-13, “is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the

powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm”, yet our earthly struggle is more than balanced by the joy of God’s grace in Christ.

Underlining the reality of hope, according to the Patriarch, has been a permanent goal of the Conference of European Churches. Hope in Christ has inspired European churches over the past 50 years, even “in a time when the people on this continent were living divided in antagonistic and hostile ideological and military blocs.”

Today CEC and its Member Churches look to the future, confident in their hope in Christ. Facing “a new reality which brings about new challenges,” the Patriarch said, “the churches must find together new solutions for new problems. We will have to become more and more used to religious pluralism, with respect for others yet without falling into doctrinal or moral relativism. But how can we keep our own identity, when everything is changing around us? Only through the cultivation and enrichment of our relationship with Jesus Christ”. Gaining confidence by the grace of God, the churches of Europe will continue to embrace their missionary calling to proclaim the gospel of God’s abiding love for all.



Hope for the ecumenical movement and the world

Hope was the theme for the first full day of the Assembly. After Patriarch Daniel's speech, five special guests spoke about their hope for the ecumenical movement and the world.



Hoping for justice and striving for the common good was the message from **Ms Anthea Cox**,

a delegate to the Assembly representing the Methodist Church of Great Britain. Ms Cox spoke about the role of the churches in the context of a global recession: "Our hope is that we see commitment to ethical principles within the broader context of our orientation to the common good – the complete flourishing of all human individuals and groups. Our hope is justice for the poor of the world."

Bishop Dr. Munib A. Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land spoke movingly of the



importance to hold on to hope in times of crisis. He outlined the situation his church finds itself in, in a land deeply

divided. The global challenges of terrorism, climate change, economy, diseases afflicting the world are not causes for despair for those who have faith in the risen Christ.

The **Rt Rev. Julio Murray**, Bishop of Panama (Episcopal Church of Panama) brought greetings from Latin America to the churches in Europe. He invited European churches to embark on a new relationship with Churches in Latin America. Bishop Julio said: "Latin America is a land of hope, not



only in our reflections but in our actions. Churches in Europe, come and live with us, hope with us in critical times."

Fr. Dr Adamantios G. Avgoustidis, a theologian and lecturer at the University of Athens proposed a vision of hope with realism. He said that: "Today, after fifty years of sincere and inexhaustible efforts of CEC, we have no other choice but to be realistic and, therefore, optimistic. Realism means earnestly to face the fact that our Christian family is a divorced family." Dr Avgoustidis went on to say that being aware of the failures of the church over issues of unity helps Christians to move on and take responsibilities for seeking and hoping for a better life for all the children of God of whatever color, race or nationality.



The CEC Assembly also heard from **Ms Ani Ghazarian**, a PhD student at University of

Lausanne and a member of the Armenian Apostolic Church, who spoke about a hope for unity, common purpose and theological virtue.



Unity and diversity

Chair of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), Bishop Dr Wolfgang Huber was invited to lead a Bible study on the letter to the Ephesians, chapter 4 verse 4, in connection to the Assembly theme, “Called to One Hope in Christ.” His message was “Unity and diversity should be a leitmotif for ecumenism in Europe.”

Bishop Dr Wolfgang Huber said that “Ephesians is a hymn of praise and unity... We have to give shape to diversity and speak with one voice. As the Ephesians suggest, the Christian community must stick together in the unity of one faith, one Lord, one baptism.”

Reflecting on his own experience as a young person growing up in a divided Germany, Bishop Huber said: “We hardly dared to hope then for the unity of our continent in our

lifetime.” He added that ecumenical co-operation is best expressed when common challenges are faced together, such as the current financial crisis, catastrophic climate change, or where parts of the world are suffering from conflict or disorder.



A desire for clearer purpose, shared values and common actions

The Assembly was realistic, optimistic and hopeful throughout the “vision day” when delegates embarked on a reform process of CEC. An important result of the consultation process was a motion brought to the Assembly by the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), which was intensively discussed in Lyon. The final resolution, which was adopted by 238 votes in favour and 27 against (with six abstentions), was a composite motion following a compromise between two alternative motions from the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the Nordic-Baltic Churches. This composite motion aimed at a revision of CEC as a whole looking at its common purpose, vision, the setting of strategic goals and its structures. A subsequent vote on a mandate for a working group was agreed by 241 to 20, with nine abstentions.

For a fundamental revision of the CEC Legal Texts and in order to review and develop CEC’s organisational and decision-making structures, for the clarification of tasks, priorities and mandates in CEC, as well as of

the ways in which it cooperates with its Member Churches, a special working group was elected by the Assembly. This revision of CEC as a whole includes looking at its common purpose, vision, the setting of strategic goals and its structures.

Elected at the 13th Assembly of CEC

Shahe Ananyan,	Oriental Orthodox, Armenia
Julian Theodor Bendo,	Orthodox, Albania
Michel Charbonnier,	Waldensian, Italy
Gunnar Grönbom,	Lutheran, Finland
Katerina Karkala-Zorba,	Orthodox, Greece
Charlotte Kuffer,	Reformed, Switzerland
Anders Lindberg,	Lutheran, Sweden
Heidi Paakjaer Martinussen,	Lutheran, Denmark
Charles Reed,	Anglican, Great Britain
Colin Ride,	Methodist, Great Britain
Graham Sparkes,	Baptist, Great Britain
Zoltan Tarr,	Reformed, Hungary
Christoph Thiele,	United, Germany
Georges Tssetsis,	Orthodox, Ecumenical Patriarchate
Klaas van der Kamp,	United, The Netherlands

The **CEC revision working group** has 15 members (see above) and is accountable to the Central Committee of CEC. The CEC



Assembly has instructed the working group to publish draft proposals by 31st December 2011, after which member churches are to be consulted. Final proposals for reform will be brought before a constitutional Assembly meeting in the summer of 2013.

The vote on the revision of CEC was followed in the Assembly by small group discussions on the theme of “Vision.” The feedback from these groups was reported by Canon Bob Fyffe, General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

The participants of the 15 groups expressing their hopes and visions for the future agreed that CEC as an organization has achieved a lot for the past 50 years. Nevertheless, there is the question as to whether or not CEC is a true reflection and expression of its 120 Member Churches. In every response there was the desire for clearer common purpose, a clearer set of shared values and a clear and focused set of common actions. But there remain some fundamental questions that need to be addressed if we are going to create a vision that is sustainable and coherent.

Almost every group wished to address issues around the nature of power in CEC. Many of the delegates reported issues around trust between Member Churches. There was a feeling of having a poor internal witness to each other. And so, as we move forward as part of our vision building, there needs to be a lot of work done around trust and sensitivity to one another.

“Do we really trust one another? Do we really engage with diversity? How do we understand different traditions and churches families and how much are we doing to really work our way into a deeper understanding? And how do we engage with different cultures and different ways of working within the CEC membership itself? How do we honor small churches and how are the small churches heard?” These questions are fundamental to the visions expressed in the Assembly.

CEC as an organization is still a builder of bridges. But the kinds of bridges which have been there in the past are part of our history. The Member Churches are looking at building new bridges and new directions as well as new designs for these bridges while recognizing that we are living in a new Europe and a new global context. Many participants expressed that CEC needs to review the whole organisational process, to look again at how it operates. There were some key principles that came out of the vision group work:

“How can we uplift and empower one another, instead of marginalizing and dis-empowering many people? We need to be more Gospel focused with less structure. There is a need for a deeper theological focus where we are giving and receiving from each other, recognizing different gifts and in order to achieve that we need to be much more relational and culturally aware.”



“Within the Member Churches there is still huge positive energy for the *Charta Oecumenica* and CEC needs to celebrate what has been achieved. However, there are also huge issues around the different denominations, between big churches and small churches.” The report from the groups showed that there is a need to focus on the environment or on poverty within our own churches, that there is a desire for more sharing around the sacraments of the churches and for better dialogue with other faith communities. Also, the participants recognised that Europe is no longer a “white continent”, emphasizing the need for a real positive engagement with migration issues.



The European churches have been urged to speak up about justice issues (particularly in the Middle East). The Assembly expressed their profound commitment to the European project as well as to CEC's work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. At the same time CEC needs to think about its people and that means caring for those who are dispossessed, including the marginalized or isolated.

“However we view this”, Canon Bob Fyffe concluded, “there is a strong sense that we are in a challenging moment in the life of CEC. Whether we are white or black, which ever culture we come from, whether we are part of a family or a church congregation, we bring

our own strengths and our gifts and, as we do that, we walk together in fellowship, sharing Christ's cross.”

Having shared their hopes and visions for the future, the Assembly gave a mandate to the newly elected Working Group and Central Committee to take forward their recommendations and undertake the necessary revisions so that CEC stands in service of its Member Churches as a forum for mutual learning and bridge-building, an advocate for Christian values in the processes of European institutions, a common voice of the Member Churches as well as a platform for dialogue, and as a diverse community sharing its life with migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities.

“Hand in Hand”: Vision and Work Priorities from a Youth Perspective

Young delegates at the Assembly brought their vision for CEC for the next years, which was prepared during their pre-assembly meeting in May/June 2009. Their statement called “Hand in Hand” affirmed the importance of maintaining the unity of CEC’s Member Churches. The young delegates hope for a strong sense of unity which celebrates the rich diversity of Christian traditions. They also “believe that sharing our experiences through dialogue is at the heart of ecumenical life. This dialogue should be patient, respectful and open-minded, allowing space both for genuine expression and acceptance of diversity.”

The youth statement strengthened the need for CEC to take action: “We believe that CEC, along with its Member Churches, can use its experience of dialogue to contribute to building an open, just, peaceful and sustainable society. Churches are powerful bodies for transforming society because they encompass such a wide sector of Europe’s population.”

Young delegates also recognized the importance of building a welcoming and inclusive community which embraces the diversity of its members. “We look towards a future where everybody is made welcome by the wider

community of the church, regardless of gender, ethnicity, denomination, age or position in the church. We see Europe as such a welcoming community, open to the rest of the world.”



The youth vision is of “a community where people from all backgrounds are constantly in contact to learn, work, live and worship together. CEC can be active in building such networks of contact which encompass the whole world. CEC can help to build such a community through training and the use of social media, as well as through organizing face-to-face encounters.”



Discussing key issues related to the future strategic policy of CEC

After having reflected on a vision for the future of the organization, the Assembly participants spent a day discussing key issues related to the future strategic policy of CEC.



Refugee protection, the ethics of investment, the future of mission, social justice, churches' dialogue with the European Institutions, globalization, human rights and religious freedom, and spirituality were just some of the topics under discussion in a series of 15 workshops on a day when the Assembly's debates were themed around the future work priorities for CEC.

Bishop Ioannis of Thermopylae (Church of Greece), speaking in the workshop on **Refugee Protection** said: "Our Lord Jesus Christ was born our refugee. Our scriptural history begins with the programme of refugees."



Two matters were at the centre of a brief but fruitful debate in the **Human rights** workshop: the role of Human Rights in the EU Lisbon Treaty and the reaction and consequences of the Russian Orthodox Church on Human Rights. The need to further CEC work on Human Rights, particularly through a specific working group, was expressed by many participants. In addition, Orthodox participants expressed their concerns about the right to keep the memory of the tradition of Churches in areas where the memory of their historical presence is in danger for political reasons as places of worship, holy sites and religious monuments.

"In London, the Methodist Church is a black majority church." This was the news from the President of the British Methodist Conference, the Rev. David Gamble, who was a delegate to the Assembly. He was participating in a workshop called "Hope for Unity – Uniting in Diversity, being church together with **migrant, black and ethnic minority churches**." President Gamble went on to say that the multicultural experience of Methodism in Britain had been very positive.

Meanwhile, other delegates were learning about the church and **socially responsible investment** policies. Although many churches work for causes of justice, financial reserves or pension plans can perpetuate injustice.

"Mission has to be one of the strategic objectives of CEC." With this widely expressed and commonly accepted recommendation, the discussion on "Witnessing to Christ in Europe today" began in the workshop on European mission organized by the Churches in Dialogue Commission of CEC. Participants acknowledged that regardless of the diverse understandings and aspects of mission around the churches in Europe, mission is always a part of our identity-preaching and living the Gospel, and a priority for many CEC Member Churches. Understanding mission as the very



nature of the church, thus a priority to all, delegates suggested that CEC should be the platform where Member Churches share their experiences, ideas and resources in order to strengthen, inspire and motivate each other in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. To this end, it was suggested that the mission desk should be strengthened so as to enable and facilitate the exchange of experiences/understandings of mission and the cooperation on our common objective: to experience anew the power of the Gospel, which transcends all barriers and can reach even human beings who have distanced themselves from the Church.

Social Justice was debated by some of the participants who identified various social challenges like migration, discrimination, inequality, difficult access to health care and social services or unemployment. The workshop concluded that “churches have an important task to advocate for the people and to build people up; it means to enable them to speak up for themselves, especially those who are marginalized, excluded and discriminated.” Discussing the role of CEC in the field of social justice, the participants recommended that “CEC support churches to get access to public funding for their work.”

CEC also has an essential advocacy task towards the **European Institutions** and other relevant bodies. “It shall empower people and churches to work towards a human, social conscious Europe, in which human rights and the basic values of peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, participation and solidarity prevail (*Charta Oecumenica*). In order to achieve this, CEC needs to be a European platform for networking and capacity building for the churches.”

The **Spirituality** workshop provided an opportunity for members of various churches to compare their approaches to worship. Under the guidance of the moderator Alina Patru from the Romanian Orthodox Church,

five presenters explained the liturgical practices of the Eastern Orthodox, Waldensian, Hussite, Lutheran and Baptist churches in Europe. Hana Tonzarova-Skorepova, a Hussite pastor from the Czech Republic, depicted services of Word and sacrament as a “proclamation of the Gospel for the transformation of the community.”



German Lutheran professor Reinhold Frieling, a former moderator of the dialogue commission, argued that common prayer must be followed by mission: leitourgia (worship) is inextricably linked to martyria (witness), diakonia (ministries of service) and koinonia (communion in Christ). Georges Tsetsis of the Ecumenical Patriarchate warned that the so-called “open communion” permitted by some churches “gives a false impression of unity” and of the progress thus far achieved by ecumenical dialogue. Nevertheless, he said, “praying together is absolutely important” in an inter-confessional assembly, and “the unity of humankind is basic to the liturgies of both Chrysostom and Basil.”

Ideas generated in the workshops were reported back to the Assembly and its **Policy Reference Committee**. In a press conference, the Moderator of the Committee, OKRin Cordelia Kopsch (Evangelical Church in Germany) said: “CEC has to react to a new situation in Europe. Churches are longing for unity and experiencing diversity. We are focusing on commitment and trust, coherence and visibility, dialogue and the strengthening of relations, witness and responsibility.”



“Hearings” and “Agora” enriched the Assembly programme

Fourteen Hearings and many Agora stands enriched the Assembly content during the lunch and coffee breaks. Assembly hearings gave the opportunity to delegates and other participants to confer on important issues which churches in Europe share. The ‘**Agora**’ was the Assembly market place where delegations could display work and material from their home communities through stands and exhibitions. Participants evaluated the Agora as an excellent place for sharing information and experiences. Participants appreciated having the Agora close to the plenary hall, thus being able to visit this during the breaks. There could have been more about CEC itself (pictures, names, presentation of staff, committees, etc).

“Churches have a responsibility to speak about ethical values and the economy.” This was a key message arising from the hearing on the **Globalisation and Financial Crises**. Prof. Christoph Stückelberger was the expert speaker at the hearing. He outlined a series of spiritual and ethical challenges that the current financial crisis has presented, and urged European Churches to contribute to a debate to help to re-orientate the economic order to be faithful to Christian values. Prof. Stückelberger, who is the Executive Director and Founder of Globoethics.net in Geneva, Switzerland, said: “The financial crisis is also an ethical crisis. It is a crisis of trust and a crisis of values. Credit is based on credibility. Credibility is based on credo, the values of people and institutions.”

People have for ages sought to improve the human condition with the help of technology. Due to recent discoveries, the idea of significantly modifying the human body is no longer mere science fiction. “**Human enhancement**” is about trying to make changes to human bodies – characteristics, abilities, emotions and capacities - beyond what we regard as normal. A hearing on this topic was held during the CEC Assembly. The examples given included chemicals to enhance performance, mood or cognition; functional

implants like brain-computer chip links; changes to body cells and systems; and life extension. “Human enhancement” raises deep theological and ethical issues about our humanity, our societies and our human destiny.

Delegates debated scientific and theological issues relating to the environment during an Assembly hearing on the issue of “**Churches and Climate Change**.” Mr John Taroanui Doom, an observer from the World Council of Churches (Ma’ohi Protestant Church, French Polynesia) spoke of the urgency of the situation facing his region with regards to the changes in the climate. Melting ice caps are causing the sea levels to rise, which is flooding Pacific islands in countries such as Kiribati and Tuvalu. He said that churches must take action in the face of climate change. Rev. Dr Peter Pavlovic agreed, saying: “We have to act, not only as individuals but also as communities.”

“We are leaving behind the old concept of communication as simply a process of transmission and moving into a new thinking of communication as a mutual process for building community.” The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) organised a Hearing called “**Communication as a spider in the web called church**.”

In relation to the churches, it is important to create a meaningful community which communicates accurately and in a timely manner in and through all levels. This challenges us to break new ground and reconsider the tensions between transmission, proclamation and dialogue; to reconsider and re-order the whole process of communication within the Church itself. Mutual process communication is one core pillar of the Church, the “spider” weaving in and out of our churches refining communication processes’ and tools, and helping the decision making bodies in the churches by processing information that is accurate, timely, accessible and transparent.



CEC celebrating 50 years of European Ecumenism

The European ecumenical movement marked 50 years of the Conference of European Churches in 2009. The celebratory event took place as part of the Assembly in Lyon. The first CEC Assembly was held in January 1959 in Nyborg, Denmark. President of CEC, the Rev. Jean Arnold de Clermont said that 50 years represents a jubilee when debts are forgiven. He said: "We look to the future, with our experience and our wisdom."



The pioneers, founder members and leaders of the organisation over five decades, including the first General Secretary Rev. Glen Garfield Williams were remembered in the event. The celebration included music, drama, and stories from people involved with CEC through the years (Dr Alexandros Papaderos, Dean John Arnold, Ms Marjolaine Chevallier and Rev. Antje Heider-Rottwilm). Also present was former CEC President, Metropolitan J  r  mie of Switzerland along with two former General Secretaries, Mr Jean Fischer and Rev. Keith Clements. A keynote address by the Ecumenical Patriarch His All Holiness Bartholomew I called for greater ecumenical partnership and church unity.

The celebration event included a moment marking the integration process of CEC and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME). Rev. Arlington Trotman, the Moderator of CCME and one of the Co-Moderators of the 13th Assembly said: "We remain joyful at working through CEC and through the Member Churches on this leading issue in Europe." The General Secretary of

CCME, Ms Doris Peschke added that the integration process would bring a new challenge to CEC.

His All Holiness Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, proposed "a better organized and structured way of cooperation" between Roman Catholics and some 120 Orthodox, Old Catholic, Anglican and Protestant churches that are members of CEC.

Patriarch Bartholomew warned that "procrastination cannot be justified. On the contrary, the collaboration between our churches and their cooperation with the European leaders active in the fields of politics, the economy and society is essential and urgent." Missing a united witness, Europeans will find themselves "without Christian spiritual values which touch on everything concerning the support and protection of human beings and their identity."



The Ecumenical Patriarch recalled that his predecessors have publicly encouraged the Roman Catholic Church to join CEC since 1979. Admitting that "such a step is not a simple matter", His All Holiness argued for "a conference of all the European churches."

Emphasizing that the Lord himself "enjoins us to do everything in our power to re-establish full communion between the Christian churches in Europe", the Ecumenical Patriarch reaffirmed the Orthodox commitment to seeking Christian



unity in faith and action. He praised the work of CEC and the European conference of Catholic bishops in adopting the *Charta Oecumenica*, an agreement on means of cooperation among all churches. However, he conceded that the document's recommendations are little-known at the congregational level and need to be communicated more broadly.

CEC awarded Youth Theological Essay Prizes during its 50th Celebration

In the context of the 13th Assembly CEC launched a Youth Theological Essay Competition. The entrants were asked to write a 2 page essay on the relevance of hope in Europe today, with reference to the CEC Assembly theme, "Called to one hope in Christ." (cfr. Eph. 4.4.) The essays addressed the question of what it means to live as people of hope in the Europe of today and highlighted the ecumenical dimension of Christianity. The essays were written in English, French and German, and entries were invited from young people from across Europe and beyond.

The winners were invited to the Assembly in Lyon to be awarded during the 50th CEC anniversary celebration. **The first prize** was awarded to Claire Sixt-Gateuille, a young pastor in the Reformed Church of France. She is 28 years old, and lives in Tarbes. Her essay was entitled "La vocation de l'espérance" and spoke of Hope in Christ in relation to calling, unity, love, and action. Her beautifully illus-

trated and particularly insightful exploration was also presented to the Assembly delegates during the "Hope" day.



The second prize was awarded to Peter Anthony, a priest of the Church of England. He is 29 years old, and lives in London. His essay was entitled "Hope: mystery and communion". The judges praised his essay in particular for its effective combination of current experience and biblical exegesis, and for its strong ecumenical perspective. **The third prize** was awarded to Joshua Searle from Northern Ireland, member of the Northumbria Community. He is 24 years old, and lives in Belfast. His essay was entitled "Called in One Hope: A Biblical vision of Hope for twenty-first century Europe". Written with great verve, his essay succeeded in maintaining a broad perspective while clearly focused on Europe, and was supported by a variety of secondary sources.





European Churches speak with one voice on critical issues

The Public Issues Committee in Lyon worked hard to prepare a series of statements which were adopted by the Assembly. Six issues, covering migration, climate change, economics, nuclear disarmament, human rights and the plight of Roma people in Europe were addressed in statements overwhelmingly endorsed by delegates at the Assembly.

“Called to value migrant people” was the first statement to be agreed upon during the Assembly’s final day of business. “In recent years there has been an alarming increase in racism and in acts of violence against migrants and ethnic minorities in Europe.” The statement encouraged CEC’s Member Churches to denounce acts of racial discrimination and institutional racism and to ask public authorities to ensure the basic human rights of undocumented migrants, particularly those in detention.

Reflecting on the global recession, the Assembly adopted a statement **“Called to promote ethical principles in financial and economic structures.”** It spoke about the financial crisis which “calls into question many basic assumptions about the economic order that have been unexamined for decades. The substance of the current crisis is not, however, limited to the realm of economics... In revealing the scale and impact of economic factors on human life, the crisis has also highlighted its significant ethical and spiritual dimensions.” The statement also said: “Prosperity built on the levels and patterns of debt of recent years cannot be accounted as real prosperity. We have heard little from responsible decision-makers that indicates an intention to address in a fundamental way these structures of debt within the global financial system that led to the current crisis.” The statement encouraged the churches of Europe to promote examples of faith-based economic praxis, such as fair trade, international debt relief and interest free credit schemes.

The Assembly also adopted **“Called to strengthen human rights, religious freedom and relationships.”** This statement outlined the context of an increasingly religiously, ethnically and linguistically diverse Europe: “The love of God for the world (John 3:16) and its people is expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and is at the heart of the Churches’ commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to their open relationship with people of other religions within and beyond Europe.” The churches agreed to increase participation in inter-religious dialogue and to deepen their understanding of the concepts of human rights and religious freedoms.



Climate change and environmental concerns were addressed in the statement **“Called to be a better stewardship of creation.”** Anticipating the international summit meetings on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the autumn the statement says: “Amongst the signs of hope and opportunity that we discern in facing this serious challenge to God’s good creation are the forthcoming UN climate change conference in September 2009 and the subsequent world conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.” The churches committed themselves to greater involvement in promoting the “economy of enough” and lifestyles which are sustainable. They have called on governments to adopt precise and binding commitments within specified timetables for the reduction in the causes of climate change at the Copenhagen summit.



“Called to a world free of nuclear weapons” strongly endorses the call from President Barack Obama for global nuclear disarmament. The churches urged all nuclear weapons states to refrain from modernization of nuclear weapons, and to set a schedule for dismantling existing arsenals. The statement concluded: “In 1989, it was people that ended the Cold War. Today, it may be people that end the threat of nuclear catastrophe.”



The final statement, **“Called to stand in solidarity with the Roma minority in Europe”** was concerned with the deteriorating situation of Roma, Sinti and travellers’ communities: “The social exclusion of the largest European ethnic minority is severely exacerbated by increasing racist violence of the past years.” The statement called on governments across Europe to do more to protect Roma communities and do more to promote their inclusion.

Report of the Assembly finance committee

The financial report of the Assembly was approved on the afternoon of Monday 20 July. This decision followed lengthy discussion and a series of votes amending one sentence dealing with consequences for Member Churches that fail to meet minimum standards for financial support of the Conference of European Churches. One practical dimension of this measure applies to bodies like the Russian Orthodox Church, which has suspended its membership pending the

outcome of negotiations over the standing of Estonian Orthodox communities in CEC.

The language of the report as originally proposed contained a recommendation that representatives of churches neglecting the minimum standard for contributions would be denied the right to vote, would not be invited to participate in CEC-sponsored events and would not receive subsidies from CEC for travel or lodging expenses.

Elizabeth Fisher, then moderator of CEC’s Churches in Dialogue Commission, moved an amendment deleting the refusal to extend invitations to CEC-sponsored events. She argued that dialogue was an essential part of the ecumenical vocation and that no church should be banned from the prospect of such engagement. After complex deliberations, the assembly acted to remove the clause on invitations. Assembly advisors also warned that the proposed denial of the right to vote faces constitutional obstacles and is a matter that must be referred to CEC’s Central Committee.



The financial report also called for careful monitoring of CEC’s budget in light of the global financial crisis and the expenditures arising from the Lyon Assembly. The report underlined a stipulation in planning for a special constitutional assembly in 2013 that such a meeting is contingent on CEC leadership identifying sources of funds to support it.



CEC New Central Committee

The New Central Committee	
<p>Central East</p> <p>Ms. Alina Patru, Orthodox, Romania Ms. Katarena Dekanovska, Hussite, Czech Republic Ms. Krisztina Rajos, Reformed, Hungary H.E. Irineu of Oltenia, Orthodox, Romania Dr. Joanna Mizgala, Reformed, Poland Ms. Julija Vidovic, Orthodox, Serbia Rev. Dr. Andrzej Kuzma, Orthodox, Poland H.G. Grigorije of Zahum-Herzegovina, Orthodox, Serbia</p>	<p>North West</p> <p>Ms. Anthea Cox, Methodist, Great Britain Prof. Dr Gocs Minderman, Remonstrant, Netherlands Very Rev. Dr Sheilagh Kesting, Reformed/Presbyterian, Great Britain Rev. Arjan Plaisier, United, Netherlands Apostle Adejare Oyewole, Council Of African & Carib. Churches, Great Britain Bishop Christopher Hill, Anglican, Great Britain</p>
<p>Central West</p> <p>OKRin Dine Fecht, Lutheran, Germany OKRin Cordelia Kopsch, United, Germany Bishop Frank Otfried July, United, Germany Rev. Thomas Wipf, Reformed, Switzerland Pfarrer Mag. Thomas Hennefeld, Lutheran, Austria Pastorin Silke Tosch, Baptist, Germany Ms. Carol Soland Faessli, Old Catholic, Switzerland</p>	<p>South</p> <p>Mr. Edouard Kanza Kibongui, Baptist, Italy Bishop Sifredo Teixeira, Methodist, Portugal Rev. Claire Sixt-Gateuille, Reformed, France</p>
<p>Nordic Baltic</p> <p>Very Rev. Karin Burstrand, Lutheran, Sweden Rev. Elise Sandnes, Lutheran, Norway Very Rev. Rauno Pietarinen, Orthodox, Finland Rev. Peeter Kaldur, Lutheran, Estonia Mr. Erlend Rogne, Lutheran, Norway Rev. Tapani Rantala, Lutheran, Finland Rev. Mette Ladefoged, Lutheran, Denmark</p>	<p>South East</p> <p>Prof. Dr. Marina Kolovopoulou, Orthodox, Greece H.G. Porphyrios of Neapolis, Orthodox, Cyprus Metropolitan H.E. Athanasios of Achaia, Orthodox, Greece Ms. Sonila Dedja, Orthodox, Albania Rev. Dimitrios Boukis, Reformed, Greece H.E. Michael of Austria, Orthodox, Ecumenical Patriarchate H.E. Emmanuel of France, Orthodox, Ecumenical Patriarchate H.E. Gennadios of Sassima, Orthodox, Ecumenical Patriarchate</p>
	<p>East</p> <p>Archimandrite Hovakim Manukyan, Armenian Apostolic, Armenia</p>

On the final day of the 13th Assembly the CEC delegates agreed on the names which constitute the new 40-member Central Committee. Earlier in the Assembly, delegates had asked that the Central Committee represent the diversity of Christianity in Europe, and for it to include a balance of lay, female, youth and ethnic minority members.

The new Central Committee has 17 women and 23 men, which achieves the target of at least 40% from one gender stated in CEC's

legal framework. However the targets for lay / clergy balance were not reached, as there are 28 clergy and only 12 lay people. The target of at least 20% young people was also not achieved either and only six people under 30 years of age serve on the new Central Committee. However, the Central Committee includes two representatives from migrant churches or from an ethnic minority – Mr Edouard Kanza Kibongui (Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy) and Apostle Adejare Oyewole (Council of African and Caribbean Churches in the UK).





“Living and Acting together as Churches in Europe – Future perspectives for the work of CEC”

After a long process which included the consultation with Member Churches on the future priorities of CEC and the work of an Initial Policy Reference group to bring a first draft to the Assembly, the delegates adopted during the final plenary of the meeting an Assembly Policy Reference Report.



“Despite all visible diversity, the longing for ‘visible unity’ seems to be a hope which is still on the agenda.” The report of the Policy Reference Committee recommended that the CEC commissions engage one another in a more intentionally interactive way “with a wider mix of people to ensure that academic theology, socio-ethical expertise and experiences with church leaders are brought together.”

Among the specific directions affirmed in the policy report were the following steps:

- CEC must find effective means of working that strengthen commitment and trust within its own organisation and among its Member Churches.
- CEC should identify no more than three strategic objectives to guide its work during the next several years.

- CEC is compelled to “set up strategic guidelines for internal and external communication and ensure a coherent and adequate communication infrastructure.”
- CEC shall continue to be an instrument of the churches for addressing European and global concerns in cooperation with partner organisations.
- CEC is called to facilitate agreements and consensus statements among churches and specifically to “work with the *Charta Ecumenica* as a fundamental achievement in the life of CEC, reaffirming the implementation of its commitments, with priority given especially to the mutual recognition of baptism” among the various Christian confessions.



The report of the policy reference committee concluded with a series of affirmations recognizing CEC as a forum for mutual learning and bridge-building, an advocate for Christian values in the processes of European institutions, a common voice of Member Churches as well as a platform for dialogue, and finally as a diverse community sharing its life with migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities.



“Called to One Hope in Christ” – Conclusions of a six day Assembly

“This is an assembly that has been concentrating very hard on the issues,” said Dr. Alison Elliot, moderator of the 13th CEC Assembly. The moderator saw great promise in the integration of the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) into CEC, calling it a “main theme” throughout the assembly. “There has been some anxiety” among long-time participants in CCME at the prospect of continuing reorganization within CEC, she continued, “but now we are all on a journey together.”

The moderator expressed disappointment that the newly elected central committee of CEC numbers only twelve lay people among its 40 members. “We would hope to improve on that in the future,” she added, noting that it is difficult for “people with a different day-job” than church employment to find time for meetings of such a governing body. “This extends to young people, too,” she said, though she was pleased to see that the six youth elected to the central committee represent a “number that is creeping up” at 15 % of the committee’s membership. “We need to look at how the central committee works,” she concluded, “to discover how people with a wider range of experience may be included.”

Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont, the outgoing president of CEC, urged the Central Committee to focus its attention on preparation of a joint meeting with the steering committee of the Roman Catholic bishops’ conference in Europe (CCEE). He described this as an opportunity to explore the formation of “a single voice of Christians in Europe.” Rev. de Clermont added, “It is possible to have a common voice even when there is a deep state of tension ethically.”

A radical vision for the church where all are welcome and equal was proclaimed by the Very Rev. Margarethe Isberg, Dean of Västerås (Church of Sweden) and outgoing deputy vice-president of CEC, at the closing service of the Assembly. The Sending Service began with a joyful processional song

celebrating the unity of all Christians. Echoing the theme of Bishop Wolfgang Huber’s bible study earlier in the Assembly, the song included the lines “There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, there is one God, above all and in all.”



Dean Isberg’s sermon was based on the prophecy of Jeremiah, chapter 31 verses 31-34. “The way a society treats the earth often correlates with the way it treats other oppressed groups. Traditionally women are linked with the earth as subordinate to men. Jeremiah’s words challenge this assumption.”

In giving thanks about the work of the Assembly, Dean Isberg said it was important to look to the future, especially when reflecting on the Assembly theme, “Called to One Hope in Christ.” “Christ is coming from the future and meets us as the God who creates, reconciles and renews life...Christ lives in the future and from there he comes to meet us when we live with our hopes set forward.”

In conclusion, she said that a Christian view of humanity maintains that all people are created equal and are of equal value. The churches have a vision for a society where all have the opportunity to fulfill our potentials as human beings. The upbeat Sending Service concluded with a blessing for the 800 participants, delegates, staff, stewards and others who had gathered for the 13th CEC Assembly.



Worship at the Assembly



The Assembly opened with the Gathering Service and closed with the Sending Service. The names of both services emphasized that we came together and went back to our won churches in our countries, and reminded us that God was active not just during the days of the Assembly, but also in gathering us together and sending us on our way.

Each day's work hung on a framework of regular prayer which gave us a specific opportunity to offer up to God all that we did, all that we heard, and all that we decided.

- Morning Prayer was offered in a different tradition with people of all confessions taking part;
- Midday Prayer called us to pause in the middle of our busy schedules and to pray for peace, God's peace for the world;
- Evening Prayer was offered by members of the local churches and on the Saturday by the Taizé community;

- Night Prayer provided an opportunity to reflect upon the day and see God's blessing for a good night's rest;
- Sunday morning found everyone accepting invitations from local churches to join with them in worship and sharing lunch.

All prayers at the Assembly were prepared by an Assembly Worship Committee drawn from different churches and countries. The Assembly Hymnbook, *Gloria Deo*, included 53 songs from a wide variety of sources and traditions, some newly composed and some sung in worship over many years. All of the Assembly prayers and worship were enhanced by a choir made up of youth from Denmark and France.

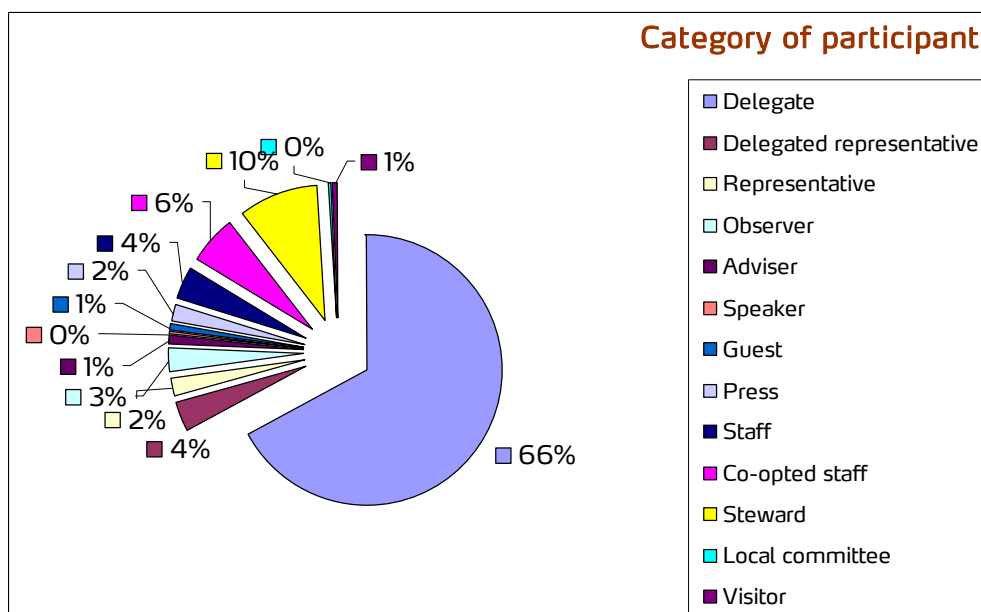




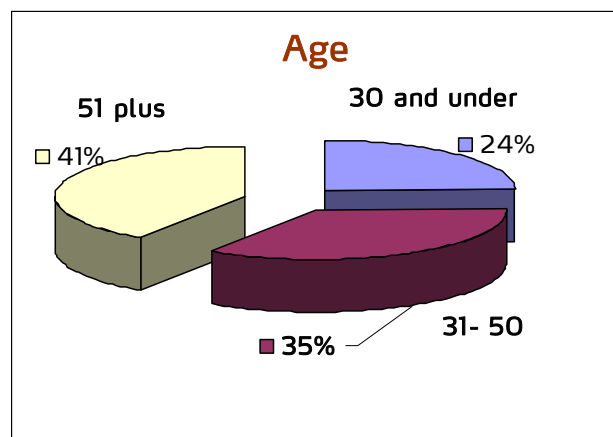
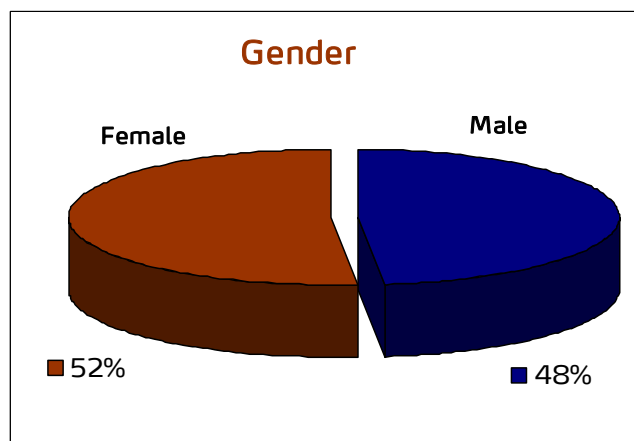
A brief evaluation

The evaluation of the 13th CEC Assembly started already in Lyon on the last day of the assembly when participants filled in the distributed evaluation forms and returned them to the Assembly office. An online evaluation process took place from September – October 2009. The following statistics and comments represent a summary of the two processes brought together.

There were 324 participants taking part in the evaluation process for the Lyon Assembly. 66% of those participating in the evaluation process were delegates in the Assembly. 10 % were staff and co-opted staff, 10% stewards and 4% delegated representatives.



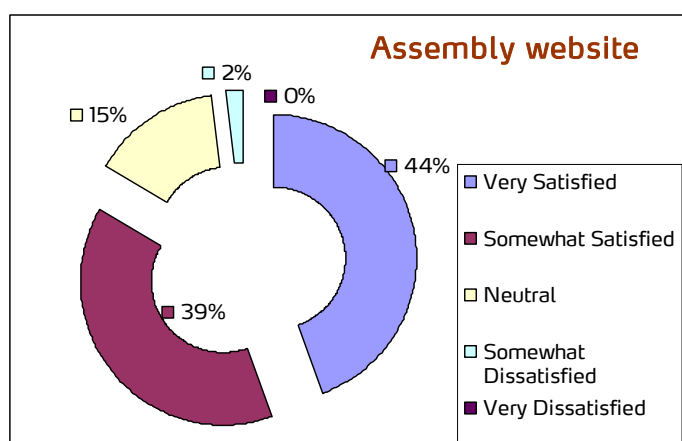
The gender and age representation in the evaluation process was rather balanced:





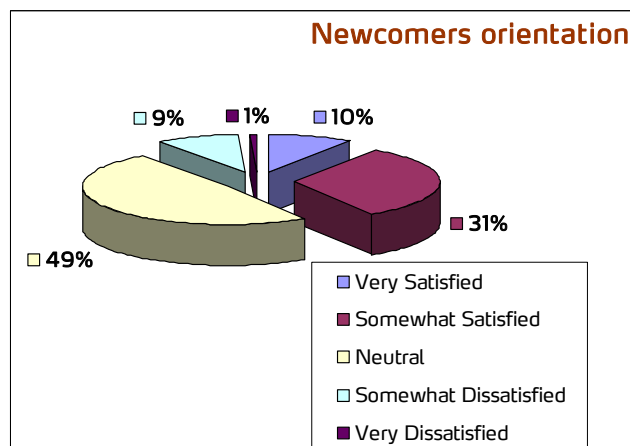
The 13th CEC Assembly did not just start on the 15th July. There was an entire process of preparation and consultation in view of the Assembly. For this process the organizers used various tools like the Assembly website and online registration which were evaluated by the participants. The following graphics indicate the overall satisfaction with the process towards the Assembly. Some of the

participants suggested that reports and motions should be prepared and made available before the actual Assembly. The time for the Assembly is too short in order to deal with all the business required by the constitution. Participants in the evaluation considered that the lists of proposed committees could have been prepared beforehand as well as some of the reports.



83 % of the participants in the evaluation were satisfied with the shape and content of the Assembly website. These considered that the website helped the delegates prepare for the Assembly, that it was clear and accurate and it gave enough information both logistical and content wise. It was also seen as an important tool in the consultation process, having published all the comments and responses from the Member Churches with regards to the Assembly and the future of CEC. It was suggested that all Assembly documents should be posted on the website so that paper is not wasted.

41 % of the participants having evaluated the Assembly appreciated the Newcomers' Orientation session and were satisfied with its content. Some would have wanted to better understand the structure of CEC during this session and the standing orders of the Assembly. Others would have wanted to get more information on the voting procedures and most of all a guide to how to proceed in order to make your voice heard during the Assembly.

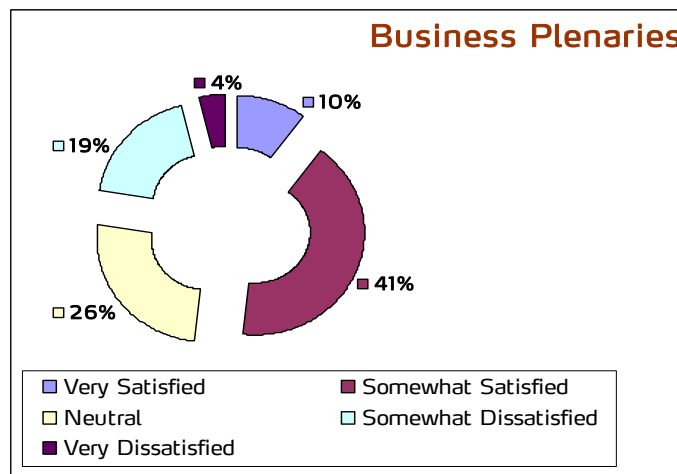


From an organizational point of view, the participants were satisfied with the Assembly plenaries. The business plenaries were sometimes poorly timed. Many participants were dissatisfied with the change of Agenda and programme already on the first day. These changes made the Assembly too political and ruined the timing of the entire assembly. The thematic plenaries were good but there were too many presentations. Some regretted that small group discussions were sacrificed by speakers overextending their allocated time.



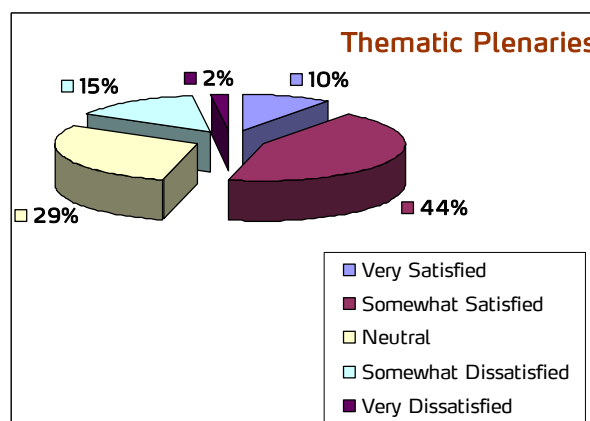
Given the time limit of the Assembly, it did cover well the subjects /themes set before it. It was a pity that the thematic plenary sessions have been shortened because of the business plenary. The changes in the programme affected its content and made it too political. Many found it difficult to access the CEC Constitution and considered that the Standing orders are made for a much longer Assembly. CEC needs to find a way to function better. If it continues with all the restructuring and political problems there will never be enough time to discuss ecumenism.

“The entire *Vision day* was sacrificed to the discussion of one motion. The structural and political discussions should have taken place after the presentations and group work on vision. Structural discussions should follow content oriented discussions and not vice-versa. It was a pity that the day on Vision was completely side-tracked by extended business plenaries and structural matters. A day of Vision was crucial for this Assembly.” Delegates appreciated the possibility to contribute in the consultation process which unfortunately not all Churches took advantage of. The hopes and aims of the Future Conference should have been mirrored more in the Assembly.



Many participants evaluating the Assembly complimented the moderators as very effective, inclusive, hard working and friendly.

The programme was very ambitious and there was not enough free time. The participants would have appreciated more time for the group work sessions and more free time to visit Lyon. There was not enough time to get to know each other in the beginning and not enough space in agenda for sharing issues for the future of CEC.



The entire process for the election of the Central Committee was too complicated and took too much time. There are too many constraints when it comes to balances and no information with regards to the competence, qualifications, experience and motivation of each candidate.

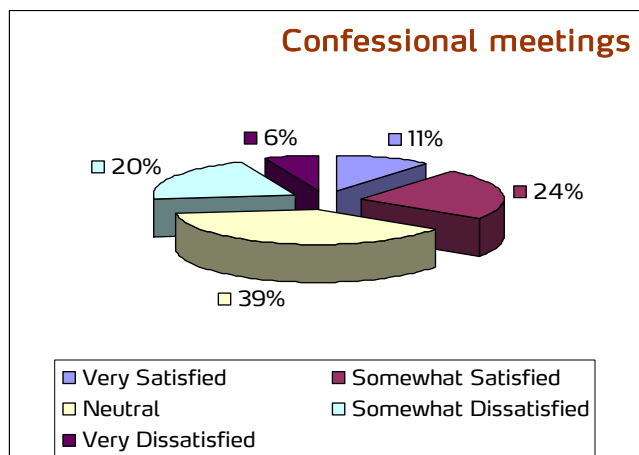
63 % of the evaluators were satisfied with the **thematic workshops**. Some would have appreciated more interaction and participation. More materials could have been provided in advance and some of the workshops could have been organized in a more creative way. The participants appreciated the opportunity to learn from the others while working in the smaller groups. The Hearings were rather short and participants did not manage to interact or respond.



The workshops were very useful and essential. “We have done a lot of work, sharing experiences and local situations, as well as very practical suggestions for the future. Working groups with free and in depth discussion are very important.

The **Agora** was excellent. It could have been bigger. Participants appreciated having the Agora close to the plenary hall, thus being able to visit this during the breaks. There could have been more about CEC itself (pictures, names, presentation of staff, committees, etc).

The **inter-confessional meetings** at lunch time were not appropriate. It was appreciated by many. There were comments about the Protestant meeting which was too large and it was felt like any other plenary session with not much interaction.

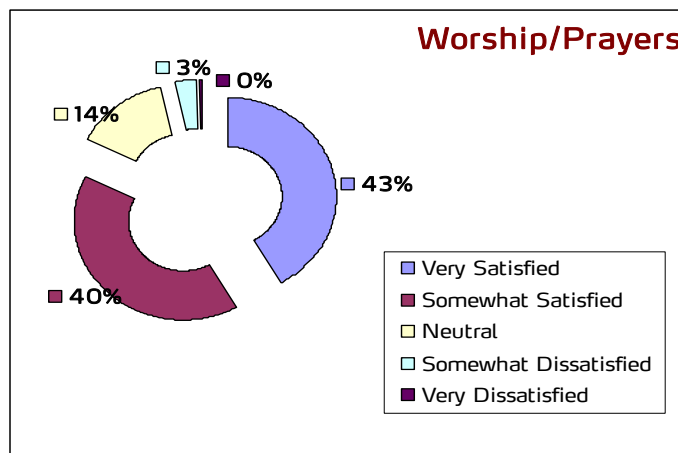


“The Assembly worship was beautiful. It was impressive in all its forms. Ecumenical worship was inspiring and stimulating.” Sharing worship with the natives; praying, celebrating, singing, worshipping together were highlights of the Assembly.” The Worship Committee was very good and cooperated extremely well.

While it was “good to meet the CEC staff and to get to know and see a bit of the CEC history”, the anniversary evening was ruined by the length and content of its second part. The celebration of 50 years of CEC was excellent up to the end of the first part.

The success of the first part presenting the history of CEC with photos and good speakers and presenting the staff of CEC was taken over by the inappropriate and very long “Calvin” theatre play. This second part disappointed not only through its content, by the length of the play did not allow participants to have dinner or refreshments throughout the evening. 47% of the participants evaluating this were satisfied with the afternoon. Many participants

83% of the participants appreciated the **worship** life of the Assembly in Lyon. Some would have preferred more moments of prayer and there were comments about the early schedule of the morning prayers. The choir was considered excellent. The Assembly could have offered more time for personal encounters through Bible study groups. “We could have been more spiritual during the business (e.g. silent before significant votes).” “Transmission of faith was neglected - the Assembly was too much oriented towards ethics and politics. Bible studies in small groups would be unifying.”



appreciated the materials presented and the content of the history part. The “Calvin” theatre production was considered too long and some of its content was not appropriate in the framework of a European Ecumenical gathering. If the Sunday evening celebration had ended after the break, it would have been excellent: “The Anniversary was both wonderful and dreadful. I so enjoyed the presentations yet found the length of the play and the translation very trying.”



In terms of the Assembly content, the participants in the evaluation process made comments about the very political aspect of the Assembly. Especially newcomers were overwhelmed by the long debates about CEC's structures: "It was disappointed with the lack of vision, purpose and direction; the amount of irrelevant "politics" played out on the floor. This is an incredible forum for real unity and engagement with the real issues that matter when we get home to our parishes. But this opportunity was missed in the plenaries."

Many participants felt that the changes made to the programme during the Assembly itself changed the entire dynamic of the meeting: "Due to a very long debate on Friday, the opportunity to work in small groups was really compromised beyond what was reasonable." The "vision day" became a "CEC structures day" with no real discussion about the mission and the goals that CEC will have in the future. "There is too much emphasis on the structures of CEC and church politics rather than on the spirituality and faith that brings the churches together in a single organization"

Asked if the Assembly fulfilled their expectations, participants answered that they had hoped the meeting to give more space for reflection on the mission of CEC, the vision for the future and that "one hope in Christ." "The clear vision of the Planning committee for greater participation in the plenary sessions was not fully achieved, particularly in the cancelled sessions on Friday; the result was an Assembly that was overly dominated with concerns about structures and politics."

"I expected more thematic discussions in the plenaries, especially on the vision day." The fact that the Assembly took up a lot of structural discussions about CEC and it all became very political, gave many participants the feeling that there was no ecumenical atmosphere. "There was too much time spent on various motions and amendments and too little time talking about the future of ecumenism."

At the same time, many participants realized that it was the structure of the Assembly itself

that made it difficult to handle: "I would propose to keep business meetings and general debates on content apart. There was much confusion in the assembly on procedure and a lack of time for business issues. Moreover the self understanding of the assembly is unclear! Synod or church day?"

CEC needs to seriously revise its structures and Legal texts. The structures of CEC as well as the Standing orders of the Assembly have to be simplified. The Assembly spends way too much time discussing balances for the election of the Central Committee. "The procedure should be revised it should be more about participation and not about quotas."

"The Assembly shows that it is a very difficult task to lead the plurality of Christians to unity, especially when it comes to administrative tasks. I hope one day there would be an ecumenical atmosphere, free of church politics and other tensions but I guess that would be the moment we have found a true unity in Christ."

"A great deal of work goes into organizing an Assembly and many come to the meeting for the whole week with the hope of being envisioned and encouraged by testimonies of what God is doing in and through the European Churches. An outdated structure and highly political power-plays do not advance the cause of CEC. The power politics was the saddest part of the assembly."

"The CEC structures have to be simplified and the tasks given by the previous Assembly still have to be accomplished. I can only answer this question (satisfaction with the Assembly) once the decisions made at this Assembly have been implemented."

"The general evaluation of the Assembly is very good, although I think that with today's crisis CEC should have been more careful when financing the Assembly. Lots of expenses could have been avoided in terms of paper spent, spaces rented, meals and so on..." "The Assembly finances should have been secured long before the meeting took place. It will be very difficult for CEC to bear the deficit of the



Lyon Assembly. The choice of the Congress Center in Lyon as venue for the 13th CEC Assembly was not responsible for an organization like CEC. The Assembly Planning Committee did not seem to have been properly informed about the Assembly budget. The deficit should have appeared in the budget earlier in the preparatory process in order to deal with this.”

The participants were disappointed in the way finances of the Assembly were dealt with. “For such a large meeting fundraising is needed.”

When asked which were the most beneficial aspects of the Assembly, the participants in the evaluation process wrote about their networking experiences. “A CEC Assembly is first of all an ecumenical encounter and one of the main expectations participants have is meet people coming from different backgrounds, to get to know each other, to share experiences, to speak about their ecumenical activities, to make contacts. Having the opportunity to meet people of different traditions, cultural perspectives and mission understanding and interacting with them represents one of the most beneficial aspects of the Assembly for many participants. The 13th CEC Assembly offered more opportunity to meet migrants, to interact with people from minority churches and share experience in Christian witness.”

Many participants appreciated the fellowship and the time for reflection and prayer. Others were glad to have the possibility to hear people from small and large churches on an equal platform. It was educational to observe difficult business well dealt with. And the inter-action with fellow delegates was wonderful.

The 13th CEC Assembly was appreciated as a participatory meeting: “The real possibility for everybody to speak at one of the 3 microphones was the most beneficial.” The Lyon Assembly experience was a very rich one: “I learned a lot on European reality through Hearings, workshops and informal discussions. It also was a great spiritual experience such a variety of prayers, worship services and sacred music.”

The combination of “heavy” business plenaries together with reflections and informal meetings in the breaks was very beneficial. Participants felt they could express themselves in the plenaries and sharing experiences in the small groups added to the success of the Assembly.

“Learning about CEC, its past and history and getting to decide about its future priorities was very important to me.” “Working with great people and experiencing fellowship across denominations (through prayers), fellowship within delegations...”

Participants appreciated very much that CEC’s structural and financial problems were openly addressed and discussed. “We have a much deeper and better understanding of the structure and role of CEC as well as all the complicated relations among our various churches”

“As a young delegate, not previously engaged in ecumenical work, my whole world view expanded a lot, as a Christian and as participant of different decision-making processes in my community.”

“Our common hope in Christ has been expressed!” We realized that others in other churches do the same or share the same values and that gives us all the hope to continue in our work.”

The obvious desire of CEC to move forward together, to build a future full of hope and mobilize the Youth and the attention given to minority churches were appreciated.

“The presence of 300 delegates was poorly exploited: CEC needs to simplify its constitution for a better use of the effort of organizing such an Assembly and in order to favor exchange for a better mutual understanding.”

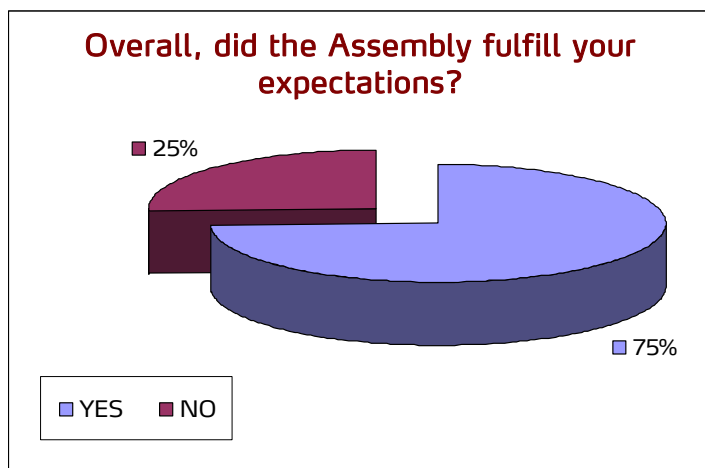
“There is hope for CEC with the start of a restructuring process, setting up the Revision Working Group and improving churches commitment to the ecumenical movement and CEC.” “The Assembly gave delegates the opportunity to revive CEC. We hope that this will have good outcomes, especially that there is now a plan how to proceed in renewing CEC,



its vision, tasks and structures.” It seemed that the Member Churches really took responsibility and said what they wanted from CEC.

“The discussions on Migration were beneficial. The integration of CCME in CEC is an impor-

tant step in CEC’s history. After 50 years of work in the service its Member Churches, CEC is now recognizing the need to take one step forward towards the integration of migrants and ethnic minorities”.



The 13th CEC Assembly has fulfilled the expectations of 75% of participants. Comments expressed appreciation for a “professional, well-run Assembly.” Many participants considered that it was all smoothly done, despite the difficult circumstances sometimes. “Wonderful event: an excellent organization, meaningful content and pertinent discussions leading to sustainable solutions for CEC’s problems.” “The Assembly fulfilled and overcame my expectations. It was my first CEC Assembly and I was able to gain a good sense of the totality of what CEC is about. I enjoyed the fellowship, solidarity and discussion with fellow Christians from Europe.”

“Actually, it was better than expected. The pedagogic was much better than earlier years (Graz, Trondheim, Sibiu). Still there could be even more work in small groups, less politics and more possibilities for participation and sharing. It is though to be regretted that the Russian Orthodox Church was not represented in the 13th CEC Assembly”

Thanks were extended to the competent moderators of the Assembly and to the staff, co-opted staff and stewards who managed an enormous amount of work which lead to a good organization of the Assembly.



Conclusions

Even before the launch of the consultation process in preparation of the 13th Assembly, CEC leadership started discussions about the need for a change in the functioning of the organisation. The entire process towards the Assembly was therefore an attempt to seek a common vision for CEC which would then drive change in the organisation. After the Future Conference, it was the consultation process with CEC Member Churches that underlined the urgency of a clear definition of CEC's role and responsibility in the future. Member Churches also expressed the need to strengthen CEC's visibility and to adapt itself to the new financial challenges and even more, the need to reorganize its structure and strengthen its internal cooperation.

Most people and organisations naturally resist change which is why processes driving change are usually very long and costly. The term “change” is often spoken about, yet the actual implementation of any restructuring or transformation process is a difficult matter.

An organization needs to undergo various steps in a restructuring process. One needs to establish a sense of urgency starting from the leadership and management and then transferred to staff and membership. Next steps consist of creating a vision to help direct the change effort and developing strategies for achieving that vision. Using every possible vehicle to communicate the new vision and strategies, is a critical step as the staff and membership will not act towards implementation unless they feel part of this process. The leadership needs to set the example for the employees to follow and empower them to act on the vision. Trust and good communication between members of the organisation – from leadership to management and staff are essential for any restructuring process. The moment the organisation starts planning for and creating visible improvements, the implementation becomes real, thus encouraging the staff and the membership to trust the process and be part of it. The last step involves sustaining momentum for change so that it will be carried to completion.

CEC has already taken some of these steps. The process before the Assembly created the sense of urgency among leadership, management and member churches. The Assembly was a good opportunity to create a common vision. And it had all the elements to do so. Partly this happened through the report of the Assembly Policy Reference Committee which was clear and concise. This report, “Living and acting together as Churches in Europe – future perspectives for the work of CEC”, not only sums up the results of the consultation process and those of the Assembly debates, it also gives directions for the future and concludes with a series of affirmations which define CEC and its vision.

At the same time, the Assembly gave mandate to a *Revision Working Group* “to carry out a revision of CEC as a whole, including a common purpose and vision and the setting of strategic goals and which structures would serve these goals in an optimal way and in accordance with the wishes and needs of the Member Churches. This revision should include all constitutional, legal and decision-making aspects deemed necessary”³.

After the Assembly, CEC is therefore dealing with two parallel processes: one by which staff is working towards the achievement of the future directions given by the Assembly Policy Reference Report and the other one by which the Revision Working Group is fulfilling its mandate, carrying out a revision of CEC as a whole. Both CEC staff and the working group are accountable to the Central Committee.

³ http://www.ccrevision.dk/fileadmin/filer/pdf/01_Motion_ADOPTED_Lyon_Assembly.pdf



In a sense, the CEC Assembly in Lyon let itself influenced by politics and allowed little space for the strengthening of CEC's ideology and the search of a future vision. This task was then left to the Revision Working Group. And it is an important task. An ideology, a strong culture, a vision in an organisation all represent the force for cooperation, for collegiality and consensus. A vision encourages members to look inwards toward a common core and helps an organisation manage contradiction and so to deal with change. What's more, an organisation with a strong culture can more easily reconcile opposing forces because what matters to the people ultimately is the organisation itself, more than any of its particular parts.

CEC needs that clear vision and strong culture which brings everyone together despite their differences. Most of the time ideology should be pulling things together in CEC, contained by healthy internal competition.

The 13th CEC Assembly only started the process by which these goals will be attained. It is important to remember that any change or restructuring process requires time, energy and finances and the expected benefits depend on the way implementation is managed.

CEC still has a long process in front of it with the Revision Working Group finalizing their work with the Constitutional Assembly in 2013. Management and staff need all the help there is to undergo this process. CEC needs to use every existing communication channel and opportunity to connect the realities of the staff and the Commissions with those of the Revision Working Group and the Central Committee. The key to this revision process is that all members of the organisation understand, appreciate, commit and try to make the effort happen. Trust and faith, communication, clarity and transparency are essential now as ever. With these, and the love we share as brothers and sisters in Christ, there is hope!

“There is hope in our struggle for truth and justice. There is hope when we resist all forms of violence and racism, when we defend the dignity of every human person. There is hope when we insist on the obligation for unselfish solidarity between people and peoples; when we fight for unfeigned respect for the creation. In the end, with the power of the crucified and risen Christ, to whom has been given “All authority in heaven and on earth” (Mt 28:18), truth, justice and love will prevail. And life will triumph over death”⁴.

⁴ “Called to One Hope in Christ”, Sermon for the Gathering Service of the 13th CEC Assembly, Archbishop Dr. Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania, http://assembly.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/asse/Assembly/Documents/Official_documents/Anastasios_Sermon_EN_Web.pdf



Part Two: Sermons & Speeches

Called to One Hope in Christ Sermon for the Gathering Service Archbishop Dr. Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania

“You were called to the one hope that belongs to your call” (Eph. 4:4; 1:18)

1. As Christians, we dare to hope. Even in an age when millions of people all over the planet are in despair under pressure from the global economic crisis and are overwhelmed by uncertainty. Even when a variety of fears, old and new, grip our minds and hearts. We Christians *dare* to hope. This hope of ours is not based on some vague optimism, but on a living Person, the real Being, in confidence and in a personal, loving relationship with Him.

We have been called “in one hope” in Christ (Ephesians 4:4). Of all the philosophical proposals or religious beliefs concerning human dignity and human future, the Christian one remains the boldest and most magnificent. It insists on the Incarnation of the Supreme Being, of God, and that we humans can progress to deification (“theosis” - becoming gods by divine grace).

According to Apostle Paul, hope “embraces divine economy entirely and answers the love of the Lord with love ... Christian hope is nothing more, nor less, than the ardent desire of a love thirsting for the presence of its Lord” (Jean Duplacy, “Espérance”, *Vocabulaire de Théologie Biblique*, éd, du Cerf).

In order to understand “what is the hope of the call” of God, an intellectual approach is not sufficient. It is necessary, as Paul entreats, that God, “the Father of glory” will grant us “a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him” (Eph. 1:17). This awareness is not acquired in discussions or through human intellectual processes. It is a *gift* which the “God of our Lord Jesus Christ” offers through personal communion with Him in an atmosphere of prayer, of meditative silence and common worship.

People today are generally indifferent to spiritual promises. What attracts them, as is widely acknowledged, is wealth and power in their various forms and guises. But the hope of our call is also linked to wealth - though of another quality. “Hope is a wealth that is invisible; hope is a treasure that is priceless, ... this is the doorway to love, this quashes desperation”, explains Saint John of the Ladder (Scala 30, *PG* 88, 1157D). In his prayer, Saint Paul wonders at “what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints” (Eph. 1:18). And not simply riches, but also power. Inconceivable power, with unique energy: “And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might” (1:19). This is an energy which has already been diffused and is acting in global history. Because the risen Christ is now “above all rule and authority and power and dominion, ... not only in this age but also in that which is to come” (1:21).

The core of our hope is founded unshakeably on this truth. Christian hope continuously reveals possibilities inaccessible to ordinary reason and experience. In the midst of insoluble problems, tribulations and sorrows, we, the faithful, not only dare to hope, but “we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.” [In the original Greek: *kavchometha* (καυχώμεθα): we boast of, we glory in]. “More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us” (Rom. 5:2-3). Hope in Christ is interwoven with peaceful joy. “Rejoice in your hope”, urges Saint Paul (Rom. 12, 12). And St Basil the Great asserts: “Hope is what makes joy co-tenant in the soul of the one who



excels” (Hom. 4;3, *PG* 31.234c). Without ignoring harsh reality, our hope has the power to change the most tragic of circumstances with joy. “For hope in God transforms all things”, St John Chrysostom assures us (Ex. In Ps. 10, Gaume 5,43).

Our hope in Christ incorporates our daily routine into an incomparably broader horizon, into the “eschatological perspective.” Its vision embraces all things in space and time. Like a spiritual telescope, it extends our gaze to the vastness of time. Our salvation is linked with this hope. “For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.” (Rom. 8:24-25; see also I Pe. 1:3-5). If this eschatological dimension is removed from Christian faith, as some people have tried to do, the hope of our call loses its power, its riches and its multi-faceted energy.

The clear promises of God are “a strong encouragement to seize the hope before us. We have this hope as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul” (Heb 6:18-19). This protects us in the midst of the storms; it is a precious gift for our calm stay in the various spiritual harbours (even this Assembly), during our long journey towards our final destination, the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. There is, however, another aspect which must be investigated at our Assembly. This one hope of our call in Christ is not an individual matter. It is actualized in the Church: “And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body” (Eph. 1:23). There is no individual Christian piety, isolated from the Church of Christ, from the communion of love with the Triune God and the members of the ecclesiastical body. Whoever lives essentially as a cell in His Body feels connected to all humankind and to the whole of creation. Such a person encloses within himself/herself all things and all people and embraces them with love, because the Church is “the fullness of him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:23).

The hope of our call in Christ does not make us romantic visionaries of an ill-defined future. Hope, accompanied by unshakable faith and unfeigned love, activates all the gifts our God has given us for a creative presence in the events of history in word and deed.

I remember the decade of the 1990’s in Albania. Churches, monasteries and ecclesial structures all lay in ruins after 23 years of total atheist persecution. Spiritually it was like a desert landscape, disheartening. The only thing that supported the efforts to reconstitute the Church was a phrase that epitomized all our certainty: in Christ there is hope! We dare to hope. And the “God of hope”, the God of surprises, has vouchsafed us many such surprises and blessings, despite enormous difficulties.

In the new phase of world history, as well as in the context of globalization, we Christians are called to personally live the “hope within us” and, at the same time, to offer this hope with courage wherever we abide.

Our message is: There is hope! - in our struggle for truth and justice. There is hope when we resist all forms of violence and racism, when we defend the dignity of every human person. There is hope when we insist on the obligation for unselfish solidarity between people and peoples; when we fight for unfeigned respect for the creation. In the end, with the power of the crucified and risen Christ, to whom has been given “All authority in heaven and on earth” (Mt 28:18), truth, justice and love will prevail. And life will triumph over death.

3. However, we Christians cannot make this announcement of hope persuasive, if we remain divided; or if we maintain relations that are formal, conventional and distant. What is demanded is “to lead a life worthy of the calling” to which we have been called. It is not only Paul who entreats this, but all the saints of the Church Triumphant: that we should proceed “with all lowliness and meekness, with



patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:2-3). These are direct exhortations, that clearly define an attitude to life that is convincing both for those within the Church and those who are critically disposed towards it.

We have all been *called* to a *common* hope. We do not have different hopes. The multi-faceted unity of the Church has its basis and source in the three persons of the Holy Trinity (“one Spirit”, “one Lord”, “one God”) and every believer is connected with it in the “one faith”, in the “one baptism.” The Christian way of living is founded on this reality, on the life of the Holy Trinity in the Church, not on vague ideas.

At the centre of our existence, the ultimate reference point for all our expectations, inclinations and hopes is: “One God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:6). [The recent Biblical view is that this whole phrase refers to God the Father. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Athanasios the Great interprets it by giving it a Trinitarian sense: “*Over all* as Father, as the principle and source; *through all* through the Word; and *in all* in the Holy Spirit” (ad Serap. Epist. 1:28, PG 26, 596B)].

In the history of the ecumenical movement it was initially faith and then love which were deemed to be of pivotal importance. The conditions of our time force us to supplement our quest by turning our attention, our discussions and our prayer more firmly in the direction of the one hope. This does not, of course, mean abandoning what has gone before. But we should seek completeness, so that our whole effort will be a “work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thess. 1:3). Faith, hope and love are mutually inclusive and constitute an organic unity.

Brothers and sisters, allow me to summarize: the hope in Christ, to which we have been called, provides inexhaustible vigour, stamina and creativity for our everyday effort, to which each and every one of us has been called. And furthermore, it opens our hearts and minds to the end of time. Not so that we can escape into the nebulous, but so that we can face up to our daily obligations with patience, joy and serenity. So that we live the local, gazing at the universal. And that we experience every moment of time in the perspective of eternity. This is a hope that liberates us from all forms of cowardice and fear, even the fear of death. We have been called to this one hope in Christ crucified and risen. In him all peoples hope. “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Rom. 15:13).

May the Lord grant us to become more fully aware of the multi-faceted dynamic of this one hope in Christ during the course of the work of this Assembly and to enjoy it all as one. And thereafter, that we carry it back with our homes, to our church communities and, more widely, to Europe and the whole world with determination and trust. Our message is clear: Even in the most difficult situations, we Christians *dare to hope*.



**Testimony
Victoria Kamondji
Vice-President
Protestant Federation of France**

Living in Europe as a Christian placing my hope in Jesus Christ can be summed up for me in one word: BELONGING.

As a committed Christian, born and baptised in the Anglican Church, I was confirmed in the Methodist Church when eighteen years old. I spent my teenage years in a Roman Catholic boarding school run by the Irish sisters of the Order of St Joseph of Cluny. I arrived in France more than twenty years ago, towards the end of the twentieth century, and I was made welcome by the Reformed Church of France.

I am originally from Sierra Leone, and so English-speaking, and my presence in Europe is due to my doctoral studies and their completion, at the University of Charles de Gaulle, Lille 3, in the north of France. There is one constant factor in my life in Europe, which seemed to me some twenty years ago so remote, so different, and sometimes so indifferent, and that is my faith and my hope in Jesus Christ. The welcome that I received in the Reformed Church of France gave me, for the first time in my life, a sense of belonging, belonging to a family, the family of God, sharing the same faith, the same hope. As a foreigner I discovered another facet of the church, a facet which had gone unnoticed as long as I was in my country of origin.

I found the church to be a place of welcome, safety, good relationships and inclusiveness – at the speed I wanted to go. I could be certain that I would be listened to, understood, appreciated and accepted just as I was. Sharing in the life of the church meant that I could make a useful contribution, useful to myself and to others. I discovered the joy of giving, of giving myself, and receiving in return. The sense of belonging gave me confidence, certainly, but also a sense of responsibility, for myself and for others. The feeling of being understood, of being supported by the confidence shown in me by certain church members, also gave me a sense of dignity. Although a foreigner in Europe, I was not alone, I belonged somewhere, to someone, to Jesus Christ. And that belonging took its most concrete form in the church, and was shown in a love that transcended social, cultural, racial and language differences. I belonged to a family, where I had brothers and sisters, a family where we were all united in our hope in the one and only Saviour, Jesus Christ.

When, some ten years later, I found myself in a Protestant migrants' church, that hope was shown primarily at national level by the acceptance of the Community of African and Caribbean Churches in France into membership of the Protestant Federation of France. That showed a degree of openness that would have been inconceivable some ten years previously when I joined the Reformed Church. And that not to mention the efforts made by the Federation to establish contact and dialogue, not only between those with Protestant roots, but also with those from other church traditions and religious sympathies.

I am witnessing a church that is evolving, a church that is always on the move, not only at national level but also at European level. There are increasing contacts, on the one hand, between the traditional churches, and, on the other hand, in a meaningful way, between the traditional churches and the migrants' churches. While the boundaries separating those churches are becoming increasingly 'porous', we are also seeing a multiplicity of efforts, on all sides, aimed at growing together and unity, while respecting diversity, differences and distinctiveness. In view of my ecumenical past, I cannot but rejoice at these developments. And it is a growing trend.



In November 2008, at Palermo in Sicily, the first Africa-Europe Consultation on migration and the changing ecclesiastical landscape was held. The consultation was organised jointly by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy, and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). We discussed unity and the desire and the necessity for us to be "church together."

Even more significant is the MIRACLE (Models of Integration through Religion, Activation, Cultural Learning and Exchange) project, organised by CCME, already under way and which will investigate the active participation of immigrant Christians in the historic European churches. The intention of the project is to emphasise the role that the historic churches can play in the integration of migrant Christians.

In the light of all these developments, and of others that I may not know of, it is clear that the churches of Europe, whatever their traditions or sympathies, can no longer ignore one another, or be exclusive in their attitude to one another. The words "unity" and "integration" are no longer taboo, because there is, it seems to me, a recognition that we belong to a common origin, in our hope in Jesus Christ. This belonging to the body of Christ transcends membership of a particular church or a given socio-political institution. "Being church together", belonging to one another on the horizontal plane, finds its complete fulfilment in all of us together having our one hope in Jesus Christ. Despite the difficulties we may meet, Jesus Christ remains the unifying factor in whom we can place our faith and our hope.

As Konrad Raiser, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, 1992-2004, said, "there is no going back on our journey towards unity." What I am seeing and experiencing these days is this desire to get to know one another and to undertake (to quote Konrad Raiser again) "the task of mutual understanding, facilitated by our awareness of the importance of the contribution that each one makes."

Finally, I would like to add that it is very significant, and highly symbolic, that Lyon has been chosen for this 13th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches. If I remember aright, it is from this city that, in the 19th century, missionaries of the Society for African Missions (Société des Missions Africaines, or SMA) went out to evangelise and Christianise Africa. Today this short testimony is given to you by a Christian originating from Africa.

Thank you.



Salutations du Président Jean-Arnold de Clermont

Dieu a une espérance pour notre monde !

C'est la seule raison pour laquelle nous sommes rassemblés à Lyon aujourd'hui.

Et cette espérance nous voulons l'accueillir, et la partager.

L'accueillir dans la diversité de nos histoires et de nos spiritualités, comme nous venons de le faire lors du service religieux qui nous a réunis à Saint Bonaventure, comme nous le ferons de jour en jour au cours de cette assemblée dans des moments de prière, d'étude de la Bible, de célébrations confessionnelles ou communes.

Accueillir l'espérance de Dieu, c'est nous reconnaître comme membres de l'Eglise de Jésus-Christ, qui est le sceau de cette espérance et qui nous a envoyés comme témoins de cette espérance. Mais, disons-le ici fermement, nous ne pourrons le faire que dans un dialogue permanent avec toutes les composantes de notre société humaine qui, sur le fondement d'autres prémices, veulent avec nous construire un monde plus juste et plus paisible. Nous ne croyons pas que ce monde soit soumis à la fatalité du désordre et de la haine, mais qu'il a une histoire, que nous avons vocation, ensemble, à orienter vers le bien commun et le bonheur de tous.

C'est pourquoi l'espérance de Dieu pour ce monde n'aura de sens que si, comme il nous en a fait dépositaire, nous savons la partager.

Partager notre foi. Si nous ne savons vivre le partage entre nous et à ce niveau essentiel, comment oserions-nous prétendre le vivre autrement. C'est un privilège dont j'ai mesuré la force tout au long de ces années que de pouvoir, en tant de lieux, prendre le temps de vivre dans d'autres spiritualités que la mienne dès lors que j'y étais invité et introduit. C'est une joie très grande que de voir se construire et se développer en Europe un dialogue des religions comme partie intégrante du dialogue des cultures. Mais nous devons bien reconnaître que nous ne sommes qu'aux balbutiements et que l'apprentissage de langages communs, respectueux de nos diversités nous prendra encore un long temps. Il y a là pourtant une responsabilité qui nous est confiée, une responsabilité proprement 'religieuse', même si l'étymologie de ce terme – ce qui 'relie' – est controversée. Quoiqu'il en soit, il s'agit d'affirmer que les religions peuvent établir des liens, construire des ponts, à d'autres niveaux que ceux qui prévalent dans notre monde contemporain ceux de la compétition économique et des rapports de force. Cela a été la vocation de la Conférence des Eglises Européennes, dès ses débuts, et, dans le contexte de l'Europe et du monde d'aujourd'hui, doit le rester.

Partager aussi la conviction évangélique du souci premier pour les pauvres. S'il est une dimension de l'espérance de Dieu pour le monde à laquelle nous devons faire échos c'est bien celle-là qui dit sa compassion et son amour pour les petits. S'il est un devoir des gouvernants que les Eglises ont vocation à leur rappeler, c'est bien celui de la solidarité à l'égard de ceux qui sont laissés sur le bord de la route par des sociétés désireuses d'excellence économique. Non que cet objectif soit mauvais. N'est-il pas celui de l'Europe défini par la stratégie de Lisbonne : Une « économie de la connaissance la plus compétitive et la plus dynamique du monde d'ici à 2010, capable d'une croissance économique durable accompagnée d'une amélioration quantitative et qualitative de l'emploi et d'une plus grande cohésion sociale . » C'était peut-être un peu emphatique ! Mais force est de constater que l'Europe n'a pas répondu pleinement, loin de là, à l'objectif de lutter contre l'exclusion sociale ; et nous sommes plus loin encore des objectifs du millénium pour le développement de réduire de 50% d'ici 2015 le nombre de ceux qui vivent avec moins d'un dollars par jour, objectifs que nous nous sommes aussi donnés.

Il est probablement temps pour la Conférence des Eglises Européennes de faire mieux entendre la compassion de Dieu. Il n'y a pas d'Evangile sans compassion. Et cette compassion doit rester au coeur de toute démarche politique.



Mais il est temps aussi de faire entendre la voix des Eglises, toujours plus déterminée, pour un développement durable. Notre Assemblée devra avoir les yeux tournés vers le rendez-vous deopenhague. Nous nous réjouissons de voir notre continent européen vouloir jouer un rôle de leadership mondial dans ce domaine. Et je sais nombre de nos Eglises attachées à développer un style de vie témoignant du respect pour toute la création, réduisant l'empreinte humaine sur la terre en consommation de co². Mais là encore notre Assemblée devrait à mes yeux faire un pas plus important en solidarité avec les pays du sud pour qu'ils puissent accéder à un niveau de vie supérieur. Ce n'est qu'en doublant notre effort écologique que nous leur offrirons la possibilité de leur propre développement, sans mettre en péril l'avenir de notre planète. L'enjeu est considérable. Il n'y a pas de développement durable qui ne soit solidaire et global. Les Eglises ne peuvent jouer pleinement leur rôle que dans un dialogue ouvert, transparent, régulier avec les institutions politiques, que ce soit au niveau national ou européen. Elles y apporteront la dimension de l'universel qui est au coeur de leur expérience spirituelle.

C'est pourquoi, en citant Jean Calvin, dont le protestantisme fête le cinq centième anniversaire de la naissance, à Noyon dans une petite ville au nord est de Paris, je veux ouvrir encore un nouvel horizon. Mais écoutons d'abord Jean Calvin : « « Autant d'hommes qu'il y a au monde, ce sont vos prochains (...). Dieu n'a point choisi la race d'un homme, il n'a point enclos son service en un pays certain, mais la paroi est rompue, tellement qu'aujourd'hui il n'y a ni Grecs, ni Juifs, comme il nous est rappelé que nous sommes tous un corps en notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ. Et d'autant que par l'Evangile, Dieu s'est révélé Sauveur et Père, il faut que nous ayons fraternité ensemble. » (Sermon sur le Deutéronome .Chap. 22, 1-4).

Fraternité, ce mot pour dire l'importance que revêt à nos yeux de chrétiens, et je ne doute pas que cela soit largement partagé, notre soucis de ceux et celles, qui sont nos prochains, et qui ont sous la contrainte le plus souvent, celle de la force ou de la faim, choisi de quitter leur pays pour venir frapper à notre porte. Les migrations sont probablement l'un des phénomènes les plus troublant de notre temps ; troublant parce qu'elles peuvent être placées sous le regard des libertés individuelles, la liberté de circulation, que nous avons retrouvée par exemple à l'intérieure de l'Union européenne et qui nous a permis à un grand nombre d'entre nous de venir sans visa ; et qui nous laisse espérer que cette capacité de libre circulation ira en s'élargissant ; troublant parce qu'elles peuvent être placées sous le regard des droits humains et de la capacité de chacun de vivre librement dans son propre pays et d'y trouver de quoi faire vivre sa famille ; et nous savons que cela n'est pas le cas, et que nos pays européens en portent parfois une grande part de responsabilité, privilégiant les relations économiques par rapports aux relations humaines, laissant parfois place à l'exploitation des matières premières ou des personnes ; troublant aussi parce qu'elles contraignent à exprimer notre compréhension d'un monde solidaire ou à révéler nos égoïsmes.

Cette Assemblée, je l'espère, fera une large place au projet de faire de 2010 l'année des Eglises européennes en réponse aux migrations. L'Europe en a besoin qui si souvent réfléchit d'abord en termes de sécurité, avant même que de réfléchir en termes d'accueil, de respect des personnes humaines et de solidarité.

Accueillir l'espérance de Dieu pour notre monde, la partager, c'est me semble-t-il le projet de notre Assemblée ; c'est ce qui nous rend heureux d'être à « Lyon, ville humaniste » et dans ce pays où le principe de laïcité affirme tout à la fois la neutralité du politique à l'égard du religieux, et réciproquement, mais aussi la liberté d'expression du religieux dans une société démocratique, d'échange et de partage. Chrétiens, nous voulons exercer notre responsabilité au service de la communauté humaine toute entière. Cette assemblée y prendra part.

Jean-Arnold de Clermont, Président de la Conférence des Eglises Européennes



Words of welcome by Cardinal Philippe Barbarin

The churches here in Lyon are happy to be able to welcome the churches of Europe which are members of CEC, gathered to celebrate CEC's 50th anniversary and to hold its 13th Assembly.

As Archbishop of Lyon, I can only congratulate your President the Revd Jean-Arnold de Clermont on his choice. Lyon is indeed delighted to take up the mantle of Abbé Paul Couturier, who co-founded the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which he referred to as an "invisible monastery" . . .

This spiritual ecumenism goes hand in hand with intensive ecumenical life, involving both regular meetings of church leaders and local groups in which Anglican, Armenian, Baptist, Catholic, Coptic, Evangelical, Orthodox and Protestant Christians pray and read the Bible together, proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel.

You have chosen as the theme for your Assembly a passage from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: "*Called to One Hope in Christ.*" This is indeed our common call: to bear witness to our world, which is often near to losing hope, that the light of Christ shines for everyone. The cross of Christ, even if a tragedy, is a door of hope opening into the Kingdom of God. It shows us the way of faith on which we are determined to go forwards together.

Your assembly intends, concretely, to reflect on what it means for Christians to serve Europe today, and to promote a committed ecumenism which can truly serve the poorest on our continent. You are already involved in dialogue between different traditions, you support one another in prayer and you have recognised the *Charta Oecumenica* as the basis for your common life.

As a brother, my wish for you is that these days of work and prayer here in Lyon may help you to move forwards in understanding the mystery of our unity in Christ, for our society presents many challenges, economic, cultural, political and inter-religious . . .

May the Holy Spirit be with you in your work, your conversations and your prayers, that the light of Christ may shine upon all nations, and may the Father guide us in confidence and unity to pursue the way of hope. As we pray: "Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."



Words of welcome Father Athanase Iskos

It is with great joy that we welcome you today to our most beautiful city. It is an important historical moment for your organisation, but also for the Christian community here in Lyon. It is our duty, indeed our sacred duty, to glorify with our whole souls the Holy Name of God, who has blessed the life and long journey of the Conference of European Churches, and has brought you to this happy celebration of your fiftieth anniversary.

We thank you most warmly for having chosen Lyon to celebrate this memorable anniversary. As the Orthodox ecumenical officer and rector of the Greek Orthodox Church, with all the representatives of CREL (Committee of Church Leaders in Lyon), we welcome you from the bottom of our hearts. Lyon is a welcoming city, a city rich in beauty, and it offers its love and human warmth to all, and to those who have chosen to make it their home.

To this city, from Smyrna in Asia Minor, the Lord led the martyr St Pothinus, the first bishop of Lyon. The shedding of his blood, and of that of the other martyrs in the year 177, has hallowed this ground. St Irenaeus, also born in Smyrna, was his successor in Lyon and he worked energetically for the peace of the Church.

From the East, from those same lands of saints and martyrs, there arrived in the last century further Christians, driven out and uprooted from their own lands. Here they sought hospitality, and they found it. They were Russians, Greeks and Armenians.

Our city has been at the forefront of the ecumenical movement, with as its chief player the pioneering figure of Fr Paul Couturier, one of the main architects of 20th century ecumenism. Imbued with charity and sympathy, full of love and a gospel-driven desire for peace, he sought out those Christian brothers and sisters, and, through his contact with them, he discovered the reality of Orthodoxy.

For fifty years now, CEC has been an ideal means showing the path for the advancement and promotion of Christian unity, while at the same time responding to the many needs of modern society. This is truly an extraordinary occasion, because it is a clear demonstration of the work and striving towards the unity of the Church of Christ. It is revelatory of the indwelling and vitality of the Holy Spirit in each one of us.

The theme of your Assembly is hope. We have that hope as a sure and certain anchor in our souls, and it gives us a foretaste of the Kingdom of God. But we Christians also wait for the complete justification of our faith. Active hope stimulates our participation in the resurrection of Christ, which gives a new content to our lives. If faith in the resurrection of Christ is the substance of the Christian message, hope for our participation in it is the means by which it is experienced as a reality. "Hope brings joy to the soul. It is the joy that anticipates joy. Hope is the force of love," said St John Climacus. "We entrust to thee our whole life and our hope, O thou friend of humankind," says the Orthodox priest in the prayer of the Divine Liturgy.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, our Hope, said when he sent out the apostles to preach, "Behold, I am with you," and he went before them to alert them to the obstacles on the way. May he also be with you and guide you in the course of your work. In your Assembly may the Holy Spirit, who is everywhere, come and make his dwelling in each one of you. And may the Holy Spirit shine his love forth and keep you in hope.



Bischof Martin Schindehütte
Rede
zur Einbringung des Antrages der EKD zur grundlegenden
Verfassungsreform der Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen

Liebe Schwestern und Brüder,

ich danke herzlich dafür, dass ich heute Abend den Antrag der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland zur Einsetzung einer Arbeitsgruppe zur grundlegenden Neufassung der rechtlichen Grundlagen der Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen in diese Vollversammlung einbringen darf.

Wir in der EKD sind dankbar dafür, dass die KEK seit ihrer Gründung für Frieden und Versöhnung im geteilten Europa während der Zeit des Eisernen Vorhangs eingetreten ist. Brücken bauen zwischen Ost und West, Nord und Süd, dies ist auch heute eine wichtige Funktion, für die die KEK gestärkt werden muss.

Wir freuen uns, wie nach Basel und Graz Gemeinschaft der Kirchen in Europa bewahrt und entwickelt wurde. Die Charta Oecumenica wurde eine Urkunde gemeinsamer Verpflichtung zum Dialog und zur Zusammenarbeit. Sie soll auf allen Ebenen des kirchlichen Lebens eine ökumenische Kultur des Dialogs und der Zusammenarbeit fördern und Verbindlichkeit schaffen. Sie hat keinen lehramtlich-dogmatischen oder kirchenrechtlich-gesetzlichen Charakter. Sie lebt vielmehr davon, dass die europäischen Kirchen und ökumenischen Organisationen ihr folgen und sich selbst verpflichten. Diese können für ihren Bereich auf der Grundlage dieses Basistextes eigene Zusätze und gemeinsame Perspektiven formulieren, die sich konkret mit ihren besonderen Herausforderungen und den sich daraus ergebenden Verpflichtungen befassen. So verstehen wir auch unseren heutigen Antrag: Als einen Versuch, die Charta Oecumenica als eine kostbare und unverzichtbare Grundlage für die Gestaltung ökumenischer Beziehungen in Europa und für die Zukunft der KEK als elementaren Bezugsrahmen zu verstehen und lebendig werden zu lassen. Wir hoffen, dass wir dabei helfen können, die Aufgaben der KEK für die Zukunft klar zu benennen und sicherzustellen.

Seit der Überwindung der Teilung Europas machen sich bei der KEK aber auch immer deutlicher zentrifugale Kräfte und auseinanderdriftende theologische und an den Kirchenfamilien orientierte Interessen und Akzentsetzungen bemerkbar. Offensichtlich hat sich die KEK in ihrer Aufgabe und Struktur noch nicht hinreichend auf die tiefgreifend veränderte Lage in Europa eingestellt. Unser Anliegen ist es, in der Europäischen Union und in ganz Europa, das Zeugnis der Kirchen in der kulturellen, gesellschaftlichen und politischen Entwicklung wirkungsvoll hörbar zu machen. Zugleich müssen wir den theologischen und ethischen Diskurs vertiefen und den Raum erweitern für gemeinsame spirituelle Erfahrungen.

Der Antrag der EKD hat eine wichtige Vorgeschichte. Für diese Vollversammlung wurde ja unter dem Datum des 19. Januar ein Papier versandt, das sich mit Vorschlägen zur Revision der Rechtstexte der KEK befasst. Diese Vorschläge wurden soeben vom Generalsekretär vorgestellt und von der Vollversammlung beschlossen. Wir halten allerdings die dortigen Vorschläge für nicht weitgehend genug und für zu langfristig angelegt. Unsere Analyse der Texte hat ergeben, dass die drei vorhandenen Rechtstexte, Verfassung, Ausführungsbestimmungen und Geschäftsordnung inkongruent und unübersichtlich sind und viele Fragen von Struktur und Zusammenarbeit offen lassen. Sie sollten daher sinnvoll ineinander geführt werden. Es gibt also schon Gründe der Rechtsklarheit, die zu dieser grundlegenden Revision zwingen.

Natürlich haben wir auch wahrgenommen, dass es in den letzten Jahren bereits Bemühungen gegeben hat, die KEK in ihren Organisations- und Entscheidungsstrukturen weiter zu entwickeln. Jedoch



zeigt sich bis heute, wie sehr Mitarbeitende und Personen in Leitungsverantwortung sowie die Verantwortlichen in den Leitungsgremien immer wieder unter unklaren Mandaten und Strukturen leiden und wie viele Kräfte von Reibungsverlusten absorbiert werden. Um ihrer aller Willen und um der Zukunft der KEK willen sagen wir: Daran muss sich etwas ändern.

Besonders wichtig jedoch sind die inhaltlichen Herausforderungen, für die die KEK unbedingt eine weitaus größere Klarheit über ihre Aufgaben, ihre Prioritäten und Mandate und über die Formen der Zusammenarbeit ihrer Mitgliedskirchen braucht. Die EKD hat dazu in ihren Antragsbrief und ihrer Stellungnahme einiges ausgeführt. Unsere Vorschläge sind sehr weitgehend. Das ist wahr. Dennoch sollen nur als Material verstanden werden, das mit vielen anderen Überlegungen in der Arbeitsgruppe bedacht werden soll.

Mit großer Dankbarkeit und Freude haben wir wahrgenommen, dass unsere Überlegungen auf große Resonanz gestoßen sind. Nicht nur bei einem Vorbereitungstreffen protestantischer Kirchen in Wien im April dieses Jahres wurde das deutlich. Schon vorher wiesen viele Stellungnahmen und Kommentare von Mitgliedskirchen auf der Web-Site zu dieser Vollversammlung in die Richtung einer grundlegenden Neuorientierung der KEK. Eine ganze Reihe von Mitgliedskirchen der KEK haben uns schon im Vorfeld wissen lassen, wie sehr sie unseren Antrag unterstützen. Sie haben wichtige Anregungen gegeben, die in den nun vorzustellenden Antrag eingeflossen sind.

Auf Grund der intensiven Arbeit der letzten Wochen in Diskussionen mit Mitgliedskirchen, mit dem Generalsekretär und den Beratern in rechtlichen Fragen, bringe ich nun folgenden modifizierten Antrag in die Vollversammlung ein. Eben weil so viele Anregungen aufgenommen worden sind, unterscheidet sich von dem Antrag von dem, den wir am 28. Mai gestellt haben.

Da die Texte in Englisch erarbeitet worden sind, wechsele ich für den Wortlaut des Antrages ins Englische:

Motion

The Assembly establishes, on the proposal of the Nominations Committee, a Working Group to carry out a fundamental revision of the legal basis of CEC and issues a mandate regulating the size, composition and procedural framework. The new legal basis is to be adopted at a special CEC meeting during the year 2012. The present legal basis, as amended by this Assembly, will therefore only be in force until a fundamentally new structure has been adopted.

Zur Umsetzung dieses Antrages ist in den letzten Wochen gemeinsam von Juristen und Kirchenvertretern Text erarbeitet worden, der das Mandat für die Überarbeitung der Rechtsgrundlagen genauer beschreibt. Diesem Text stimmt die EKD ausdrücklich zu und macht ihn sich zueigen. Vorgeschlagen wird folgender Auftrag der Vollversammlung an die spezielle Arbeitsgruppe:

Mandate for the Working Group

1. The Working Group set up by this Assembly to review the statutory framework of CEC shall examine the basic legal texts (currently Constitution, Bye-Laws and the Standing Orders of the Assembly) of CEC and draft proposals for a new legal basis, taking into account as starting points for its deliberations:

- the motion of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD), the policy reference report of the Central Committee and the Secretary General,
- the policy decisions of this Assembly,



- the explanation of the EKD motion and statements of Member Churches in the consultation preceding this Assembly,
- additional proposals submitted to it by any member church before the end of this year,
- comments by the Central Committee,
- comments of the Commissions of CEC and of relevant partners (e.g. associated organisations) which shall be consulted as part of the process.

It shall make sure that the revision takes account of the need for a concise and coherent body of legal provisions that is easily manageable.

2. The working group is set up as a special task force. As its work will be conducted between Assemblies, it shall not be a committee according to Nr. 8.12 SO, but be constituted as a body of experts representative of the of the denominational families and of majority and minority churches within CEC. It shall keep the Central Committee informed about the progress and contents of its work.

3. The Working Group shall have thirteen members. Eight members shall be elected by the Assembly on the proposal of the Nominations Committee, which shall ensure that the voting list consists of experts with an appropriate professional background. The other members shall be co-opted by the Group. All Member Churches are invited to name potential members from their ranks for election at the Assembly or within three months of its closure for co-option. Election and co-optation shall each respect the balance of denominations and majority and minority churches within CEC. Its members shall be in close contact to their respective church so as to create a basis for a wider consensus.

4. The Working Group shall be convened within five months of the closure of this Assembly. It shall have a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman who are to be elected at the first meeting. The Group shall constitute itself and adopt statutes regulating more detailed procedures. The General Secretariat shall provide the logistic support asked for by the presidium of the Group.

5. With a view to achieving the widest possible measure of agreement between the Member Churches, the Working Group shall be empowered to seek the feedback of Member Churches and the other bodies listed in 2. on any issue it wishes to consult them on.

6. The Working Group shall submit its draft revision of the legal texts to the Central Committee for examination no later than nine months before a Constitutional Assembly to be held in summer 2012. The Central Committee shall then transmit the draft revision with its comments to all Member Churches no later than six months before the Constitutional Assembly.

7. The Working Group shall be empowered to revise its draft proposal in the last two months prior to the Constitutional Assembly, but amendments shall be limited to points raised by the Central Committee or Member Churches in response to the draft originally transmitted.

8. The Working Group shall be empowered to draft written explanations accompanying the proposal. It shall also present its proposals and explanations to the Constitutional Assembly and advice it on the feasibility and/or impact on the entire body of revised texts of any amendment to its proposal submitted at that Assembly.

Der Wortlaut dieses Mandates macht sehr deutlich, dass uns an einem partizipativen Prozess liegt, der zu ein breiten Basis von Zustimmung führt.



Lassen Sie mich an dieser Stelle auch noch zu einer Frage Stellung nehmen, die die Integration der Kommission der Kirchen für Migranten in Europa betrifft. Mit Recht freuen wir uns darüber, dass die Arbeit dieser Kommission nun durch einen Vertrag viel enger und definierter an die KEK gebunden werden soll. Der Vertrag ist auf der Grundlage der gegenwärtigen rechtlichen Grundlagen erarbeitet worden. Wenn unser Antrag auf Einsetzung einer Arbeitsgruppe zur grundlegenden Revision der Rechtsgrundlagen eingesetzt wird, ändert sich die Geschäftsgrundlage für diesen Vertrag nahezu vollständig. Von Seiten der EKD hätten wir volles Verständnis dafür, wenn die Kommission unter diesen grundlegend veränderten Bedingungen neu darüber nachdenkt, wie die nicht in Frage stehende Prozess der Integration nun unter diesen Bedingungen fortgeführt werden soll. Wir freuen uns, dass es klare Signale gibt, dass KKME sich intensiv am Prozess der Erarbeitung von Aufgabe und Mandat der KEK auf neuer Rechtsgrundlagen beteiligen will. KKME nimmt damit teil an einem Prozess, der ja von allen Beteiligten Beiträge zu einer Neudefinition ihrer Arbeit in der KEK erbittet und erhofft.

Wir freuen uns auf die Diskussion während der Vollversammlung und sind gespannt, was Sie aus Ihrem Engagement für die KEK und mit Ihren Perspektiven beizutragen haben. Und natürlich hoffen wir sehr, dass Sie unserem Antrag zustimmen.

Für unser Engagement als EKD in der KEK und in den Arbeitsfeldern, die derzeit von den Kommissionen wahrgenommen werden, hängt sehr viel davon ab, ob mit einem positiven Beschluss der Vollversammlung eine hinreichend klare Zukunftsperspektive für die KEK eröffnet werden kann.

Die Losung für diese Vollversammlung „Called to One Hope in Christ“ richtet unsere Schritte nach vorn und bestärkt uns in unserer Gemeinschaft in Jesus Christus. Dass wir um unseres christlichen Zeugnisses in Europa willen, neue Wege finden und begehen, darauf hoffen wir und dafür beten wir.

Motion adopted

Referring to the discussions in the Plenary concerning the renewal of the CEC, raised by the Motion of the EKD, the Assembly establishes, on the proposal of the Nominations Committee, a working group of 15 members to carry out a revision of the CEC as a whole, including a common purpose and vision and the setting of strategic goals and which structures would serve these goals in an optimal way and in accordance with the wishes and needs of the Member Churches. In this process, it is important to pay due consideration to the present status of the General Assembly, the Central Committee and the Commissions. This revision should include both constitutional, legal and decision-making aspects deemed necessary.

This working group is to be accountable to the Central Committee and has to make a first draft available no later than 31 December 2011, after which the Member Churches and the Commissions are to be consulted.

The Central Committee has to bring a final proposal to an advanced constitutional and general assembly to be held in the summer of 2013.

Mandate for the Working Group

1. The Working Group shall make sure that this revision takes account of the need for a concise and coherent body of constitutional, legal and decision making provisions and procedures that is easily manageable.



2. It is set up as a special task force. As its work will be conducted between Assemblies, it shall not be a committee according to Nr. 8.12 SO, but be constituted as a body of experts representative of the regions, the denominational families and of majority and minority churches within CEC. It shall present a report on the current state of its work at every meeting of the Central Committee for discussion and take the recommendations of that body into account. The President and the two Vice-Presidents can, in an advisory capacity, take part in the meetings of the working group.
3. The Working Group shall be convened within five months of the closure of this Assembly. The Group shall constitute itself and adopt standing orders in line with the general legal framework of CEC to regulate more detailed procedures. The General Secretariat shall provide the logistic support asked for by the presidium of the Group.
4. The Central Committee shall transmit the final proposal to all Member Churches no later than six months before the Constitutional Assembly, as stated in the Bye Laws.
5. The Working Group presents the final proposal submitted by the Central Committee to the Constitutional Assembly and advises it on the feasibility and/or impact on the entire body of revised texts of any amendment to its proposal submitted at that Assembly.
6. When convening the Constitutional and General Assembly in 2013 the Central Committee has to take into consideration the date and place of the General Assembly of the WCC as well as the financial consequences for CEC and its Member Churches.



Remarks by the President Jean-Arnold de Clermont

At the Assembly of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), it is customary to ask the President of the Central Committee to present a report. This is why I am speaking to you at the plenary session devoted to the life of CEC from the Trondheim Assembly to this one in Lyon. But I do not want to distract your attention from the reports on CEC's activities presented by the General Secretary, the directors of the Commissions and the Finance Secretary. The Central Committee is of course in complete solidarity with all of these. My own remarks will therefore be of a more personal nature.

Looking back at these last six years of the Central Committee's work, I must surely acknowledge that we have devoted a great deal of time to CEC's structures; one could even say that this has been done to the detriment of other priorities which we have. I shall come back to this. But let us try to see what is at stake here: if we go back to Trondheim, that Assembly gave us, among 43 (!) recommendations for action, that of carrying out the integration of CCME into CEC. We saw very soon that this had less to do with constitutional matters than with our way of understanding what CEC is and our vision of its role in Europe, as well as our way of working. On one hand we all needed to be convinced that the protection of migrants, the rehabilitation of victims of racism, and attention to new forms of slavery, notably that of sex slaves . . . belonged integrally to the common mission of our churches in Europe and their witness with regard to the building up and integration of Europe. I believe I can assure you that this conviction is shared by the Central Committee, and I have no doubt that this Assembly will support the plan to make 2010 the Year of the European Churches for Migrants.

At the same time, however, we have understood very well that a CEC which from now on will have three Commissions would not be the same, at least in the way it works, as the CEC which at Trondheim was still rejoicing that it had integrated with the Ecumenical European Commission on Church and Society (EECCS) in 1999. This is all the more true since, in the follow-up to Trondheim, the Church and Society Commission found itself called upon in many different ways to respond to requests from the churches. It took time for us to be able to express what seemed to us an appropriate model of governance, under the supervision of the General Secretary, working closely together with the directors of the Commissions.

At this Assembly in Lyon, some formal changes to our rules and regulations will be proposed for your consideration, but the Central Committee is very aware that a more thorough revision of these texts will be needed in the next several years. This is not being done here at this Assembly, however, because the Central Committee felt that the Member Churches should first focus their attention on the vision of CEC which they share, and then draw the conclusions which this vision will have for the rules and regulations.

An important feature of the journey from Trondheim to Lyon was the European ecumenical stage at Sibiu. The General Secretary's report tells about this. For my part, I should like to underline two aspects. In my opinion, we did not emphasise enough the fact that for the first time we had an EEA of 2500 delegates, representing the largest European ecumenical network ever assembled, and that, despite the imperfections of the Sibiu EEA3, we found ourselves strongly called, all of us together, to a greater commitment to a common witness. This was, in effect, a sort of plebiscite in favour of the *Charta Oecumenica*, and served as a thread running through the entire meeting.

Therefore I believe that now, in the follow-up to Sibiu, we must respond to the ecumenical expectations which were expressed there. That means increased relations with the Roman Catholic Church,



so as to have more of a shared witness! I am not so naïve as to think that the ecclesiological and theological tensions which remain between our churches will fade away easily; don't we have such tensions even between CEC Member Churches? But I am convinced that we have not advanced even half as far along this road as we could do together, within the framework which already unites us theologically and spiritually. So we bear the guilt for not having come further on this road, in a world which has such a crying need for a common witness by Christians. We don't have miraculous solutions for global warming, or for the financial crisis which is shaking our world; we don't have ready-made answers on North-South relations or how to build peace . . . But we do have the capacity to contribute meaning to the debates and actions that concern the future of our world, that is, the preferential option for the poor; the refusal to be fatalistic, reflecting our hope in Christ; and our conviction that "one does not live by bread alone." Our listening together to the word of God, our common prayer, our travel forward on the road of hope are far from having reached the limits imposed by our theological and ecclesiological agreements.

The integration with CCME, the EEA3 at Sibiu, the way in which CEC is structured, and ecumenism have not been the only matters on which the CEC Central Committee has focused; it has also followed attentively the work programmes of the Commissions. Here as well, the reports on CEC activities prepared for this Assembly tell the story. Nevertheless, the question of the role of Central Committee comes up here. I mentioned above the importance of a clear understanding of what holds CEC together, and the structural implications which follow from it; here I want to speak of the questions I have, after six years of experience, about the place of Central Committee in the vision which we have for CEC.

I do not want to preempt the debates which will take place at this Assembly. They will have to do precisely with the vision which we have of CEC, and what should be our priorities during the next few years. But I do want to begin by thanking the numerous Member Churches which have entered into the process of preparing for the Assembly by expressing, on the basis of the documents sent to them last December, their expectations of a CEC with a better defined overall mission, centred once again on a few essential goals, calling upon the Commissions to work in greater coherence with one another. This leads inevitably to a reconsideration of the role of Central Committee.

It seems to me that in this perspective, this role consists less of following step by step the work of the Commissions – though plainly this responsibility continues – than to pursue an ongoing task of analysing the situation in Europe, what word the churches should speak to it, and the ecumenical commitment which responds most faithfully to what God expects of the churches. It seems to me that it is Central Committee which is specifically responsible for leading the ecumenical dialogue with a view to a common witness. This is not to be done outside of the concrete commitments which the Commissions carry, but it is to be done before a common witness is undertaken and should correspond to such a witness. To fulfil this task, the diversity of the Central Committee participants is a remarkable treasure, if it is placed at the service of an ever greater knowledge of the situation of the churches and of their witness in Europe.

From this viewpoint, two concrete questions arise:

CEC is, and should continue to be, an ecumenical community of churches in Europe. But the commitment to ecumenism is also carried by a multitude of movements and associations; these are helping to focus media attention on the message of the churches, from which they spring. If Central Committee is to play its full role in coordinating and inspiring this common witness, or at least a witness which takes into account the debate of the churches on their common message, Central Committee will need to cultivate relationships and dialogue with this wealth of potential ecumenical partners. Probably the Commissions can best facilitate this, as soon as they recognize, in their way of



working, Central Committee as having the role of coordination and primary expression of the churches' common message.

This brings up my second question on the role of Central Committee: Should it not be, as it has never been before, the place where CEC's communications policy is developed, the place where, from year to year, the choice is made to direct the voice of the churches here or there in the arena of European public opinion? The new CEC Website which was created for the Assembly, and intended as a place for the exchange of ideas, should be used in future as a window through which CEC makes itself visible, makes itself heard, as a common voice for the churches within the public debate. But we shall also need initiatives in many other areas to make the presence of CEC more visible in the European public arena.

Permit me to make a final observation. It is inspired by the European elections we had in June. The massive lack of participation in many countries does not express opposition to the European project, so much as it expresses that the great majority of our fellow citizens do not feel that the European project belongs to them. They do not own it. Europe is a cultural, geographic and human reality . . . but the European Union remains empty of meaning for the majority of its people; it's an affair for specialists. We should not be surprised that the same is true for the members of our churches. They confess that they believe in the church universal, and they participate in their own churches. But when the churches try to express together their hope and their unity in Christ on the European continent, and in service to all humankind . . . the churches in this role seem far away from people and unfamiliar to them.

So each of our local churches and national churches should be asked the question: does the CEC project really belong to you? do you have an investment, not only financial but also spiritual, in this project which is CEC? Certainly CEC must do the work of making its project plan easier to read, more coherent, perhaps simpler, and better expressed in terms of priorities and commitments which we share. This is the very purpose of our Assembly. But our work together only has meaning if the Member Churches commit themselves to support the project which we shall define together.

For the ecumenical movement, in which we celebrate together the glory of God, in which we bear common witness to God's word, in which we serve humanity in Christ's name, is probably the most faithful expression of the hope in Christ to which we are called. It is the echo of the hope which God has for our world. CEC needs every one of the churches on our continent to tune this echo closer and closer to the true note⁵.

⁵ As in music, that means a note that is properly in tune. But it does not need to be strong. Power is not the language of the churches



Hope is Born out of Faith and Manifests Itself through Love
Speech of His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church

I. Jesus Christ – The Source of Hope

The theme proposed by the Conference of European Churches for its 13th General Assembly, “Called to One Hope in Christ”, is as appropriate as can be for the current times for both this organisation and all Churches in Europe. In these times of financial crisis, of searches for new solutions for the surpassing of many challenges, Christians must reflect together upon what hope in Christ means for them, or, better said, how they can best harmonise their hopes with the one hope in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

In the writings of the New Testament, Christian hope is described as “*a better hope*”, through which we are getting closer to God (Hebrews 7:19). This better hope is identified, in fact, by St Apostle Paul with Christ Himself – “*Our hope*” (1 Timothy 1:1; Colossians 1:27).

Jesus Christ is our Hope because He is both perfect God and complete man. He is the One through Whom “*all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made*” (John 1:3); “*all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. [...] He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross*” (Colossians 1:16-20).

Jesus Christ, God’s love bestowed upon us, is **our Hope because He is the “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15), the Creator, the Governor and the ultimate destination of the world and of the created existence.** He is the Son of God, the only begotten, incarnated for us humans and for our salvation, as St Apostle John the Evangelist states, “*for God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life*” (John 3:16).

Jesus Christ, the Creator and Saviour of the world, **is our Hope because we live through Him** (1 John 4:9), the Word of God being sent into the world by the Father so that the world “*may have life, and have it to the full*” (John 10:10). St Apostle Paul says that our “*life is now hidden with Christ in God*” (Colossians 3:3).

Jesus Christ, “*the Light of the world*” (John 8:20), **is our Hope because He is the supreme and eternal Truth** (cf. John 14:6), *the One Who is the same yesterday and today and forever* (Hebrews 13:8), and *His word is truth* (cf. John 17:17; 1 Timothy 2:15).

Jesus Christ, the Victor over sin, death and hell, **is our Hope because He is our Peace , the One Who has reconciled man with God** (Ephesians 2:14), through him all gaining *access to the Father by one Spirit* (Ephesians 2:18).

Jesus Christ, our Merciful Benefactor, **is our Hope because He took on Himself the human being, cleansed it, sanctified it and raised it in glory, in the intimacy of the eternal love of the Most Holy Trinity.** Christ our Lord is the *Door* which leads to the inside of the divine life and communion, the *Door* through which whoever enters will be saved (cf. John 10:9). Hence, one can sense the intimate relationship between hope and salvation repeatedly affirmed in the New Testa-



ment: “*in this hope we were saved*” (Romans 8:24), because “*everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure*” (1 John 3:3).

In the teachings and acts of Jesus Christ, the mystery of the humble and all-powerful love of the Holy Trinity for the human being and man’s possibility to participate in the eternal life of the Holy Trinity are shown. In this sense, St Apostle Paul says that through the crucified and resurrected Christ, God “*raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus*” (Ephesians 2: 6). That is why, for all of us who, through Him, have believed in God, as St Apostle Peter also notes, He is “*our hope in God*” (cf. 1 Peter 1:21).

Founded upon the divine promise, according to which “*God, Who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful*” (1 Corinthians 1:9), Christians, in humbleness, must lay all their hope on the infinite love of Christ, as God helps those who humble themselves, granting them His grace (Proverbs 3:34). According to the words of St Apostle Paul, Christians are those “*who were the first to hope in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:12), being sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit (cf. Ephesians 1:13). This hope in Christ in which and through which God communicate Himself or is self-giving to humans is, also, a guarantee that in Him, in Christ, “*all will be resurrected*” (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Faith in God is reinforced through the hope of the Gospel (cf. Colossians 1:23) and practiced through the love with which man responds to the unconditional love of God, as well as through love towards the neighbour. In his first letter to the Thessalonians, St Paul underlines very well the relationship between faith, hope and love, when writing about “*your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Thessalonians 1:3). According to St Maximus the Confessor, the knowledge of God is the living faith which nurtures hope, and hope nurtures love.

Christian hope grows and yields fruits through the cooperation of man with God. Hope is God’s gift to the human being, but a gift which must be cultivated. That is why *the Christian is required to fight in this life against everything which can hinder him in fulfilling Christ’s will*. Our Saviour Jesus Christ Himself has shown, through His words and His life, that in the fallen world, profoundly affected by sin, by selfish passions, by demonic work and death, it is hard, but not impossible, for the human being to live according to God’s will, Who wants man’s liberation from sin and death and his attaining of eternal life and joy.

The temptations with which Jesus was confronted in the desert (cf. Matthew 4:4), namely: *material greed (the economic problem), the obsession of selfish pride (the problem of unreasonable self-esteem), the desire to rule this world (the political problem)*, named by St Maximus Confessor “the temptations of pleasure”, are a permanent part of Christian’s spiritual fight in this material world, which permanently attempts to substitute the Creator and to become an idol (cf. Romans 1:23). Departing from its vocation of being a stairway to heaven, the material world, through sin, inches towards becoming a gateway to hell. From window towards God, it moves towards becoming an opaque wall of isolation. However, all these above mentioned temptations were rejected by Jesus, Who showed that “*man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God*” (Matthew 4:4). Human being cannot exist only as a biological being, because it is a theological being, created in the image of God, who nourishes itself from its relationship of life and love with God. *The hope or the riches of His glorious inheritance* (cf. Ephesians 1:18) to which human being was called is, in fact, communion with Him, the eternal Being, a communion which starts in His Church and fulfils itself in the Kingdom of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:19).



The egotistical passion of ruling or dominating the terrestrial world, of creating domains, empires and paradises from the limited and passing material world, is, in fact, a perversion or deviance of human's desire for God's infinite love and richness; this deviation is – according to Maurice Blondel – *“the sinful search of the infinite in the finite things.”* Only when used in a state of gratefulness and prayerfulness towards God the Creator, the created world becomes a multiple language or a multifaceted dialogue of human being with God and of humans with each other. *This is possible to the extent to which the Christian has inside the Spirit of Christ*, is a witness and follower to Christ, in the sense that he thinks, lives and fights in this world as Jesus Christ, our Lord, has taught, lived and fought. To this end, Christian life is first of all a spiritual fight, a crucifixion of selfish passions and of the victory of humble love over egotism, in order to live, not in selfish confrontation, but in a communion of fraternal love, according to St Apostle Paul, who says: *“those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other”* (Galatians 5:24-26).

The fight of the faithful in this world with the greed for material things and money, with the desire to rule and become superior to others, is more than a moral exercise, it is a spiritual fight which concretely experiments the hope that only by God's help one can vanquish the sin in the human nature and the acts of evil or the spirits of evilness: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand” (Ephesians 6:12-13). And this armour is made of: the breastplate of righteousness; the Gospel of peace; the shield of faith; the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (cf. Ephesians 6:14-17). In addition, St Paul encourages us to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18).

The difficulty of Christian's struggle in the world is balanced by the joy of the victory brought by God's grace to those who love Christ and this joy strengthened by the hope in Christ. That is why the tension between the frailty or powerlessness of human nature, on one side, and the power of the working grace in the fighting Christians, which keeps the hope of victory alive, on the other side, was described by the same Apostle, a theologian of hope and shepherd of the universal Church, by the words: *“We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not rejected; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body”* (2 Corinthians 4:7-10).

When a human being ceases to be a fighter against sin, understood as selfish individual and collective existence, he or she can no longer be fully and constantly a humble being who loves God and people, neither a courageous promoter of the evangelical hope. The crisis of hope in the secularised human being can be seen today especially in the practice of suicide, euthanasia, abortion, drugs, domestic and social violence, and in other expressions of despair and spiritual disorientation.

However, every prayer and every act of social solidarity with the underprivileged is a source of hope, humanity and sanctification.

II. The Conference of European Churches – A Call for a Common Witness and a Ministry of the Gospel of Hope



On the occasion of the 50th anniversary since the foundation of the Conference of European Churches (1959-2009), we observe that underlining the importance of hope in Christ for the life of the Churches on our continent was a permanent goal of this organisation. The hope for a more just and peaceful world, inspired from the faith in the most glorified Triune God, was the binder through which the Conference of European Churches has encouraged Churches in Europe in a time when the people on this continent were living divided in antagonistic and hostile ideological and military blocs. The Conference of European Churches looks today towards the future, trusting that the hope in Jesus Christ will inspire the Churches in Europe through the grace of the Holy Spirit, from the Father's infinite love, to continue their common work for the service of today's people.

Many of the problems confronting Churches in Europe today are still influenced by the complex process of European integration. But the European integration regarded only from an economic, juridical, financial and strategic-defensive viewpoint is not sufficient. If we limit ourselves only to these, many aspects of the identity and capacity for dialogue of the Churches are neglected, unused or even humiliated. Thus, speaking about an authentic and real European integration, the spiritual and cultural factors are of prime importance. The spiritual factor, and, most of all, the religious one, because religion is the most profound dimension of human spirituality, cannot be disregarded. We are expressing here the joy that in the recent years the European institutions have shown increased interest for the cultural dimension of European integration in general, as well as for the dialogue with the European Churches. During the Third European Ecumenical Assembly, hosted by the Romanian Orthodox Church and other churches in Romania in Sibiu, Romania, in September 2007, several possibilities of cooperation between the Churches and the European institutions were highlighted, aiming at a fairer and safer world on our continent.

The entire world is preoccupied today by the economic crisis which affects it and towards which the Churches cannot remain indifferent. The economic crisis, which also includes a spiritual crisis, that of the greed for money, can, however, be converted in a chance for progress, even if it generates an entire series of social problems, which the Churches cannot circumvent. The Gospel shows that Jesus Christ has a preference for the poor, for those in suffering, for those who cannot rely entirely on themselves, and the Church, as the Mystical Body of Christ, cannot have another attitude. Therefore, in this context of economic crisis, the cooperation between the Churches in Eastern Europe and those in Western Europe must be a missionary one, which can bring hopes, prepared by critical observations, by changes of attitudes, by the rethinking of the relationship between spiritual and material, between the amassing of wealth and the solidarity with the poor.

In the current European context, marked by this profound spiritual crisis, there is also a certain tension between tradition and modernity, a loss of traditional Christian values, a painful instability of the family, a conflict between generations and much agnosticism, individualism, doubled by sectarianism, proselytism, and religious fundamentalism. Thus, there is a spiritual crisis indeed, because secularism (understood as an attitude of building the society and human life disregarding transcendental eternal values, as if God did not exist) does not solve the problems of personal and social life. Secularism leaves a void which, if not filled with authentic Christianity, is more and more filled by a diffuse and syncretistic religiosity, or by a radical and violent religiosity, as a reaction towards the nihilistic indifference of the secularised human being.

One can notice that, due to the massive movement of people from one area to another, generated by migration, a very complex phenomenon in today's Europe, as a result of the permanent search by humans for a better life, radical changes on the religious map of Europe took place. In this very complex context, which is, certainly, permanently changing and a great challenge for the Churches, we cannot afford to be nostalgic by attempting to restore a Christian medieval Europe. As this is a new reality which brings about new challenges, the Churches must find together new solutions for



new problems. We will have to become more and more used to religious pluralism, with respect for the others, however without falling into doctrinal or moral relativism. But how can we keep our own identity, when everything is changing around us? Of course, only through the cultivation and enrichment of our relationship with Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever (cf. Hebrews 13:8), in His Church, which is His Mystical Body.

Generally, today's European society – often more indifferent than unfaithful – needs the Church, because it needs spiritual healing and communion. This society needs healing especially because it identifies freedom of the person with egotistical individualism and with the possession of limited and passing material things; however, human life cannot be built strong and lasting on the spiritual void of forgetfulness of God and of the heavenly or transcendent calling of the human being. Without spiritual or metaphysical perspective, human life is quickly reduced to “mathematics”, namely a number of robotised individuals and quantities of finite products, for well defined purposes, but living in a world which is closed in itself, self-sufficient.

On another side, true Christian life is not content only with the belief that God exists somewhere in heavens; it fulfils itself as foretasting or living experience of Christ's presence in those who love Him, His Gospel and His Church. Let us remember that the Gospel according to Matthew ends with the words of Christ which He spoke before His Ascension to heavens: *“Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”* (Matthew 28:20).

Assured by this promise, let us put our faith in Him, the One Who will enlighten us with His Holy Spirit, enabling us to feel the love of God the Father and to give the world the good news of the Gospel of God's love for the entire humankind, for all nations and all human persons.



Signs of Hope
Bishop Dr Munib A. Younan
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)

1 Peter 1:3-12 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith – being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things into which angels long to look!”*

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

New birth, resurrection, inheritance, protection, salvation, rejoicing, love, joy, grace, glory, good news – this text from 1 Peter is full of hopeful words. It is appropriate that in this time of political turbulence, economic uncertainty, global warming, contagious diseases, pandemics, epidemics, extremism and other challenges, we turn our focus to signs of hope.

It is appropriate, too, that you have asked someone from what is often viewed as a hopeless situation to bring you words of hope. As a member of a minority church from a part of the world that has yet to have its hopes for peace based on justice be realized, I know a thing or two about seeing signs of hope amid innumerable challenges. This is why I have chosen the beautiful hymn of the resurrection – the ultimate sign of hope – as the text for today.

Jesus Christ’s resurrection is the center of our hope and the center of this life. It is central to the Gospels, which were written from the point of view of resurrection. It was in the resurrection that Jesus was revealed as Lord and Savior. It was because of the resurrection that the early church was given the power of the Spirit. It was because of the resurrection that those first Christians could look to the future and have a living hope in everlasting life. Likewise today, we cannot see the future, but because of the resurrection, we can have hope in the present and hope for the future. This is why Paul writes, “If Christ is not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in sins” (1 Cor. 15:17). So resurrection is the source of hope.

A theologian once said, “Hope is the inseparable companion of faith.” Faith believes in God, and hope awaits the moment when this truth is confirmed. Faith is the basis for hope, and hope perseveres to feed and affirm and renew faith’s vitality. Theologian Jürgen Moltmann says, “In the Christian life faith has the priority, but hope the primacy” (*Theology of Hope*, 2002). Without hope, faith weakens and dies. Martin Luther says, “Therefore faith is like dialectic, which conceives the idea of all the things that are to be believed, and hope is like rhetoric, which develops, urges, persuades and exhorts to steadiness, so that faith does not collapse in temptation but keeps the word and holds firmly to it” (Luther’s Works, 23-24).



What is the nature of this hope born of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? It is not a hope that aspires to life after death as if life on earth has no value or meaning. Rather, it is a hope that leads us to look at life here on earth from the perspective of eternal values: love, holiness and communion with God and the saints.

In the place where heaven met earth in the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ, there are many churches. Even though the ELCJHL is young compared to many of them, we are an integral part of the 2000 year history of Christianity, which began when the first witnesses to the resurrection went out from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. Centuries later, Protestant missionaries came here and revived the Gospel among us through diaconal and mission work. As a result, my church celebrates this year 170 years of evangelical mission, 50 years of the royal recognition of the establishment of the synod and 30 years of the establishment of the Arab bishopric. Each day we live out this heritage as an expression of our experience of the resurrection.

Martin Luther once said, “If I knew that Christ would come tomorrow, I would still plant an apple tree today.” We Palestinian Christians, living as we do in a hopeless situation, nevertheless plant figurative and real olive trees every day by giving our people signs of hope and reminding them that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Now, allow me to plant olive trees here in Lyon by sharing with you signs of hope from my church, signs that exist because of our strong faith in the Risen Lord.

Sign of hope: our ecclesiastical work

God calls the ELCJHL to proclaim the Gospel within an Arab context in the Holy Lands. To preach the gospel and administer the sacraments is always a vivid sign of hope. Along with preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments in our congregations, we serve our communities, educate our children, uplift our women and train future church leaders.

Sign of hope: our ecumenical ministry

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land works closely with the other Christian churches in the Holy Land and the Middle East to interpret the difficult and often tense circumstances of daily life in Israel and Palestine. Given the choice to live and witness together or to die alone, we choose to witness together. Allow me to discuss some of the shared concerns and efforts of Jerusalem churches.

1. Emigration of Christians: In 1948, Christians made up 26 percent of the population of Israel-Palestine. Due largely to emigration, that number has fallen to less 2 percent today. To stem the tide of emigration, Christian churches work together to encourage people to stay through education, job creation, housing development and strengthening church institutions.

2. Shared Jerusalem: Jerusalem is the spiritual home for the three Abrahamic faiths. Our vision is one of a shared future in a shared city. We reject any claims of exclusive access to Jerusalem by any religion. Each must have its own identity and free access to its holy places. This is only possible if it is truly shared the way God intended.

The Patriarchs and Heads of Local Christian Churches in Jerusalem jointly call for a Jerusalem that is open to all residents and pilgrims, where property rights are observed and whose holy places are accessible to worshippers.



3. The Lutheran-Reformed Mutual Recognition Agreement, signed by seven churches in the region in 2006, was an important step for evangelical churches in the Middle East. Foreign missions planted churches here over the years, reviving the Gospel among us; now it is our responsibility to preach the Gospel, administer the sacraments and continue to revive the evangelical witness. This is why my church, through the Fellowship of the Middle East Evangelical Churches, initiated this effort for mutual recognition.

4. Accompaniment – Our accompaniment relationship with our partners is a great source of hope. In accompaniment, partners walk together as Christ walked with the disciples on the way to Emmaus. In accompaniment, we are refreshed as we break bread together and go to the world to teach, preach, baptize and make ourselves and others his disciples. As we accompany one another, we are reminded that we are interdependent, not independent.

Sign of hope: our interfaith ministry

Despite tense political circumstances, the ELCJHL continues to engage in interfaith dialogue, seeking to contribute to a just peace throughout the Middle East. Through interfaith dialogue, we affirm the contributions of each religion toward the values of justice, peace, reconciliation, coexistence, forgiveness and toleration.

Our interfaith efforts include Jewish-Christian dialogue in the Jonah Dialogue Group and Muslim-Christian dialogue that includes statements of mutual respect such as the 2008 Amman Declaration. Dialogue and cooperation among the three faiths is facilitated by the Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land, formed in 2005 to promote interreligious understanding and cooperation.

Sign of hope: our ministry of reconciliation

Some say pursuing peace is too political. But for me, peacemaking is not simply political, it is biblical. When political realities cause my people to lose faith, it is no longer a political but a spiritual issue. That is why the ELCJHL is deeply invested in seeking reconciliation in this land. I believe true reconciliation has the following marks:

1. Genuine reconciliation can grow only in a culture of truthfulness.
2. Reconciliation is built on justice, and the fruit of justice is peace.
3. For true reconciliation to occur, we must be willing to forgive.

Sign of hope: a new day has dawned

St. Peter, in his hymn of resurrection, encourages us when he says, “In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials.” The ELCJHL is a suffering church. But this church says that as long as there is a living Lord, there is hope for the Middle East. Empowered by the resurrection, our church has become an instrument of peace, a broker for justice, a beacon of hope, a defender of human rights including women’s rights, an initiator of interfaith dialogue and a minister of reconciliation.

My sisters and brothers, we stand as a living church, full of hope, in the light of a new dawn. Do not forget us. Do not leave us alone. Pray for us, for our mission is yours and yours is ours. May God bless you.



«Appelés à une seule espérance en Christ» (cf. Ep 4,4)

Ani Ghazarian

Doctorante – Université de Lausanne, Eglise Apostolique Arménienne

Parler de *l'espérance* (ἐλπίς) en Christ, c'est dire la place que tient l'avenir dans la vie religieuse du peuple de Dieu, un avenir de bonheur auquel sont appelés tous les hommes (1 Tm 2,4). Les promesses de Dieu ont révélé peu à peu à son peuple la splendeur de cet avenir qui ne sera pas une réalité de ce monde, mais «une patrie meilleure» où l'homme sera «semblable à Dieu» (1 Jn 2,25; 3,2). Ce sont la confiance en Dieu et en sa fidélité, la foi en ses promesses, qui garantissent la réalité de cet avenir (cf. He 11,1) et qui permettent au moins d'en deviner les merveilles. Il est dès lors possible au croyant d'espérer cet avenir.

L'espérance chrétienne est liée à un *appel* de Dieu comme une vocation. Cette dernière est un appel à être membres du corps du Christ. Le Nouveau Testament conçoit l'unité de l'Eglise non comme une unité sociologique, mais comme une unité dont la réalité essentielle se trouve dans le Christ lui-même et dans son union avec son peuple (Ac 9,4ss; 1 Co 12,12; Jn 15,1s). Il y a *un seul corps* (ἐν σώμα), comme on lit en Ep 4,4.

L'*unité* dans le seul corps est fortement accentuée en Ep 4,1-16 et est perçue comme un «être en Christ». Dieu ne laisse pas ceux qu'il appelle perdus dans l'isolement de l'individualisme ou dans l'anonymat des masses, mais en les unissant au Christ il les unit les uns aux autres, si bien que vivant d'une même vie reçue du Christ, ils composent cette unité d'une extraordinaire complexité, le Corps du Christ (1,23; 4,12; 5,23.30). Et l'unicité de l'Esprit est inséparable de l'unicité du Corps, car c'est par son Esprit que Dieu unit les croyants au Christ et les uns aux autres en un seul Corps. Ainsi, sans employer le mot ἐκκλησία = église, Paul rappelle l'unité de l'Eglise dans le Corps du Christ, qui n'est pas une réalité statique, mais est sans cesse créé et recréé par l'Esprit. Et Paul définit l'orientation de son dynamisme en s'adressant à ses lecteurs. Ne sont-ils pas le Corps du Christ en vertu de la vocation que Dieu a adressé à chacun d'eux? Or leur vocation ne finit pas dans leur condition présente, mais dans l'héritage qui leur est promis (1,14, 18; 3,6) ou, comme Paul le dit au v. 4, dans *l'espérance*. Et cette espérance propre à la vocation des croyants, qui leur est donnée avec leur vocation même, cette espérance est *une*, si bien qu'en concentrant sur elle l'attente de tous, en se présentant à tous comme leur fin commune, elle contribue puissamment à les unir⁶. L'unité naît de l'amour de Dieu en Jésus Christ qui, en liant à lui les Eglises, les lie les unes aux autres.

Dans le monde actuel, l'église œcuménique est composée d'Eglises qui reconnaissent Jésus Christ comme Dieu. Elle trouve leur unité en Christ et il est de leur devoir de faire cause commune pour chercher et exprimer cette unité dans la *vie pratique*, avec la foi, l'espérance et l'amour. Et le service que l'Eglise rend au monde doit être à la fois une manifestation d'unité et un appel à l'unité. C'est pourquoi le Nouveau Testament atteste que l'Eglise participe à la fois à la vie de ce monde et à celle du monde à venir (Ep 2,6). Elle doit, certes, s'acquitter des tâches qui lui sont assignées en ce monde en restant et en proclamant dans l'espérance chrétienne le monde à venir. C'est dans cette union que l'église œcuménique est appelée à espérer le monde à venir et à s'identifier à l'espérance du monde

⁶ Ch. Masson, «L'épître de saint Paul aux Ephésiens», Neuchâtel, Paris, 1952, p. 184-186.



actuel. La fin «terrestre» de l'Eglise, c'est-à-dire le terme de son pèlerinage et de sa lutte, est le «retour du Christ»⁷. Vers lui était tendue l'espérance des premiers chrétiens. Vers lui reste tendue l'espérance de l'Eglise: ses rites, ses sacrements, surtout l'eucharistie, rassemblent en une même évocation l'œuvre accomplie par le Christ en son premier avènement, et l'accomplissement de cette œuvre par son retour. Entre les deux se trouve l'édification du corps du Christ sur terre qui est figuré dans l'union de l'ἐκκλησία avec de nombreux membres (1 Co 12, 12-27; Rm 12, 3-8) qui, chacun à sa place, ont à remplir leur fonction dans nos sociétés.

Au final, l'espérance, vertu théologale, ne détourne pas le chrétien des objets de son activité terrestre, mais les lui fait dépasser et l'en détache peu à peu. Vertu enfin de la poursuite d'un idéal de communion avec Dieu et avec les autres, elle ne saurait sans une déviation fondamentale inspirer ou justifier le retour égoïste sur soi. Son objectif, et l'objectif de tout le monde finalement, est le salut qui consiste à *perdre son âme pour la trouver*.

⁷ P. Bailly, «Espérance», *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, Lutetiae Parisiorum, tome IV, Paris, p. 1207-1231.



Speech Anthea Cox

Re British Churches' submission on CEC CSC work programme

The Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland, the Church of England's House of Bishops' Europe Panel, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, responded together to the draft work programme of the Church and Society Commission. Although the submission focused on CEC CSC, its analysis could be applied to any of the Commissions and the churches were not signalling out CEC CSC for special treatment.

The churches were mindful of the growing pressures faced by Member Churches from Britain, the tendency for financial retrenchment leading to a re-examination of existing priorities as well as methods of working. And this was against the backdrop of the global financial crisis and the reality of a significant economic downturn across Europe.

The churches in Britain want to stress the importance they see in CEC through its Church and Society Commission enabling them to engage with social and political issues. The CSC is seen as being an essential resource for the churches in this regard. Three concerns that were considered in the preparation of the paper were

- the overwhelming number of issues, that seemed to be increasingly expanding, placing considerable demands on the staff and resources
- the need to support churches' own decision making in response to debate and the problematic nature of an ecumenical body trying to represent the diversity of the CEC Member Churches in European Dialogue and the European Institutions.
- the lack of strategic direction flagged up by the submission is itself reflective of a lack of organisational cohesion in CEC as a whole that is marked by a multiplicity of competing decision-making bodies that encourages working practices that are neither transparent nor predictable.

Important to the British Churches were partnerships built on consultation and participation. Initiatives taken by the CSC need the full and active involvement of Member Churches. Ecumenical dialogue on 'Church and Society' matters must reach beyond the Brussels-based political debate into a full-blown European Ecumenical Public Space that helps to create understanding and respect for each others traditions, identity and thinking.

The British Churches agree that the proposed CSC work programme focuses on the questions, 'What is CEC CSC best placed to do' and 'what can be better done by individual Member Churches'.

The British Churches in their submission therefore suggested four strategic objectives for the Church and Society Commission to approach its work:

Developing CEC CSC as a EU and Pan-European Public Affairs Resource for its Member Churches



For many Member Churches, being kept informed of legislative developments in Europe is a core priority. CEC CSC is well placed to provide a whole range of public affairs services to better link its Member Churches with the decision-making centres of the European Union.

Developing CEC CSC as a European Ecumenical Think-Tank

It is important to the British Churches that the work be underpinned by theological and ethical reflection. Developing CEC CSC as the premier source of ecumenical analysis, informed Christian debate and influential ideas on how to build a values-based Europe, should be a key strategic objective for the next 5 years.

Developing CEC CSC as a capacity-building resource for its Member Churches

The resourcing of Member Churches is a vital role for the CSC. This may be expressed in terms of enabling shared reflection to take place, strengthening member engagement, providing specific support, or helping individual members to develop their own strategies.

Developing CEC CSC as a model for new organisational relationships

In Britain there has been a significant change in the ecumenical architecture with some churches significantly reducing their financial support to ecumenical bodies, whilst at the same time new and more organic ecumenical partnerships have developed. As churches we need to be alert and actively work at finding new ways in which the voices of the churches contribute to debates in the public sphere. CEC CSC needs to recognise and work with such shifts in order that its work meets and serves the aspirations of the Member Churches. To achieve these priorities it is vital that the organizational culture and structure of CEC changes and responds.



Bible Study
Bishop Dr. Dr. h.c. Wolfgang Huber
President of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany

I

A few weeks ago I received a letter (see attachment) with an impressive recollection from the year 1939. The person writing the letter recalled the German-speaking Protestant congregation in Cambridge in the 1930s. He wrote: "The congregation was mainly composed of people who for reasons of politics or race had had to leave Germany. They were holding their services in the Round Church in the city centre at the invitation of the Church of England. In the year 1939 arrangements had been made as usual for a united ecumenical service. Shortly afterwards, Germany invaded Poland and England declared war against us. Our pastor phoned his English friend and colleague to say that because of these terrible events the arrangements for the united service should be cancelled. The reply was, 'Yes, it is indeed terrible, but, surely there can be no better reason for us to pray together.' So, shortly after the beginning of hostilities between England and Germany, the two congregations of the warring nations prayed together."

Similarly, in the course of the history of the Conference of European Churches, there have been hostility, violent conflict and war between European neighbours. The time when CEC came into being fifty years ago was a time marked by heightened confrontation between East and West. The cold war was an occasion when CEC prayed across frontiers. Since then a central concern has been the determination to maintain links and dialogue between the churches across frontiers and to encourage reconciliation. The situation of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants has led CEC to defend their rights, to encourage the churches to defend human rights and to coordinate joint aid. Theological dialogue and exchange between different traditions have been further important tasks. There have been many other issues that have taken us across frontiers to share together in prayer and to provide aid.

Today CEC has reached a point at which it must find new opportunities to which to devote its energies. Amid the multiplicity of issues and activities it must again find the central ecumenical idea for Europe and set out in common ecumenical action. In a Europe that is seeking its way ahead, we desire to give a common witness to God's mercy and peace. That is our ecumenical task. And its basis is the core of the Gospel. In our ecumenical endeavours it is our desire to demonstrate that this is what we concentrate on. That is what we concentrate on, but our horizons are wide – that, as I see it, is the great task confronting this Assembly.

As it does this, the Assembly needs to be aware that it has this dual role. The reconciled diversity of the Christian churches of Europe can be a significant example for the task confronting European society as a whole: that is, to shape our diversity on the foundation of common values and beliefs. At the same time, however, CEC also has the task to speak with the united voice of the churches to the situation in Europe. Today we need to make it clear that the contribution of the Christian faith to European society is indispensable. To maintain diversity and to speak with a united voice – that is the dual task facing CEC today with particular urgency.



At the beginning of the Second World War, as described in the letter I quoted from, the people of England in that Europe going up in flames threatening to destroy their fellowship in the faith, concentrated on the core of their faith so that Christians could stand by one another. Following their example, I should like this morning to reflect with you on the basis of our ecumenical fellowship. Only with that as our starting point will we be able to tackle the tasks before us. For that, I turn now to a passage in the New Testament that is for me a magna charta for all our ecumenical work.

II

In Ephesians chapter 4, verses 3-6 we read:

Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. (NRSV)

According to many biblical scholars, the person addressing us in this passage is someone who feels committed to speak with the authority of the apostle Paul. As Paul's successor, aware that he thinks like Paul, he addresses the congregation in Ephesus. He has the same approach as Paul, addresses his congregation, and reminds them of the message of the great apostle to the gentiles. He belongs to the next generation, and with his own perspective he develops the apostle Paul's message further and makes it contemporary.

A basic theme of his letter is the united nature of the Christian community. He speaks of the unity of those who confess Christ, quite apart from whether they were previously reckoned to be Jews or gentiles. At the centre of the letter there is a matter that had already troubled Paul and which, one generation later, was still a pressing and explosive issue.

It is a clearly structured letter and it falls into two parts. In the first part, and particularly in chapter 2, the author describes the unity of the congregation, living under the same new roof of their faith in Christ as promise and message of salvation. The core sentence is the message for gentiles in Ephesians 2: 19: "You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household." From the standpoint of those who were committed to the old covenant and had long belonged to God's chosen people, he opens the door in the name of God and declares that Christians from among the gentiles are no longer simply guests. Instead, he unreservedly declares that they are full members of God's people and that salvation is theirs.

That was because Christ had broken down the wall that had separated the two groups from one another. The categories of 'uncircumcised' and 'circumcised' counted no longer. Christ had brought reconciliation and peace between people who had confronted one another so irreconcilably. And it would be to scorn Christ, if they were to think again in terms of dividing walls.

This magnificent passage is unhesitating, does not weigh up the difficulties that could ensue, and is not afraid that the house might prove too small. There is enough room in God's house. The great invitation in Ephesians is to everyone to be members of the household.

Together with the Sermon on the Mount this passage has to the present day been an inspiration for the peace witness of the Christian churches. I myself remember exactly when this powerful inspiration from the letter to the Ephesians first came home to me. It was at that time when Europe was divided not only by frontiers but also by barbed wire, with the Berlin wall as its most massive section. That was the background to the German Protestant Kirchentag in Hanover in 1967 with the theme



"Christ is our peace." The great philosopher, Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker told us that peace is the body of truth and truth is the soul of peace. The core of that insight was that, because of the division of the continent of Europe, we must hold on to the fact that we belong together. We hardly dared then to hope that the division of our continent could be ended in our lifetime. But that is exactly what happened a bit more than twenty years later – exactly twenty years ago this year. Christ is our peace. With deep gratitude and emotion we can confess: Yes, the iron curtain was torn down, the wall demolished, the division of our continent ended. Together we can declare our faith and carry out our task of reconciliation and testify to the peace of Christ that is given to us.

With chapter 4, to which we turn this morning, there begins the moral, exhortatory section of the letter. So that the project of the peace of Christ has a future, so that the work of salvation does not come to nothing because of the sloth of those who are called to reconcile, there follows from this chapter onwards encouragement and indications as to how this work can succeed. This section is full of the author's passionate commendation of fellowship and openness to one another.

The apostle addresses the Christians in Ephesus as people who have a calling. You are called, you are called to go out. You are not like people who sit at home, content with themselves, gazing at the floor, and only accepting as valid what has always been familiar and what they have been taught. You are called and chosen. This calling is described in a quite distinctive way. Unity in the Spirit is to be maintained by the bond of peace. What is being described is not a unity achieved by compulsion, but through mutual care. A way of belonging together is presented to us that grows out of diversity and embraces the whole of life. Our letter uses the word "peace" to describe it, peace that includes the whole fullness of life, life as it is meant to be, for which the Old Testament uses the word "shalom."

This fullness is expressed in the letter in an unforgettable threefold way: one body, one Spirit, one hope. In that threefold way it indicates the distinctive features of any Christian community. As a congregation, you are one body. One Spirit shapes you. And you have one hope.

By means of this threefold description, the author makes a link with the image, already used by Paul, of the congregation as the body of Christ. It was a familiar image. You thought of the foot, which, because it had nothing in common with the hand, considered that it did not belong to it; or of the ear, that spontaneously compared itself with the eye, and had doubts whether it then had anything in common with it (1 Cor. 12: 15-16). This familiar pictorial language is here highly intensified: one body, one Spirit, one hope. Immediately hearers and readers would get the point: it is that the Christian community and its visible form in the world belong inseparably to one another, that God's Spirit creates fellowship between Christians in the midst of their everyday problems, and that they have the high calling to hope. The certainty that they formed one body, the confidence that they were guided by God's Spirit, and the shared hope that sees beyond the here and now – those are the characteristic features of every Christian church.

Confident certainty, confident trust and confident hope are there expressed. Even more important is the question: on what are they based? That question is given an answer that is also threefold: one Lord, one faith, one baptism. The first threefold formulation of body, Spirit and hope was an answer to the question 'Who are we?' Now the second threefold formulation provides an answer to the question 'Where do we come from?'

At the very beginning there is the basic confession of the early Christians: 'Jesus Christ is Lord' (Phil. 2: 11; 1 Cor. 12: 3; Rom. 10: 9). You can see here an allusion to some arguments, even in the earliest Christian community, over who was their chief, for example, Apollos, Cephas or Paul (1 Cor. 1: 12). 'How can that be? Is Christ divided?' Paul had already pointedly asked the Corinthians. The letter to



the Ephesians repeats it in the same sense. One Lord. It is your calling to confess that. The one Lord cannot be divided. Faith in him holds them together and does not divide them.

The idea of the one faith also inseparably belongs here. Whenever the New Testament speaks of faith, it is not only an inner state of mind, nor one possible opinion among others. Faith means trust, becoming involved there where the power of God's goodness is at work. becoming receptive to the salvation that encounters us in Jesus Christ. 'One faith' does not mean a common creed or doctrinal tradition. Rather, it describes a way of living and a relationship to reality as a whole that is shaped by salvation in Christ.

Belonging to those who confess Christ as Lord and live in the realm of the power of God's goodness finds its expression in baptism. Hence the third element: one baptism. Baptism is the ecumenical sacrament par excellence. Nowadays we are increasingly aware of that. In our churches in Germany there is a movement under way to make us more aware of this ecumenical nature of baptism. I see in that one of the most promising ecumenical developments. In Germany in 2007 we expressed this in the form of an ecumenical agreement on the mutual recognition of baptism. In this important ecumenical document we have made direct reference to this passage in Ephesians 4. It is also highly probable that the wording used here in Ephesians has its origin in a baptismal liturgy of the early church. If so, that would be an even more definite indication of the ecumenical significance of baptism.

Just as baptism marks the initiation of our Christian life, just as faith is the foundation for living out our Christian life, just as our one Lord certainly leads us, so it is also with our ecumenical fellowship. It is not ours to do what we like with. It is not ours to shape according to our liking. It is not a matter of a decision that we can comply with or ignore. It is also not a matter of a goal that we can strive towards with greater, or lesser, enthusiasm. The belonging of Christians to one another and of the church is rather something that is given to us with that very foundation of our faith: one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

It is not we who bring ecumenism into being: it is a gift. And the question addressed to us is, rather, whether we rise to this previously given gift, or whether we fall short of it. We are challenged as to whether we give expression to this basis in the organisation of our church fellowship, whether we let ourselves be guided in a recognizable way by the one Spirit of God, whether we in our day are witnesses to the one hope. The one Lord also urges us to be one body. The one faith commits us to be guided by the one Spirit. The one baptism makes us witnesses to the one hope.

What we have here is a short hymn, but, although short, it is a sublime hymn to unity, quite comparable to the sublime hymn to love in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. This sublime hymn to unity flows into praise of the one God and Father. The fellowship of the church, in its witness, its service and its hope, has as its foundation its confession of Christ, its common faith and its one baptism. It is this fellowship that is the basis of our praise of the one God, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

With this praise of God the Letter to the Ephesians places our Christian life in the widest setting conceivable. It portrays an ecumenism of praise and thanksgiving to God. It does not begin with what is required of us ecumenically. Rather, it reminds us of what is entrusted to us ecumenically. It says first of all what we are ecumenically before it demands what we should become ecumenically. We here encounter in a magnificent and impressive way an ecumenism in the indicative tense. By recalling what is entrusted to us in common, it makes clear our calling to be the body of Christ together.



The choice of this image reminds us that belonging to one another ecumenically does not imply uniformity. Ephesians does not link unity to any uniform structure of relationships of ministry or structure, nor to any universal uniformity of the liturgy. Its ecumenical litmus test is whether different people are being guided by the same Spirit and are testifying to the same hope. And the sure foundation for that is that they are bound together by the same baptism, hold to the same faith and confess the one Lord, the crucified and risen Christ.

III

Although, on first hearing this short passage, we might think that so much emphasis is being placed on unity that there is no room for diversity, on closer inspection we can see that that is not the case. The sevenfold unity statement in Ephesians describes rather a dynamic unity in which diversity definitely has its place. What we have here is not an ecumenism imposed from above, in which a conclusion is drawn from the unity of God that the church should be uniform. What we have here is an ecumenism from below that makes room for diversity, but, as it does so, has confidence in the strength of its unity. On the basis of thankfulness for the given unity of our confession of Christ, we seek ways to bring diverse gifts together into common witness to this unity.

That is a dynamic understanding of unity, and we have also seen its political equivalent in the recent history of Europe. Twenty years after the peaceful changes in Europe, we can thankfully say that a unity in diversity has been given us for which we had long hardly dared to hope. To shape it is the great political task ahead of us in Europe. As churches we wish to make our contribution to it.

The ecumenical community which we wish to shape is not a rigid template but a vital process. It is a road, along which we shall come again and again to significant junctions and dividing of the ways, where we shall need to decide what direction we should take. As I see it, we stand today at such a junction.

Many European churches in these years are engaged in discovering anew their place in society. In face of the radical social changes through which we have passed and which is by no means at an end, they are discovering their role anew and are attempting to find an appropriate form for their witness. In the Evangelical Church in Germany we are taking our direction for this from a policy document of 2006 entitled "Kirche der Freiheit" (Church of Freedom). It is our aim to feed the Reformation heritage into the common witness of the churches. We wish to emphasize the particular insight of faith entrusted to us so that it can reach out to those who have become unfamiliar with the confession of one Lord, one faith, one baptism. We are trying to link the missionary task before us in today's Europe with our ecumenical obligation, in which we are involved as churches with one another.

Today we have to find a fresh balance between the common message entrusted to us and the many possibilities of expressing it in the life of our churches. That task is not always greeted with enthusiasm. Many have settled down into their particular niche, consider their own room possibly as the real world, and thus have lost sight of the whole house. They change Christian faith into a particular life-style that can be cultivated and preserved only in a small circle of the likeminded. In their self-contained world they are at the same time disappointed that only a few are hearing their message. And they then ask whether Christian belief has any relevance for developments in European society. However, as Christians, it is our conviction that our understanding of humankind as made in the image of God, our confidence in the power of forgiveness and reconciliation, and our hope for a life of justice and of peace can be a powerful force for the future of Europe. To that end, we need to combine in a fresh way the diversity of our traditions and the common elements of our faith.



Out of this combination of diversity and what we have in common, a fresh ecumenical vision for Europe can emerge. Our response in our diversity to the unity that is given us can become the leit-motif of the ecumenical movement in Europe. Diversity and unity, breadth and concentration can thus be combined anew. The breadth of issues and networks must not be lost, when we reflect on our common witness. Our different traditions must not lose their distinctive hues, when we together make visible the one foundation on which we stand: one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

The unity of the church does not need to be reinvented. It is the foundation on which we stand. This change of perspective is the decisive step for the new direction necessary for the ecumenical movement today. It will help us to see that our diversity is not a threat to our unity but an expression of it.

Ecumenical cooperation presupposes above all that we constantly return to the common sources of our faith. For it is out of them that our faith constantly gains fresh strength to renew our common witness.

Ecumenical cooperation is further demonstrated in the way in which ecumenical partners are bound to one another in their mutual respect for their respective ecclesiologies. Just as ecumenical cooperation rests on participants being faithful to their own church, so it also rests on their having this mutual respect.

Finally, ecumenical cooperation is expressed in the way in which common tasks are also undertaken together. Our ecumenical fellowship must be maintained in our response to the great crises and challenges of our time. The irresponsible actions that have led to the present economic crisis, the danger of disastrous climate change still hanging over us, and the continuing unrest in many parts of the world – all these are challenging us to engage in common witness.

Yet, in all this, our ecumenical cooperation rests on our joy in this precious treasure of the Church of Jesus Christ, which is a sacred trust to us all. Our rejoicing in this precious shared treasure is the theme of the sublime hymn of unity that can guide us in all our endeavours. It is a joy in which we all can share:

One body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.



Hand in Hand

Vision and Work Priorities from a Fresh Perspective

- Presentation from the Youth Delegates -

1. Unifying

We affirm the importance of maintaining the unity of CEC's Member Churches, and envisage a future where we can expand that unity to include all Christian churches. We hope for a strong sense of unity which celebrates the rich diversity of Christian traditions. We hope that one day we will move towards mutual recognition of the sacraments.

To achieve this vision CEC work priorities should be in:

- ❖ Developing dialogue with churches that are not members of CEC, including Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal, independent and migrant churches.
- ❖ Implementing the Charta Oecumenica
- ❖ To strengthen the relationships between Member Churches so as to promote mutual understanding and a sincere atmosphere of tolerance, and to support straight communication in order to avoid inner conflicts.

2. Sharing

We believe that sharing our experiences through dialogue is at the heart of ecumenical life. This dialogue should be patient, respectful and open-minded, allowing space both for genuine expression and acceptance of diversity. We assert that such sharing is the only way to build peace.

To achieve this vision CEC work priorities should be in:

- ❖ Providing the opportunity to share best practice, both in ecumenical activities and in social justice issues.
- ❖ Producing a clear 'mission statement' for CEC that can guide the work of the organization and its commissions.
- ❖ Building stronger links between the commissions to develop common values.

3. Acting

Words are nothing without action. We believe that CEC, along with its Member Churches, can use its experience of dialogue to contribute to building an open, just, peaceful and sustainable society. Churches are powerful bodies for transforming society because they encompass such a wide sector of Europe's population.

To achieve this vision CEC work priorities should be in:



- ❖ Reflecting internally within CEC and Member Churches to address environmental issues, sustainability, ethical investment, social justice and fair employment practice and to demonstrate our commitments through action.
- ❖ Changing the communication structures of CEC to focus on reaching local congregations in order that statements made by CEC can reach grassroots level. This could involve, for example, publishing resources and engaging further with the media.
- ❖ Encouraging the churches to use communication structures effectively for sharing information between CEC and local congregations.
- ❖ Producing a human rights manual for churches to help them to engage with the issue.
- ❖ Supporting and promoting the voice of more marginalized churches, especially churches from countries outside the EU.

4. Welcoming

We believe in the importance of building a welcoming and inclusive community which embraces the diversity of its members. We look towards a future where everybody is made welcome by the wider community of the church, regardless of gender, ethnicity, denomination, age or position in the church. We see Europe as such a welcoming community, open to the rest of the world.

To achieve this vision:

- ❖ We commend the work of the CCME towards the full support and integration of migrants and refugees.
- ❖ We support the focus on the issue of gender, such as the creation of a 'gender desk'.

And CEC work priorities should be in:

- ❖ Maintaining close contact with international, European and national organizations, particularly seeking to build closer contacts with missionary organizations.
- ❖ Engaging in interfaith dialogue to promote acceptance of diversity and mutual understanding.

5. Meeting

Our vision is of a community where people from all backgrounds are constantly in contact to learn, work, live and worship together. CEC can be active in building such networks of contact which encompass the whole world. CEC can help to build such a community through training and the use of social media, as well as through organizing face-to-face encounters.

To achieve this vision CEC work priorities should be in:

- ❖ Continuing to work to build a bridge between East and West Europe
- ❖ Encouraging the concept of exchanges between Member Churches, using the 'twinning' concept to link churches from different denominational backgrounds and countries
- ❖ Expanding the provision of training courses and conferences beyond the General Assembly.



“Zu einer Hoffnung in Christus berufen”
50-Jahresfeier der KEK
Grusswort
Dr. Alexandros K. Papaderos

„Ich danke dir dafür, dass ich wunderbar gemacht bin; wunderbar sind deine Werke; das erkennt meine Seele.“ (Ps. 139:14)

Mit diesen Worten des Psalmisten
möchte ich der Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen
zu ihrem 50. Geburtstag grüßen und ihr gratulieren!
Ja, meine Seele erkennt:

Wunderbar hat Gott die Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen gemacht.
Ohne Seinen heiligen Willen wäre sie nicht gewesen;
nicht 50 Jahre alt geworden!
Wunderbar ist sie, wie alle Seine Werke,
Dank und Ehre sei Gott,
dem Vater und dem Sohne und dem Hl. Geist. Amen!

* * *

Zuversichtlich hoffe ich, aus der Seele von Ihnen allen diese Worte des Dankes an Gott ausgesprochen zu haben, verehrte Väter, liebe Brüder und Schwestern!

Hinzufügen möchte ich meinen persönlichen Dank für die freundliche Einladung, insbesondere für die ehrenvolle Gelegenheit, mit Ihnen allen diesen Festakt der Erinnerung, der Danksagung und der Hoffnung feiern zu dürfen.

Der Rückblick auf die 50 Lebensjahre der KEK bewegt mein Herz, in dieser wunderschönen feierlichen Atmosphäre ein weiteres Wort des Dankes zu sagen.

Dies gilt zunächst meiner eigenen Kirche, dem Ökumenischen Patriarchat von Konstantinopel, den verewigten Ökumenischen Patriarchen Athenagoras und Dimitrios und dem – wohl zur Freude von uns allen – anwesenden Ökumenischen Patriarchen, Seiner All Heiligkeit Bartholomaios. Ihnen vor allem verdanke ich die Inspiration für das ökumenische Engagement, wie auch das große Vertrauen, seitens des Ökumenischen Patriarchats ganze 30 Jahre lang im Zentralausschuss der KEK zu dienen, dieser Schule des ökumenischen Zueinanders und Lernens.

Der Dank gilt ebenfalls allen Mitgliedskirchen der KEK und deren Vertretern, die mich immer wieder in dieses Amt gewählt haben, den jeweiligen Mitgliedern des Präsidiums und des Zentralausschusses, dem verehrten Colin Williams und allen früheren Generalsekretären, die mir wichtige Missionen und Aufgaben anvertraut haben.

Wir begehen diesen denkwürdigen Tag hier in Lyon; in der Stadt des Hl. Eirenaios, des großen griechischen Kirchenvaters der einen ungeteilten Kirche Christi. Er kam im 2. Jh. aus dem Osten hierher



und hat eine heute noch tragende theologische und geistliche Brücke zum Westen geschlagen. Wir erinnern uns: Die Brücke ist archetypisches Symbol für die KEK!

Die mir gestellte Aufgabe, ein paar Worte über die erste Dekade der KEK zu sagen, ist nicht leicht. Vermutlich bin ich zwar der „Dienstälteste“ unter allen Menschen in der Versammlung, die gesegnet wurden, die KEK im Laufe ihrer 50 Jahre in der einen oder anderen Eigenschaft zu begleiten. Dennoch kann ich aus persönlichen Erinnerungen nur wenig über die Gründung und Konsolidierung unserer Konferenz berichten.

Neben den schriftlichen Quellen helfen mir dabei frühere persönliche Gespräche mit einigen der Pioniere der KEK. Ich denke vor allem an in Gottes Barmherzigkeit ruhende Personen wie den niederländischen Pfarrer Egbert Emmen, den Deutschen Pfarrer und Präses Ernst Wilm, den Metropoliten des Ökumenischen Patriarchats Jakobos, später Erzbischof von Amerika, an Nikos Nissiotis aus der Kirche Griechenlands, an Anna – Brita Castren, Finnland, natürlich auch an den vor kurzer Zeit verstorbenen Patriarchen von Moskau und ganz Russland Alexy; und vor allem an Glen Garfield Williams, den nicht immer bequemen, stets jedoch schöpferischen und dynamischen ersten Generalsekretär der KEK. Viel zu erzählen hatte auch seine treue Sekretärin Ada Silenzi, der die KEK nicht wenig verdankt.

Erste Dekade der KEK also!

Wann beginnt sie eigentlich? Mit dem Jahr 1959? Formell JA! Als Vision jedoch viel früher. Besonders relevant sind Begegnungen aus den Jahren 1951, 1955, 1957. Eine so ausgedehnte „Dekade“ ist natürlich nicht in wenigen Worten zusammenzufassen. Es sei mir deshalb erlaubt, Ihre noch wache Erinnerung, bzw. Ihre wertvolle Aufmerksamkeit auf nur wenige markante Bilder und Ereignisse zu konzentrieren:

Europa ist, der Etymologie dieses griechischen Namens ΕΥΡΩΠΗ nach, eine Frau mit einer breiten Stirn, einem schönen Gesicht oder einem weit reichenden Blick. Kaum etwas war von diesen Eigenschaften im Europa der 50er Jahre zu erkennen. Gräber, Ruinen, offene Wunden, alpträumhafte Erinnerungen, Hass, Armut, Elend, Spaltungen, Machtblöcke, atomare Bedrohung, überschatteten Europas Gesicht unter dem dauernden Druck des Kalten Krieges.

Unzählige Divisionen in Europa....

Visionen für die Zukunft?

So wie einige Politiker es damals wagten, aus dem europäischen Chaos eine neue, lebensfähige Ordnung zu bilden, so legten auch manche kirchliche Visionäre ihr Zeugnis davon ab, dass der christliche Glaube Mut schenkt, in der Kraft des Hl. Geistes zuversichtlich in das Chaos zu springen, so abgründig und dunkel es auch sein mag! Damit haben sie es verdient, im dankbaren Gedächtnis der Kirche zu bleiben.

* * *

Starke Motivation war in den Anfängen die Überzeugung, dass Christen und Kirchen im Nachkriegseuropa aus ihrer Selbstisolierung heraustreten, ihr gegenseitiges Vertrauen erstreben und ihre Kräfte sammeln sollten, um gemeinsam ihre ihnen spezifische Verantwortung zu jener Stunde zu erfüllen. Die ihnen gebotenen Aufgaben und Prioritäten waren mehr als eindeutig:

- Versöhnung, Besinnung, Buße durch Gottes Eleos und Gnade.
- Verwandlung der Bitterkeit der Völker Europas in gegenseitige Annahme, Solidarität und Kooperation.
- Festigung des Friedens als „Frucht der Gerechtigkeit“ (Jes. 32, 17).



- Gemeinsame Sorge für die Zukunft des ganzen Kontinents angesichts der rapiden Säkularisierung und des Atheismus, der im Westen triumphierte und dem Osten aufgezwungen worden war, im Rahmen des schmerzvollen Experiments, die im Westen entstandene Ideologie einer radikalen Veränderung der Welt ohne, ja vielmehr gegen Gott, zunächst und vor allem an einem Teil des Körpers der Orthodoxie durchzuführen.

Welcher Weg würde die Kirchen am schnellsten und sichersten zum Ziel führen? Wohl ein Weg mit vielen „Brücken“, mit vielfachen Begegnungen und Dialogen. Zunächst in der Form von *Konferenzen*.

Das Wort *Konferenz* wurde offensichtlich deshalb vorgezogen, weil man zunächst allein an inoffizielle, periodische Treffen dachte. Wahrscheinlich deshalb fehlte ursprünglich auch die Idee einer festen Struktur.

Erst 1957 zeigten sich Absichten und Voraussetzungen für eine Struktur als diskussions-, jedoch immer noch nicht als vereinbarungsfähig. Selbst das Treffen im Januar 1959, das unter der Bezeichnung NYBORG I. als Geburtsakt der KEK gilt, litt noch an Zweifel. Nyborg II. und III. (1960, 1962) bauten dann aber das gegenseitige Vertrauen stark auf. Während der 4. Versammlung, die auf dem legendären Schiff „Bornholm“ tagte, konnte somit am 8. Oktober 1964 die erste Verfassung der KEK angenommen werden. Dies sicherte der Bezeichnung *Konferenz* konstitutionellen Platz im Titel der KEK, und der Organisation eine stabile Struktur und einen offiziellen Status.

Im Blick auf das Verhältnis zum Ökumenischen Rat der Kirchen: Die Menschen der „ersten Stunde“ der KEK hatten nicht die Absicht, einen „Rat“ der Kirchen Europas zu organisieren, neben oder gar gegen den Weltkirchenrat. Im Gegenteil: Die Entstehung der KEK ist nur im Rahmen der vorangegangenen Ökumenischen Bewegung zu verstehen. Die KEK sollte „eine Einübung in die ökumenische Begegnung“ auf kontinentaler Ebene sein und spezifisch europäische Aufgaben erfüllen. Dies war im Interesse auch des Weltkirchenrates.

Ein Faktor, der sich für die KEK sehr positiv ausgewirkt hat, war die Tatsache, dass sich das kirchliche Klima vor und während der ersten Dekade der KEK deutlich verbessert hatte. Als wirklichen ÉLAN VITAL OECUMÉNIQUE dürfte man die ökumenische Begeisterung der 50er und 60er Jahre bezeichnen.

Die gelungene Durchführung der ersten 5 Versammlungen der KEK und teilweise die Vorbereitung der 6. haben sowohl strukturell und personell als auch inhaltlich eine tragfähige Basis gelegt:

- Rahmen, Ethos, Methoden und Finanzierung der Arbeit, theologisch-ökumenisches wie europäisches Selbstbewusstsein, ökumenisch-solidarisches Zueinander, Repräsentationsbesuche zu den Mitgliedskirchen, Beziehung zum Weltkirchenrat, zu anderen ökumenischen Organisationen, sowie schon damals zur Römisch-Katholischen Kirche,
- offene und aufrichtige Auseinandersetzung mit traditionellen und aktuellen Fragen des Verhältnisses zwischen Mehrheits- und Minderheitskirchen zu einander und zur KEK, Fragen der Mission und des Proselytismus, Stellung und Verantwortung von Geistlichen und Laien, Männern, Frauen und Jugendlichen in der Kirche und in den Organen der KEK,
- klare kurz- und langfristige Zielvorgaben und Prioritäten,
- schöpferische Antwort auf geistige, politische und soziale Herausforderungen und Krisen,
- Kontakte und Vertrauensbildung innerhalb und außerhalb Europas.



All das und vieles mehr sind solide Fundamente, auf denen die nächsten Dekaden weiter aufbauen konnten.

Zuletzt sei noch eine Grunderfahrung genannt: Groß ist die Verantwortung, dankenswert sind die Mühen der Menschen, die in den Organen der KEK arbeiten. Die KEK selbst, als Ganzes jedoch, ist das, was die Mitgliedskirchen aus ihr machen wollen.

In dieser Überzeugung sei mir erlaubt, in Anwesenheit unserer hochverehrten Patriarchen und der anderen Vertretern unserer Orthodoxen Kirche ein Wort an jene, wenn auch wenigen orthodoxen Menschen zu richten, welche noch im Irrtum leben und ihn verbreiten, dass die Orthodoxie bloß Gast in der KEK und überhaupt in der Ökumene sei, wenn nicht sogar bloß geduldeter Fremdling. Dass wir orthodoxe Menschen und Kirchen deshalb keine Verantwortung für das ökumenische Geschehen hätten, sondern nur die Freiheit der kritischen Ablehnung!

Im Gegenteil: Wahrlich orthodox sein heißt ökumenisch denken und handeln. Und dazu noch: Die Orthodoxie trägt volle Verantwortung sowohl für die Anfänge und die Entfaltung der Ökumenischen Bewegung überhaupt, wie für die Gründung und die Arbeit des Weltkirchenrates und auch der KEK. Selbstkritik soll deshalb der eventuell berechtigten Kritik vorangehen.

In der festen Erwartung, dass Gott die KEK weiterhin reichlich segnen wird, bitte ich Sie, mir zu erlauben, als Erinnerung und als Wunsch für die Zukunft, mit einer kleinen Variation des Themas der VIII. Vollversammlung der KEK bei uns in Kreta zu schließen:

IN DER KRAFT DES HEILIGEN GEISTES,
FREI FÜR DIE KIRCHEN EUROPAS
UND DEN GANZEN KONTINENT;
FREI FÜR DIE WELT;
FREI FÜR DAS EVANGELIUM CHRISTI –
QUELLE UNSERER HOFFNUNG.



**50th anniversary of the founding of CEC:
the second decade 1969-78
The Rt Rev John Arnold**

After the crushing of the attempt to develop ‘socialism with a human face’ in Czechoslovakia in 1968 the seventies were largely a decade of stagnation and of the sullen acceptance of the political division of our continent for the foreseeable future.

But the churches could not let the limits of their fellowship be determined by anything other than the Gospel itself; and the CEC’s contribution to the promotion and maintenance of unity consisted of a mixture of open and clandestine meetings and travel by all involved in its work. It is said that ‘love laughs at locksmiths’; and this decade was characterised by ingenious endeavours to part curtains, penetrate walls and circumvent barriers at a time when the resources of modern industrialised states were being deployed to seal one half of Europe off from the other. So every opportunity was used by us in the CEC to meet, to worship together, to bring hope and the simple assurance of not being forgotten, to convey food, clothing and medicine and, above all, the Word of God in Bibles, hymn-books and works of theology. CEC engaged in a truly Pauline ministry, such as we read about in the Acts and Epistles, with Christians travelling from one church to another to encourage one another in the faith, exchange experiences, take up collections, distribute gifts and, above all, enjoy the fellowship – the *koinonia* – of the Holy Spirit. Practically all I know of discipleship and the grace of God I owe to fellow Christians ‘behind the Iron Curtain’ (as we used to say); and I want to pay tribute now to those who kept the faith then in circumstances which are being forgotten and ought to be remembered.

In the forefront of this work was our first Executive, later General, Secretary, Glen Garfield Williams, with his Sergeant Major’s moustache, his Sergeant Major’s voice and, indeed, his Sergeant Major’s past – an unlikely candidate for a career in ecclesiastical diplomacy. It would be easy to caricature and criticise him, but his achievement in securing and retaining the trust of so wide a range of churches and governments was truly remarkable. At the start of this decade he was still not full-time and only at the end did he acquire a colleague, a study secretary, in a move which began the transition from a body, which held frequent Assemblies and had little ongoing work, to one which holds infrequent Assemblies and has the full programme of a Regional Ecumenical Organisation. From his days as Europe Secretary for Interchurch Aid he established a tradition of care for minority Protestant Churches in Latin Europe, which became a feature of the CEC. For some in the West ecumenism may then have been an optional extra. For the churches in the south and especially for those in Central and Eastern Europe it was a lifeline and oxygen supply combined and the only means for many of engaging in public issues other than by simply supporting the peace policies of the Soviet Union. As Metropolitan, now Patriarch, Kyrill said, ‘The voice of the church returned to our country (Russia) in a roundabout way...by means of resolutions and documents of ecumenical organisations.’ It is worth recording that in the 1970s at least resolutions and documents played their part in the transmission of the Gospel.

So did Dr Williams; and in my most vivid pictorial memory, I see him lying on his bed in a hotel in Engelberg during the 6th Assembly in 1974, having suffered a heart attack, but still following the proceedings in plenary through the headphones provided for interpretation. I thought, ‘Give that Sergeant Major a medal!’

Meanwhile, one of the by-products of the Second Vatican Council was the establishment in 1971 of the Council of Bishops’ Conferences in Europe (CCEE). It is a measure of the confidence, which the CEC enjoyed, that one of the first things the new Council did was to set up a Joint Committee (CEC/CCEE), which has met annually since 1972. It was the mutual trust and affection, which de-



veloped there, which enabled the first of the immensely effective Encounters to take place in Chantilly in 1978, Encounters which led in turn to the three European Ecumenical Assemblies and the Carta Ecumenica. We take meetings like these for granted now; then, it was a bold innovation with plenty of opponents on both sides. It was, after all, the first meeting of the churches of Europe at such a high level of representation since the ill-fated Council of Florence in the fifteenth century (1438-45) – a mark of how far we have come in the past fifty years, even if we have not come far enough.

I want to leave you with one last impression or vignette from Engelberg, to highlight both the difficulties and the dynamism of those days

Vatican II had produced a climatic change in relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the other churches in Europe; but that didn't exclude occasional cold fronts from crossing the Alps, despite the general warming. One such had just occurred; and, at a reception at the Benedictine monastery, which had given its name to the mountain, one delegate abandoned diplomacy and blurted out to the Abbot, 'How is it that you are being so nice to us?' There was an embarrassed silence. The Abbot put his fingertips together, smiled and said, 'The Order is older than any of our divisions.'

Later, when I was the successor of Benedictine priors as Dean, first of Rochester and then of Durham, I remembered his words and took them as a guide to life. In the 1970s, and even more in the 1980s and 90s, we experienced within the CEC the strength of the centrifugal forces, pulling the churches and the peoples of Europe apart; but we also experienced, even more strongly, the strength of the centripetal forces, holding us together. The things we hold in common and which hold us together are older – and stronger - than any of our divisions.

That gives us hope.



Présentation de Madame Marjolaine Chevallier

Décennie 1979-1989

La KEK avait 20 ans. C'était une institution majeure, elle avait déjà connu 7 assemblées. Pour la 1ère fois elle était accueillie dans un pays de tradition orthodoxe. Nous y étions initiés joyeusement : contexte festif. Je remercie Alexandre Papaderos qui nous accueillait et qui m'a beaucoup appris sur la spiritualité orthodoxe.

Quand on était nouveau venu, entrer dans le fonctionnement de la KEK, c'était faire de nombreuses découvertes.

Mon nom était proposé à élection pour les qualités requises suivantes : une femme, venant des pays latins, de langue française et réformée. Mais très vite s'introduit une **dimension politique** : les effets du partage en deux de l'Europe d'alors.

J'apprends que le Métropolite Alexy (qui fut plus tard président de la KEK et le patriarche Alexy II de Russie) s'oppose à ma candidature parce qu'il a su que je suis membre d'Amnesty International. Il demande aux votants des pays de l'Est de s'opposer à cette candidature. (Ils proposent même une autre femme, une Italienne vaudoise, Fernanda Comba, dont ils ignorent qu'elle est aussi membre d'Amnesty : nous en avons ri ensemble !)

Aussitôt après les élections, le Métropolite Alexy de Tallinn vient personnellement me féliciter et m'offre un cadeau. A la première réunion du Joint Meeting (en mars 1980, en Autriche), nouveau cadeau.

J'en parle au Pasteur Held, un Allemand qui connaît parfaitement la KEK et a l'expérience de ces relations complexes. Il me dit que l'explication est peut-être la suivante : le hiérarque russe est obligé officiellement de manifester son opposition aux enquêtes que publie Amnesty sur les violations des Droits de l'homme en URSS, mais lui personnellement est intéressé...

A la rencontre suivante du Joint Meeting et avec l'aide d'un interprète, je sollicite une entrevue avec le métropolite. Je dis que je désire parler avec lui d'Amnesty International et être tout à fait honnête à ce sujet. Je propose, s'il le souhaite, de lui apporter toute la documentation que je reçois d'A.I., de l'Acat etc., sur les cas concernant l'URSS, afin qu'il sache pour quels cas particuliers nous intervenons et qu'il puisse voir ce qu'il peut faire de son côté. Il accepte, en précisant qu'il ne me dira jamais ce qu'il aura pu faire lui-même.

Je savais qu'il n'y avait aucun inconvénient à ce qu'il se borne à remettre ces documents à la Police ou aux services secrets, puisque la politique même d'A.I. était (c'est toujours le cas) de faire savoir le plus largement possible aux autorités d'un pays tout ce que nous savions, de façon à empêcher que ces cas restent secrets...

Bref, pendant près de douze ans, à chacune de nos rencontres, j'ai apporté au métropolite un gros paquet de documents et il les a toujours acceptés... Mais naturellement, j'ai toujours ignoré à quoi cette activité avait pu servir, avoir un effet positif... ? Il y a eu au moins celui de **l'informer, lui**, ainsi que ses traducteurs, de ce qu'ils n'avaient aucun moyen de savoir...



Quand, à Athènes une autre année, j'ai fait la même proposition au délégué de Tchécoslovaquie, il a refusé catégoriquement, en me disant que nous n'avions pas la même conception des droits de l'homme.

Nous qui avions le privilège d'une liberté si grande, nous avions évidemment le souci de ne pas rendre leur situation plus difficile encore, leurs paroles étant surveillées et rapportées dans leur pays. Tâcher de construire des ponts, au moins de petites passerelles...

C'était très difficile. Dur de savoir que les uns et les autres étaient obligés d'adopter en public ce qu'on appelle une « langue de bois ». Dur de ne pas être simple et que notre amitié dans le Christ, réelle, soit entravée par tout ce qui devait rester dans le silence avec nos partenaires de l'Est, pendant toutes ces années. Comment ils protestaient unanimement quand on parlait par ex. du Conseil de l'Europe... Mais cependant nous parlions ensemble de paix et nos efforts dans ce sens étaient réels. Nous parlions d'espérance et il y avait une espérance chrétienne vive qui nous portait les uns et les autres. Nous avons beaucoup prié ensemble, malgré la grande diversité des traditions.

J'ai commencé par l'aspect politique parce qu'il pesait lourdement sur nous tous, mais je voudrais insister sur un autre aspect, lui positif, qui me tient très à coeur, l'amitié qui se développa entre membres du Joint Meeting. Surtout rendre hommage à cette pionnière que fut Inga Brita Castrén, Finnoise, polyglotte, laïque et bonne théologienne luthérienne, elle était alors la seule femme au Joint Meeting. Elle fut une mère et une très précieuse formatrice pour moi qui fus alors la seconde, avant le rééquilibrage indispensable du pourcentage des femmes qui se fit progressivement, avec des femmes merveilleuses dont je revois les visages...

Parmi les souvenirs très vifs des nombreuses rencontres auxquelles nous avons participé, il y a cette réunion entre les comités de la KEK et du CCEE à **Riva del Garda** (en octobre 1984). Un service oecuménique solennel dans la cathédrale de Trente, où s'est réuni le fameux concile au XVI^e siècle. Nous avons pu donner et recevoir des signes de réconciliation, prier ensemble, aussi avec le peuple catholique du diocèse en foule, si on a le temps de le dire : au moment de proclamer ensemble d'une seule voix le fameux Credo de Nicée-Constantinople, sur lequel nous avons tant travaillé, on avait supprimé du texte italien distribué le mot « *filioque* », mais la foule par habitude l'a distinctement prononcé !)

Mais le plus magnifique des souvenirs de cette décennie, c'est le premier Rassemblement oecuménique européen à **Bâle à la Pentecôte 1989** : dans le climat politique de l'Europe d'alors, les craquements de la glace, comme on disait. La chaise officiellement vide du délégué de Tchécoslovaquie qui n'avait pas pu avoir de visa ; le début d'une libération de la parole... pas seulement les signes concrets qui avaient été inventés (le funambule traversant le Rhin, les petites lumières lancées la nuit sur le fleuve, la fameuse marche sans frontières d'une après-midi entre les trois pays Suisse, France et Allemagne). Mais aussi ces grands offices du matin dans la cathédrale (restée protestante depuis la Réforme) absolument pleine, jour après jour. Ou encore l'énorme enthousiasme quand le message final a été voté à l'unanimité. Selon l'image des affiches, le Saint Esprit plongeait sur nous. Il était présent dans les coeurs : Une pentecôte sur l'Europe, dont les murs tombaient quelques mois plus tard.

La glace craquait encore plus qu'à Bâle quand nous avons fêté les **30 ans de la KEK à Nyborg**, au Danemark, en **octobre 1989**. Pour finir par le politique, comme j'ai commencé : 2 autres souvenirs. On était à la veille de la chute du mur et de la révolution à Bucarest, avec la mort de Ceausescu. Un invité danois, un personnage assez officiel, se trouve à la même table que moi et qu'un jeune métropolitain roumain. Le Danois lui dit : « mais comment supportez-vous ce que fait votre gouvernement ? » Le Roumain lui répond en se maîtrisant : « Monsieur, vous m'offensez gravement et je ne vous pardonne que parce que je pense que vous ne l'avez pas mesuré... » Et moi d'essayer de prendre son



parti pour apaiser les choses. Sur le bateau qui nous ramène, le vieux métropolite Antonie vient en privé me remettre un document en anglais sur la situation politique en Roumanie (écrit par un Roumain en exil) et me dit, ce qu'il n'a jamais dit en public : « lisez ceci, c'est vrai .» Très reconnaissante de ce signe d'honnêteté. Entre quatre yeux il avait abandonné la langue de bois. Je l'ai pris comme un geste d'amitié !

L'Assemblée suivante s'est réunie à **Prague, en 1992**, pour la première fois dans un pays de l'ex-Europe de l'Est. Une page était tournée. C'est là que mon mandat a pris fin.



Notizen zum Weg der KEK von 1989 bis 1999

Pastorin Antje Heider-Rottwilm

1987 lud der ÖRK die Mitgliedskirchen und die römisch-katholische Kirche dazu ein, gemeinsam eine Weltversammlung **für Gerechtigkeit, Frieden und Bewahrung der Schöpfung** zu organisieren.

Es passierte viel in der Zeit: in Ostdeutschland etwa die gefährliche Verbreitung des Zeichens **„Schwerter zu Pflugscharen“** und die spektakuläre Gründung einer Umweltbibliothek, der Kampf gegen Atomendlager und Atomkraftwerke und vieles, vieles mehr. Aber auch Gründungen von ökumenischen Netzwerken, eine Fülle von regionalen ökumenischen Versammlungen, auch in Dresden (April 1989) und Magdeburg (Oktober 1988). Das spiegelt eindrücklich den mutigen, intensiven Prozess in den Kirchen der DDR.

1989

Erste europäische Ökumenische Versammlung Basel, die die KEK anhand der Themen Gerechtigkeit, Frieden, Bewahrung der Schöpfung über Insiderkreise hinaus bekannt gemacht hat, weil die Kirchen hier öffentlich und im Dialog mit anderen gesellschaftlichen Kräften ihre Hausaufgaben gemacht haben.

Die Erste Europäische Ökumenische Versammlung in Basel 1989 brachte Menschen aus allen Regionen Europas zusammen, brachte Menschen aller in Europa lebenden Konfessionen zusammen – das erste mal seit der Kirchenspaltung, brachte Menschen mit den verschiedenen Themen, Anliegen, Visionen zusammen, die in den Jahren gärten. Die Veranstalter, die Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen und der **Rat der Europäischen Bischofskonferenzen (CCEE)** unternahmen das Risiko, sich darauf einzulassen, aus diesen Divergenzen mit vielen Krisen und Konflikten eine Konferenz zu gestalten, einen Raum für Delegierte und Gruppen, für Vertreter der Basis und der Kirchenleitungen. Es ging hier nicht nur um die Themen, sondern auch um den Prozess - Konziliarität, verbindliche Absprachen der Kirchen.

Mit Basel ist das **Umweltthema** auf der ökumenischen Agenda angekommen - ein Thema von gerade gegenwärtiger Brisanz.

Außerdem wurde heftig gestritten über die Aussagen zur Friedenspolitik und den Primat der Gewaltfreiheit. Ich erinnere mich noch an die heißen Debatten um das Sondervotum der Friedenskirchen, die jeglichen Einsatz von militärischen Mitteln ablehnten. **Church and Peace**, das Netzwerk der Friedenskirchen und Kommunitäten (dessen Vorsitzende ich seit einem Monat bin), hatte wenige Tage vorher sein 40 Jahre – Bestehen gefeiert. Der **Ökumenische Dienst / Schalomdiakonat** ist ein direktes Kind der 1. EÖV. Ein Beschluss, den die Friedenskirchen und Kommunitäten eingebracht haben, lautete: „Wir regen die Bildung von ökumenischen ‚Schalom-Diensten‘ an. Frauen und Männer, die sich in solchen Diensten engagieren, werden ihre eigene Kirche als Teil des dienenden Gottesvolkes unter allen Völkern erkennen lernen. Wir verpflichten uns, diesen aktiven Geist des Schalom auszubreiten.“¹

Ein weiterer Aspekt: Im Jahre 1988, ein Jahr vor Basel, hatte der ÖRK die **Ökumenische Dekade – Kirchen in Solidarität mit den Frauen (1988-1998)** eröffnet. Seit dem Sheffield Report zum Thema 'Gemeinschaft von Frauen und Männern in der Kirche' im Jahre 1982 war nicht mehr zu leugnen, dass dieses Thema eine zentrale Herausforderung für die Mitgliedskirchen weltweit bedeutet. In Basel nun war der Anteil der Frauen signifikant höher als in bisherigen ökumenischen Versammlungen (35% weibliche Delegierte, mehr als 40% Frauen in verantwortlichen Rollen als Rednerinnen,



Moderatorinnen, Mitwirkung im Gottesdienst etc.). Auf dem Rhein lag das **Frauenschiff**. In dem Schlussdokument der 1.EÖV wird die Folge weltweiter Ungerechtigkeit und die gegenwärtige Krise für Frauen beschrieben. Die Europäische Versammlung bekräftigt in ihrer Schlussbotschaft die Selbstverpflichtung zum Aufbau einer neuen Gesellschaft, „in der Frauen und Männer zu gleichen Teilen Verantwortung tragen“.

Deutlich ist am Ende der Versammlung, dass der Prozess gerade erst beginnt: „Ja, wir haben festgestellt, dass die EÖV Teil eines Prozesses und nicht ein einmaliges Ereignis ist. Was nach Basel geschieht, wird von größter Wichtigkeit sein. Wir fordern die Kirchen und Christen in Europa auf, in einen **Rezeptionsprozess** einzutreten.“ (Nr. 95)²

Das Bild vom gemeinsamen Haus Europa machte die Runde – da waren die Möglichkeiten, mit denen wir heute Europa gestalten, ja noch nicht absehbar. Aber es war spürbar: Veränderung lag in der Luft. Wenige Monate später wurde möglich, was wir vorher nicht zu hoffen wagten: der eiserne Vorhang wurde zerrissen. Und der Weg der Kirchen in der DDR, der Konziliare Prozess, der auch in Mittel- und Osteuropa um sich griff, hat nachweisbar entscheidend zum friedlichen Verlauf beigetragen.

1990 bis 1992

Vorbereitung VV Prag (Teilnahme für ÖFCFE)

Geprägt durch die neue Situation nach der Wende – und damit u. A. auch von den Fragen im Umgang mit der Vergangenheit.

1990er Jahre

Die Auflösung des Eisernen Vorhangs hatte dazu geführt, dass Krieg in Europa nicht mehr möglich schien – umso größer war das **Entsetzen über den Ausbruch der Konflikte und dann Gewalt im ehemaligen Jugoslawien**. Ich erinnere mich noch an den Tag, an dem ich das erste Mal in den Nachrichten von den Vergewaltigungen im Zusammenhang dieses Krieges hörte. Für uns Frauen aus dem Ökumenischen Forum Christlicher Frauen in Europa in meiner Region war das der Beginn der Mahnwachen in Solidarität mit den **„Frauen in Schwarz“** in Belgrad, Sarajevo, Rom, Jerusalem, Haifa, Madrid, Genf und an vielen anderen Orten in Europa und weltweit.

In dieser Zeit entstand die Frage nach einer **Zweiten Europäischen Ökumenischen Versammlung**. Europa war durch tiefgreifende Umbrüche verändert – und die Kirchen mussten neu buchstabieren, was Gerechtigkeit, Frieden und Bewahrung der Schöpfung nun heißt.

In vielen Kirchen gab es Ökumenische Versammlungen, Synodendebatten und Beschlüsse, Umweltbeauftragte, Kirchentage, eine Fülle von Aktivitäten, die zeigten, dass der Konziliare Prozess in die Tiefe und in die Breite ging.

Die Ankündigung dann, dass die zweite Europäische Ökumenische Versammlung unter dem Thema „Versöhnung - Gabe Gottes und Quelle neuen Lebens“ stattfinden sollte, provozierte heftige Anfragen. Es klang zu sehr nach Verdrängung und Verbrämung

1997 Graz

Zweite Europäische Ökumenische Versammlung

Mit 10.000 Personen waren zu der 2. Europäischen Ökumenischen Versammlung, zu der KEK und CCEE eingeladen hatte, mehr Menschen angereist als man erwartet hatte. Etwa 60% sollen aus Ost-



europa gekommen sein. Dass die rumänische Gruppe die Zahl der Teilnehmenden aus Deutschland noch übertroffen hat, war ein Zeichen dafür, dass die zentral- und osteuropäischen Länder auch im Konziliaren Prozess ökumenisch präsent waren.

700 Delegierte, Vertreter/innen von Partnerorganisationen und Beratende nahmen an den Beratungen zu den sechs Themenfeldern teil, nämlich

1. Suche nach der sichtbaren Einheit zwischen den Kirchen,
2. Dialog mit den Religionen,
3. Einsatz für soziale Gerechtigkeit,
4. Versöhnung zwischen den Völkern und Nationen und Stärkung gewaltfreier Formen der Konfliktbewältigung,
5. neue Praxis ökologischer Verantwortlichkeit und
6. gerechter Ausgleich mit anderen Weltregionen.

Dazu kam die (vornehmlich theologische) Arbeit am Hauptthema "Versöhnung." Offenkundig wurde, welcher **Versöhnungsbedarf** unter den Kirchen selbst in zahlreichen Ländern angesichts von ungleichzeitigen Entwicklungen und konfessioneller und nationalistischer Differenzen besteht. Die Frage der Versöhnung war nicht nur eine Aufforderung nach außen, sondern vor allem eine ernsthafte Frage an die Kirchen selbst und ihr glaubwürdiges gemeinsames Zeugnis. In den Texten gab es klare Worte für Versöhnungsschritte und Solidarität mit Ausgegrenzten, für Gleichberechtigung von Frauen und die Einrichtung von Friedensfachdiensten und Konfliktschlichtungsmöglichkeiten, für einen Schuldenerlass der ärmsten Länder zum Jahr 2000 und gegen Rassismus und Fremdenfeindlichkeit. Seit Graz hat sich das Christliche Umweltnetzwerk gegründet (ECEN), das europaweit Initiativen vernetzt und Standards setzt.

Das wichtigste Ergebnis ist wohl, dass die Delegierten in Graz beschlossen, das Thema der Versöhnung untereinander zu konkretisieren. Eine Arbeitsgruppe erstellte dann 1999 einen 1. Entwurf der **Charta Oecumenica**, der von den Leitungsgremien der Europäischen römisch-katholischen Bischofskonferenz (CCEE) und der Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen (KEK) auf den Weg in ihre Mitgliedskirchen gebracht wurde. Ein wichtiger ökumenischer Schritt war, dass sich die orthodoxen Kirchen an dem Prozess beteiligt haben. Der Entwurf wurde aufgrund der Stellungnahmen aus den Kirchen überarbeitet und schließlich in **Straßburg im Jahre 2001** anlässlich einer Begegnung mit einer großen Zahl Jugendlicher aus allen Kirchen Europas verabschiedet.³ Besonders stark ist mir die Bibelarbeit zur Emmaus-Geschichte in Erinnerung geblieben, während derer wir zu zweit – je eine oder einer derer, die in CCEE oder KEK ihre Kirchen vertreten und eine Jugendliche oder ein Jugendlicher – für eine Weile miteinander auf den Weg geschickt wurden. Wir waren gefragt, inander zu erzählen, einander mitzuteilen, wer der Auferstandene für uns ist und was als Aufgabe vor uns liegt, in seiner Nachfolge, je dort, wo wir leben. Und darum geht es in der Charta.

In der Charta Oecumenica geht es ja darum, dass die bisher erarbeiteten Themen und Herausforderungen auf allen Ebenen kirchlichen Lebens ausbuchstabiert werden, von der Gemeinde bis zur europäischen Ebene. Noch nie haben so viele Konfessionen ausgesprochen, dass unser gemeinsamer Glaube an Jesus Christus das Band der Einheit ist, dass wir die Aufgabe haben, gemeinsam das Evangelium zu verkündigen und alles zusammen zu tun, was zusammen längst möglich ist – und Vieles mehr. Das, was unter „Unsere gemeinsame Verantwortung in Europa“ steht (Kapitel III der Charta) ist zentraler Aspekt unserer sozialen und gesellschaftlichen Verantwortung. Dazu gehören Verpflichtungen wie: Nationalismus überwinden, sich für Minderheiten, für gewaltfreie Lösungen einsetzen, aber auch die Frage des solidarischen Lebensstils, ebenso wie die Auseinandersetzung mit der Vergangenheit.



Es ging nicht um neue Forderungen oder gar Überforderungen, aber um die Fortsetzung eines Weges, auf den wir uns längst und unwiderruflich in der ökumenischen Bewegung, im Konziliaren Prozess gemacht haben.

1997

Vollversammlung Graz

Ab 1997 war ich Leiterin der Europaabteilung der EKD und kam mitten hinein in den Integrationsprozess der damaligen EECCS (European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society) mit der KEK, so wie nun die Integration von KEK und CCME ansteht. Die EECCS, die vor allem aus protestantischen Kirchen bestand, hatte sich mit ihren Fachgruppen jahrzehntenlang in Brüssel zu den verschiedenen Themen eingemischt in die politische Tagesordnung.

Nun ging es darum, zwei gleichberechtigte Organisationen auf Augenhöhe zusammen zu bringen.

Arbeitsstil der EECCS und dann der Kommission Kirche und Gesellschaft (KKG) war, viele, gerade auch osteuropäische Kirchen an den Diskussionen zu beteiligen und damit auch in ihnen die Lernprozesse zu den europäischen Themen zu ermöglichen und einen kirchlichen europäischen Integrationsprozess zu initiieren. Partizipatorisch, transparent und zielorientiert war der Arbeitsstil. Und es ging um die Vielfalt der europäischen Themen – da wurden (und werden) die Kirchen nur dann ernst genommen und ihre Beiträge einbezogen, wenn man zeitnah, sachkundig und kompetent reagierte.

Seit 1997 ist viel passiert. Europa hat sich weiter grundlegend verändert durch den Beitritt von nun 12 Staaten. Ich selber habe seitdem in Zentralausschuss, Präsidium und KKG mitgearbeitet, habe KKG auch jahrelang moderiert – auf meinen Wunsch hin in ‚shared leadership‘, zusammen mit Father Chaplin und später Father George der Russischen Orthodoxen Kirche.

Ich habe in den Jahren viel gelernt über die so **unterschiedlichen religiösen, kulturellen und sozialen Situationen in den Ländern und Kirchen**. Viele Kirchen in Mittel- und Osteuropa nahmen eine sehr ambivalente Haltung gegenüber der neueren gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung ein. Auf der einen Seite hat die Entwicklung, die Ende der 80er, Anfang der 90er eingeleitet worden ist, zu Befreiung von Unterdrückung, zu einem Ende der Bevormundung, des Druckes und des Versuches, Religion aus der Gesellschaft zu eliminieren, geführt. Andererseits hatten sie das Empfinden, jetzt auf einmal einer anderen Form von Atheismus ausgesetzt zu sein; einer westlichen Gesellschaft, die geprägt ist durch Kommerzialisierung; einer Gesellschaft, in der religiöse Werte im Alltag keine Rolle spielen; einer Gesellschaft, die arm und reich gnadenlos gegeneinander ausspielt. Jahrzehntlang hatte man sich dagegen wehren müssen, dass die kommunistische Diktatur die Kirche zerstören wollte. Nun meint man sich dagegen wehren zu müssen, dass ein westlicher Atheismus die Gesellschaft zerstört.

Und alle Kirchen, welche Konfession auch immer, unterlagen genau denselben Herausforderungen. Einerseits wuchsen die Tendenzen zu Konfessionalismus, die Tendenzen, sich abzuschotten voniesen Individualisierungs- und Säkularisierungsschüben. In den zwischenkirchlichen Beziehungen war (und ist) dies ein kritisches Thema, eines an dem deutlich wird, dass wir im westlichen und östlichen Europa noch weit voneinander entfernt sind.

Das Wort "Ökumene" oder "ökumenisch" war in weiten Teilen Osteuropas zu einem Unwort, gar einem Schimpfwort geworden. Vor allem aber war das Wort "Ökumene" belastet durch die Erfahrungen aus der Zeit der kommunistischen Diktatur bzw. der Sowjetherrschaft. Auf diesem Felde zeichnet sich noch immer eine große Aufgabe für die kirchliche Zeitgeschichte ab. Und viele Chris-



tinnen und Christen Osteuropas aller Konfessionen empfanden in ethischen Fragen eine große Distanz zu ihren Brüdern und Schwestern in den westlich geprägten Ländern.

Geduldiges Aufeinander-Hören, Sich Informieren, Sich Besuchen, Hinhören und Hinsehen, Vertrauensbildung als Basis für Diskutieren, Klären und sachgemäßes Handeln war da notwendig!

Die politischen Prozesse in den Ländern Europas und auf europäischer Ebene haben seit der Wende die Christinnen und Christen und Kirchen herausgefordert. In den selben Jahren, in denen die Kirchen an der Charta Oecumenica arbeiteten, weil deutlich war, dass die Verpflichtung zur Zusammenarbeit in einem Dokument formuliert werden musste, arbeiteten die Mitgliedsstaaten der EU an der **Charta der Grundrechte**. Die Kirchen haben sich in vielen Ländern sowie auf europäischer Ebene intensiv in diesen Prozess eingebracht, ging es doch um die Formulierung von grundlegenden Werten für das Zusammenleben der Menschen in Europa. Der Entstehungsprozess und die Debatte um einen europäischen Verfassungsvertrag waren ebenfalls Anlass für die Kirchen, ihre Stimmen zu ünden und einzubringen, vor allem durch ihre Büros in Brüssel und Straßburg: das Büro der EKD, das Büro der Katholischen Bischofskonferenzen in der COMECE und das Büro der KEK.

Da findet man alle Themen wieder, die uns im Zusammenhang des Konziliaren Prozesses beschäftigt haben und beschäftigen, die in der Charta Oecumenica als Herausforderungen für unser Handeln aus dem gemeinsamen Glauben heraus genannt werden, die sich als Anfragen für die Zukunft dieses Kontinents und seiner Verantwortung für die Welt stellen. Und so haben wir uns heftig eingemischt: zu Sozialstandards, Dienstleistungsrichtlinie, Europäischer Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik, Antidiskriminierungsrichtlinie, Bildungskonzepten, Menschenrechtsfragen etc.

Die anstehenden Fragen sind – auch weiterhin - nur gemeinsam zu lösen.

¹ Hg. Ökumenischer Dienst im Konziliaren Prozess e.V., Schalomdiakonat, 10 Jahre Ökumenischer Dienst für Gerechtigkeit,

Frieden und Bewahrung der Schöpfung, Diemelstadt 2002, S.13

² Stobbe in : Hg. Michael Schibilsky, Ulf Schlüter, Heinz-Günter Stobbe s.o.S.30

³ Hg KEK und CCEE, Charta Oecumenica, Leitlinien für die wachsende Zusammenarbeit unter den Kirchen in Europa, St. Gallen und Genf 2001



**'The rich future of hope for the Conference
of European Churches'
Address by His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomaios I for
the
50th anniversary of the Conference of European Churches**

We give honour and glory to the Triune God who has blessed the work of our Conference of European Churches during its fifty years. Lyon is a highly symbolic place for celebrating this anniversary, since it was to this city that St Irenaeus came from the East to exercise his ministry as bishop. Thanks to the faith and love of St Irenaeus, the distance between East and West was overcome, and East and West thereafter journeyed together in a spirit of dialogue and praying the Lord to guide them towards **"...unity of faith and communion in the Holy Spirit"**¹, so that they could experience in future the fullness of their love and communion in the same faith.

I have often expressed my belief, personally and as Ecumenical Patriarch, and also at the level of all Orthodoxy that it is only by engaging in dialogue and by closely cooperating that the churches will prove capable of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to the world in a convincing and effective way. For that reason, as the Church of Constantinople, since my blessed predecessor, Patriarch Joachim III issued his famous Encyclical of 1902, we believe strongly that re-establishing communion between Christians is a prime urgent duty for us all, for it is a commandment given by Christ our Saviour in his last prayer. That prayer is a legacy from our Lord Jesus Christ that we must observe to the letter, in order that the world may believe (John 17: 21).

It was in that spirit, and by always praying in our liturgies for the union of all Christians, that we Orthodox founded, with other churches, the World Council of Churches over sixty years ago. Similarly, more than fifty years ago, together with several other European churches, we set up this Conference of European Churches (CEC), whose fiftieth anniversary we are celebrating today by giving thanks to God. As joint founders and present members of CEC we do not only enjoy the fruit harvested to this day by sharing in the joy of those who rejoice, and we do not only share our joy at all that has been done, rich achievements blessed by God, but we also accept our share of the responsibility incumbent on us for any omissions or failures in the course of the years. I wish deliberately here to emphasize this Orthodox position, wishing thereby to dispel any possible doubts and misunderstandings that may have arisen, both within and outside our Orthodox church, as regards what CEC has already achieved.

I wish here to express my happiness that a great number of Orthodox colleagues have made a valuable contribution to CEC at all levels. We owe them an immense debt of gratitude.

However, quite apart from the valuable contribution made by all those colleagues, we cannot ignore our responsibilities and obligations towards CEC, and especially those that we have with regard to the commandment of our Lord, who enjoins us to do everything in our power to re-establish full communion between the Christian churches in Europe. That is our hope and unshakeable conviction.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is in that spirit and with the greatest hope that I look forward to the future of CEC.



There is no doubt that during the past fifty years there have been many valuable achievements by CEC. In those years countless documents on ecumenical issues have been produced, documents of great theological depth, such as the **Charta Oecumenica**, which is the fruit of joint efforts by all the churches of Europe, i.e. our own CEC and the [Roman Catholic] Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE).

However, as was emphasized in the Message from the Third European Ecumenical Assembly at Sibiu in 2007, our faithful have not become consciously aware of many proposals made in the **Charta**, nor have they *a fortiori* been implemented by our churches. Unfortunately, the faithful in our churches remain unaware of a great number of its recommendations. They have thus remained a dead letter incapable of producing the positive desired effects. The result is that what we have said is not matched by our actions, which damages the credibility of our churches, and gives the impression, both within and without, that we are incapable of finding solutions to current problems. I am sure that for all of you these comments are not new, and that is why I strongly recommend and heartily encourage the appropriate bodies within CEC to do everything in their power to promote its reception (*receptio*) and increase awareness of what has been jointly agreed.

I believe that our theological schools and faculties can contribute to this end and should assume responsibility in the form of study curricula to inform and appropriately guide the students of our churches, so as to pass on to them the well founded spirit of reconciliation and the ecumenical imperative. Moreover, I wish and recommend that scholars in that field and teachers in our faculties of theology examine together the continuing problems still hindering the achievement of full communion between our churches, so as to find appropriate solutions and enable us all, with God's help, to reach unity of faith and communion in the Holy Spirit.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate has always stressed the need for cooperation between our theology faculties in Europe (the Encyclical of 1920), and welcomes the commitment made in the **Charta Oecumenica** (section II, sub-section 3). We thus welcome and view with great favour such initiatives and all steps taken in that direction and we duly appreciate CEC's theological contribution as well as its involvement in promoting programmes designed to improve cooperation between our theological faculties.

In this regard, I should like to emphasize that cooperation between CEC and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences has been essential and constructive. In order to improve this ecumenical commitment, I am proposing to set up a better organized and structured way of cooperation between our two organizations. I should like to recall that the Church of Constantinople some time ago, at the Eighth CEC Assembly at the Orthodox Academy in Crete in 1979, proposed that the Roman Catholic Church should in the future become a member of CEC. It is clear that such a step is not a simple matter and would require preparatory work and changes to the relevant rules. However, I am convinced that a conference of **all** the European Churches working in harmony will be able to respond better to the sacred command to re-establish communion between the churches and serve our contemporaries confronted as they are with so many complex problems.

It will then be possible to promote more effectively the dialogue of the churches of Europe with the European institutions and the European Union. This dialogue, in which my own church has been involved for many years, is valuable and essential, not only for the churches but also for the political bodies of the European Union, and above all for the peoples of Europe.

The future of the new Europe that is under construction is sombre and, indeed, uncertain, being built as it is without Christian spiritual values which touch on everything concerning the support and protection of human beings and their dignity. That is why we clearly declare that for Europe respect



for the dignity of the human person as made **"in the image of God"** must be the foundation for the absolute respect for and protection of all the rights of all people, **"independently of colour, religion, race, nationality and language"** (Third Pan-Orthodox Preconciliar Conference, Chambésy, 1986).

These are difficult times, and the conditions of life are critical. There are still, sadly, enduring wars and conflicts between nations and walls of separation. Social and economic injustice affects all households. Xenophobia, racism, human rights violations, and denial of religious freedom cause increasing disquiet. Secularization and the crisis in spirituality and Christian values are daily a growing concern for our churches. The faith, our faith in Jesus Christ, is also being called in question.

Our young people continue to face unemployment and shortage of jobs. Businesses, small and large, are closing down every day because of the deep economic crisis. Hundreds of thousands of poor immigrants seek refuge in our continent in search of a better future, victims of trafficking in human beings. And, finally, the environment itself also suffers from our indifference and incompetence in protecting it, in creating a space for respect for nature and the economy of creation.

Christians, Jews and Muslims have, for some years now, been engaged in dialogue for promoting peace and reconciliation between the different monotheistic religions. All are desperately seeking hope.

That is why any procrastination cannot be justified. On the contrary, the collaboration between our churches and their cooperation with the European leaders active in the fields of politics, the economy and society is essential and urgent.

We have an obligation to proclaim and witness together to the crucified Christ, who suffered, was buried, and **"by death has conquered death"** as the Easter troparion declares. He has destroyed death and freed the human race **"by giving them life."** Despite difficulties and setbacks, despite crises and conflicts, despite wars and suffering, it is today the duty of all Christians and all churches together to communicate this message of resurrection and hope, this message of reconciliation and peace, for Christ is the hope of the world. I do not ignore pain, suffering or martyrdom, but I am determined to persist in resistance and to proclaim with you all, today, tomorrow and to all eternity the words of the apostle Paul:

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light' (Rom. 13: 11-12, NIV).

Inspired by unshakeable belief, love and faith, we must proclaim to the oppressed and suffering the strength, the courage and the will to resist that come from the optimism and the hope of Christ's message:

Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes... Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation... (Eph. 6: 11, 14 -17, NIV).



It is my firm belief that the Triune God will guide our steps, and the work of the Conference of European Churches and of all the churches of Europe in the coming fifty years in love and communion, for the good of all and to the glory of God's holy Name.

Amen.

† Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostome



Sermon for the Sending Service The Very Rev. Margarethe Isberg

The days are surely coming, says God through Jeremiah. And we can answer – *Yes, the day has surely come!*

Jeremiah had a great vision for God's relation with the people – not a covenant based on rules, laws and knowledge of God and the people being an obedient family. Devastation, grief and despair are often the circumstances of Jeremiah. But in this part of the book, called the little book of consolation, joy overtakes grief and singing replaces weeping. The message is healing and new life. In the past Israel had broken the covenant repeatedly, but God has not abandoned them no matter what their infidelities.

In the prophecy of Jeremiah we can feel the presence of a new spirit. A spirit who will lead the people not by the hand as in the old days, but by the heart, because the will and love of God will be written in the hearts of God's people – a new covenant! Jeremiah thought of a new covenant for the house of Israel and Judah – but for us it has turned into something new – the whole world. God will make this possible!

A fundamental aspect of that restored society is that everyone “from the least to the greatest” will live in covenant relationship. In the covenant no one can claim special revelation or superior intimacy with God. All will know God. Inherent in this vision is an egalitarian claim that challenges religious domination by the chosen few. It contains resources, for example; women's hopes, young people's hope, hope for lay people, hope for the poor and for the disabled. A hope for a new order of social relations that are based on human dignity and interdependence. It is also a token for the environment. There is no hierarchy that makes humans sovereigns over the earth rather than its partner. For Jeremiah people are part of the earth and its fate depends on their fidelity. It is a responsibility entrusted to us.

The way a society treats the earth often correlates with the way it treats other oppressed groups. Traditionally women are linked with the earth as subordinate to men. Jeremiah's words challenge this assumption. The earth and all inhabitants are God's creation and the survival of the individual depends on the whole.

Today we can hear the voice of God saying – *I will be your God*. We can answer out of our hearts – *Yes, we are your people*.

We, the representatives of the peoples of Europe, gathered here in Lyon

- We have celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Conference of European Churches and the anniversary of the Church and Society Commission.
- We have scrutinized the six years way from Trondheim. We have talked about improvements, sleeping achievements and dead ends.
- We have entered into the long prepared marriage between the Conference of European and the Churches Commissions for Migrants in Europe. We have to pray for a life-giving conception, awaiting the European Churches responding to Migration 2010.
- We have tried to tackle the difficult financial situation
- We have worshipped and experienced different traditions of spirituality



- We have been given inputs of hope from other continents and listened to “how to tango in Latin America”
- Not least - we have set up a framework of goals for the future ecumenical movement in our region of the world and prepared the means for a revised CEC.

The future is the most important – because Christ is not coming from behind, through the two thousand years of history of the Christian Church or should I say churches. Christ is coming from the future and meets us as the God who creates, reconciles and renews life. That is a great mystery of Christian faith – Christ who once and for all redeemed us from evil, death and the darkness of the past is coming from the future as the Resurrected. Christ lives in the future and from there he comes to meet us when we live with our hopes set forward.

Like in the early morning when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the empty tomb and got the message that Jesus will go before them to Galilee. On the way to tell his disciples they met Jesus, who greets them and they in turn worshipped him and they became the first witnesses of the resurrection and the first missionaries of the Church. Later in Galilee, there he was on the mountain, from the future, to meet with his friends, giving them the commission of making disciples of all nations when baptising in the name of the Holy Trinity. Jesus often said that he was sent to the lost sheep of Israel, but in this great commission he asks them to go out to all nations. He will meet them in every place they go.

Wherever we go in this world – Christ has always been there before us, because Christ comes from the future.

Already in the words of Jeremiah we can discern the work of the Holy Trinity: God – the creator has given the foundation of the covenant, the new life in Christ and the Holy Spirit will open our hearts for the love and will of God. And God says - *I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

That is us – we are God’s people here in Europe. We know about all things that separate us – languages, cultures, politics, religions, you name it! We celebrate different religious festivals; as Churches we even celebrate Easter at different dates. But we believe in the triune God and we share the same hope in Christ. We can offer a substantial contribution to Europe – of human values, unity and hope.

As the Churches of Europe we need to speak out and to say loud – We like to contribute!

We know about human values.

A Christian view of humanity maintains that all people are created equal and are of equal value. Equality was already ours with creation, but it has often been perverted into oppression and injustice between the sexes, races, social groups and countries. Our vision is a society where the dignity of the individual is the central focus; where there is no longer any exclusion, oppression or poverty. It is a society where we all have the opportunity to fulfil our potentials as human beings. A world where the earth’s resources are shared by all and Creation is cared for and managed well for future generations. The common good is the goal of our efforts. This is a goal we share with everyone, irrespective of faiths.

We know about unity!

The unity that God wants to give the world is not just the unity of the Churches, but the complete unity and affinity of the world, humanity and creation. We who are divided in so many ways we be-



long together at a profound level. Working ecumenically we give this affinity a concrete form. When Churches seek unity it is ultimately so that the world may live.

We are driven by hope!

Our hope is that Christ will meet us from the future and create something new of us. We can recognise hope in the experience of being lost but found again. We have failed in many ways, we have betrayed God, our neighbours, creation and ourselves, but we get the opportunity of starting all over again. That is grace, thanks be to God - Creator, Redeemer and Life giver.

Amen.



Part Three: Final Assembly Documents

Message from the 13th General Assembly of CEC to all the Member Churches

We, three hundred and six delegates of diverse churches in Europe, gathered in the historical city of Lyon, France, from the 15th till the 21st of July 2009, under the theme “Called to one hope in Christ”, on the occasion of the 13th General Assembly and the fiftieth anniversary of the Conference of European Churches, convey this message to the Member Churches of our ecumenical movement and all of Europe.

One hope in Christ

As Christians we dare to hope. As the letter to the Hebrews affirms, faith is the substance of things hoped for. Hope must be seen as an essential aspect of the Christian faith. Hope gives us joy, peace, courage, boldness and freedom. It liberates us from fear, opens our hearts and strengthens our witness to the Risen Lord. All Christians are called to the one hope in Christ, as a way of love, forgiveness and reconciliation. As Christians, we share our hope in the risen Christ with the communities in which we live and to which we belong. The *Charta Oecumenica* is the basis for our engagement ecumenically and with society.

Looking to the future

CEC was founded fifty years ago in a divided Europe and has sought to build bridges between East and West and to bring Christians together. It was founded in a Europe torn by wars and in desperate need of seeds of hope and resurrection.

Today, as we celebrate fifty years of the existence of CEC, the situation in Europe has considerably changed. This year is the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the iron curtain which gave new hope not just to Europe but to the whole world. Nevertheless, many European societies are still struggling with the consequences of the atheist communist dictatorships in Central and Eastern Europe which still affect attitudes, create suspicion and hinder real reconciliation between East and West.

While we eagerly work for, and anticipate, a reconciled and united Europe, we mourn that new walls of separation are being erected between nations, cultures and religions. We see new divisions appearing – between the settled and the migrating, rich and poor, employed and unemployed, those whose rights are respected and those whose rights are put aside.

There are worldwide crises with global consequences. Climate change and the destruction of the environment call us to work for the integrity of the creation, both by influencing politicians and decision makers, and by looking to ourselves by reducing our own ecological footprint and CO₂-emissions. The far-reaching financial crisis demands that we recognise the opportunity for a new economic order to emerge and to remind the world of the need for an economy based on ethical responsibility and environmental sustainability – at the same time as we make sure that we as churches invest our own financial resources with the same high standards as we demand from others. All this challenges our deep commitment in the conciliar process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.



Despite all this, it is our deep conviction that we as Christian people have a special hope to share in situations where there may seem only despair. We declare: There is hope! – in our struggle for truth and justice. There is hope when we resist all forms of violence and racism, when we defend the dignity of every human person. There is hope when we insist on the obligation for unselfish solidarity between people and peoples; when we fight for unfeigned respect for the creation.

We believe that Europe can and should be an open-minded, welcoming and inclusive continent. We affirm that there should be open doors for any who seek sanctuary from persecution and violence. At this CEC Assembly we have celebrated closer co-operation with the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe. This will be further manifested in 2010, a year of “European churches responding to migration”, when together we have the opportunity to witness to our Christian commitment to refugees and migrants.

The assembly, in looking to the future, has established a working group to carry out a revision of the CEC as a whole, including a common purpose, vision and a setting of strategic goals - and which structures would serve these goals in an optimal way. The Assembly asks all the Member Churches to commit to this review and the ongoing work of the CEC.

Challenges to us as churches and christians

The challenges given from the Assembly to all the Member Churches is the daring message about hope – but a hope not expressed in empty statements but in deeds and a living faith.

We affirm that the churches need to work for justice and speak truth to power! It is about breaking down walls between people, cultures and religions and learning to seek God’s image in the face of “the other.” It is about respecting and not only tolerating other human beings. Above all it is about finding new expressions of solidarity with the poor amongst us and in other parts of our world. Together let us be reminded of the words of the Apostle Peter, who declared: “Always be prepared to make a defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence” (I Peter 3:15)



Assembly Policy Reference Report

Living and Acting together as Churches in Europe Future Perspectives for the work of CEC

SECTION I

Background and Methodology

The methodology that the Policy Reference Committee used to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities has been determined in part by the thinking set out by the report produced by the Initial Policy Reference Committee. This report reflected the common trend in the responses from Member Churches that CEC urgently needs to adopt a more strategic, focused approach to its work. As a result, the draft report presented to the Assembly reflected the premise that any report adopted by the Assembly ought to restrict itself to offering main policy lines for CEC in the years ahead. The Policy Reference Committee accepted this premise as being consistent with the Assembly's subsequent deliberations. It follows, therefore, that rather than offering an exhaustive list of issues to be addressed by CEC, the report should provide a non-prescriptive policy framework to assist the Central Committee in agreeing strategic objectives based on the main policy lines set out by the Assembly. This report is intended to guide the Central Committee when it makes decisions following the Assembly. It is also offered as an "aide memoire" to the Constitutional Committee set up by this Assembly as a faithful reflection of the Assembly's deliberations.

Equipped with this methodology, the PRC listened to the voices expressed during the Assembly in its various plenaries and group activities. The following thematic issues were addressed during the Assembly:

- dialogue with the European institutions
- social justice in Europe
- human rights and religious freedom
- globalisation
- mission
- spirituality
- hope for unity
- unifying in diversity - being church together with migrant, black and ethnic minority churches
- hope for justice - protecting refugees in Europe in the 21st century
- faithful investments - churches and responsible investments
- CEC's place in the ecumenical movement
- CEC as a platform for dialogue with other Christian churches and other faith communities
- arms trade
- migration in a changing ecclesial landscape in Europe
- human enhancement and new technologies
- Europe in relation to other continents
- gender stereotypes in Church and society
- churches and climate change
- communication strategy
- nuclear non-proliferation
- Christian education
- persecution of Christians



- conflicts between States where CEC Member Churches are living
- elderly people
- people with disabilities

These issues will be addressed by the Central Committee and the Commissions according to the following policy lines as set out in Section II - Report. This report does not determine which of these issues will be prioritized. This will be the task of the relevant bodies of CEC. It is noted, that some of these issues have already found visible expression through the documentation provided by the Message Committee, Public Issues Committee and the Presentation from the Youth Delegates "Hand in Hand."

SECTION II Report

The major challenge: Longing for unity – experiencing diversity

Europe in the year 2009 is facing ongoing and new challenges arising from diversity. The plurality of its nations, languages, cultures and religious traditions continues to increase as people from within and from outside Europe feel constrained to move away from their home countries. Thus migrants from different contexts have brought their original cultures, traditions and religions to their new homes in Europe. The art of living together in peace and justice as citizens with differing religious identities is in many respects, still to be developed and practised. This is as true for Europe as a whole as it is true for each country within Europe. Diversity means richness, but at the same time it can be used as a reason for injustice, rivalry and conflict.

Therefore – and not only because of political and economic motives – the longing for unity is crucial to Europe. It can be described as the hope for fellowship, for a community which is able to absorb and integrate diversity, differences, even conflict, so that mutual respect, justice and peace may be achieved.

With the 13th Assembly, the churches in Europe have come together in Lyon to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Conference of European Churches (CEC). Out of the ruins of World War II and their then subsequent separation in hostile national political systems, the churches understood that they had the unique opportunity of building bridges between their different confessions and traditions. At the same time their coming together in the fellowship of CEC can be understood as symbolizing hope for a Europe where people would learn about reconciliation and peace, to live together as good neighbours and eventually to recognize themselves to be sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ.

With gratitude we therefore recall the positive role that churches – and CEC – were able to play in the processes of reconciliation, in democratic movements, as bridge-builders and contributors to the removal of the iron curtain. With pleasure we heard from politicians at the Third European Eumenical Assembly acknowledge the important role that churches have played and continue to play in the process of the growing together of Europe.

It is true that the churches themselves still have to explore how their common experience within CEC can help them walk together on a common way, giving a common witness to the one hope in Jesus Christ. Despite all visible diversity the longing for “visible unity” seems to be a hope which is still on the agenda. However, it has also lost part of its strength as a result of the problems and conflicts which have sometimes been hard to deal with in the fellowship and the work of CEC. Never-



theless mission is a challenge for all Member Churches and for CEC itself. The more the common witness of CEC becomes visible, the more CEC fulfils its vocation.

“Called to One Hope in Christ” – the ecumenical journey

CEC Member Churches have shared the experience of their ecumenical journey over the last 50 years. Despite their different traditions and confessions they have paved ways for dialogue, for mutual understanding and for common witness and action. During the years from Trondheim to Lyon hopes and obstacles in equal measure have shaped the ecumenical landscape both within and outside CEC.

“Called to One Hope in Christ” - the theme which titles and accompanies the 13th Assembly of CEC - reminds all Christian Churches of their common origin in Jesus Christ. Yet this theme is not only a reminder, but it also calls each church and the fellowship of churches in CEC to live out this indivisible hope and to give witness to unity, even at times when this seems to be a goal far away from day-by-day experience. Nevertheless the different theological concepts of “unity in reconciled diversity” and “visible unity” must not be seen as being in contradiction to each other. They should be brought into dialogue.

As far as the ecumenical dialogue with other Church families is concerned it remains a challenge for CEC to identify its specific role. One question within this matter is how CEC could make better use of the results of the various bilateral dialogues. The *Charta Oecumenica* remains for CEC the basic document for ecumenical dialogue in Europe.

In our Christian perspective hope is related very closely to faith. In the Bible we find the ground and the challenge for our hope. It is promoting a life in which hope and love are rooted in and nurtured by the triune God and it helps Christians and Churches to live and act together.

In Ephesians 4 we read: *“I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*

Called to One Hope – living and acting together as churches in Europe: consequences for the major policy lines for CEC

Based on their faith the churches are challenged to stand for this hope in their living and working together within CEC in the years to come.

Throughout its life and work CEC will illustrate its commitment to equality and diversity by ensuring that the recognised balances of women, men and young people are achieved within its Commissions and projects.

Following the reflections in the Assembly and our analysis of the current situation and in order to contribute to the mission of the Church, the safeguarding of life and the well-being of all humankind, we can outline the following overarching issues along which policy should be shaped in the coming years:

- trust and commitment



- dialogue and strengthening of relations
- coherence and visibility
- witness and responsibility.

1. Trust and Commitment

The active participation of the churches in the life of CEC, as well as their financial support, is crucial for the future. Space is needed to build up trust and commitment of Member Churches towards CEC. CEC should continue to provide a common platform for all Member Churches, and also use the existing member church offices in Brussels to reinforce cooperation and networking within its framework.

A fundamental issue in all areas of work and not least in the decision making bodies of CEC has to be increasing the commitment of the churches within the CEC fellowship and building trust among themselves - so displaying transparency in its business and mission.

Recommendations

Therefore CEC shall in the years to come:

- Find ways and methods of working appropriate to the goal of strengthening commitment and trust within its own organisational life and between its Member Churches.
- In accordance with the motion carried by the assembly “to establish a working group for revision of the CEC as a whole”, reconfigure its structures and processes in a way that assures that transparency, accountability, and acceleration in its decision-making procedures are achieved.
- Reflect on methods of discussion and decision-making in its governing bodies, including a system of consensus decision-making, with a view to facilitating transparency, ownership and predictability of any decisions reached.
- Bring forward proposals for an improved and accountable system of sharing in the financial support of CEC that is both equitable and sustainable.
- Create and support opportunities for the Member Churches to develop mutual respect and understanding between themselves and the organisation of CEC.
- Secure new and additional sources of funding to support specific projects consistent with the strategic objectives of the organisation (e.g. gender work).
- Ensure that all projects and work undertaken are properly costed and consideration given to whether they provide measurable value for money.

2. Dialogue and Strengthening of Relations

The intention to strengthen dialogue and relations between the churches follows directly the policy line of building trust and increasing commitment.

Dialogue has a deep-seated connection to trust-building. To a greater extent than in the past, dialogue should offer opportunities for the churches to learn from each other with regard to those themes and issues which are important for their theological reflection and also in their practice. Therefore, it is **recommended** that the work of the Commissions will be interrelated in a more systematic way. The coherence and inter-relation of the work of the Commissions has to be developed further. Theological reflection, socio-ethical questions, work with the European Institutions and ad-



vocacy work all belong together. This is not just a matter of organisational efficiency; it is a matter of the good stewardship of our common resources.

The agenda of the Churches in Dialogue Commission must include issues which are also relevant to the work of the Church and Society Commission (CSC) or to the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and vice versa. The work of the Commissions as a whole has to reflect the major policy lines and be in harmony with the strategic objectives for which CEC stands. Therefore, it is **recommended** that there be a review of the mandate of the Commissions (see Appendix 1).

In order to implement this new approach, it is **recommended** that the Commissions work with a wider mix of people to ensure that academic theology, socio-ethical expertise and experiences from church-leaders are brought together.

Dialogue and strengthening of relations should not only include people who have taken responsibility in the Governing Bodies or in the Commissions; opportunities should be created for more exchange (e.g. best practices) and ecumenical learning, through consultations, fora, seminars, and (virtual) encounters (e.g. similar to Ecumenical Assemblies) etc.

It will also be very important for ecumenical relations and the ecumenical movement in future to have more young people involved, including young theologians. Therefore ecumenical formation is crucial and CEC will engage more than in the past in this field of work, in particular by strengthening the co-operation with its associated youth organizations in light of the memorandum of co-operation and the strategic plan approved by Central Committee in 2007.

As a consequence of strengthening its own internal relations, CEC should be better placed to partner and work with other churches, organisations, networks and movements.

3. Coherence and Visibility

Given the different confessions, traditions, structures and agendas of its Member Churches CEC has to act within a wide range of complexity in its own constituency. CEC is confronted with many issues which are on the European agenda today: the economic and social development of Europe, the financial crisis, human rights, interreligious dialogue, migration issues, to name only a few. This agenda is ever changing, never static.

CEC is more than ever challenged to clarify its specific call and task within the various ecumenical organisations and institutions that exist at a national European, and international level.

Recommendations

Therefore CEC shall in the years to come work on its coherence and visibility, and in particular:

- Make clear to its own constituency and to as wide an audience as possible no more than three strategic objectives which will direct its work.
- Direct all of the work of CEC's constituent parts towards achieving the strategic objectives of the organisation. Work priorities will be set by decisions of the Central Committee in consultation with the Commissions.
- Focus on building relations between its Member Churches and clarifying relationships with churches outside CEC. This is especially necessary with regard to migrant churches (see *Charta Oecumenica*).



- To set up strategic guidelines for internal and external communication and ensure a coherent and adequate communications infrastructure.

4. Witness and Responsibility

For many people in Europe CEC stood and stands for the work of CSC and CCME in relation to the European Institutions. It is understood as a strong attempt to bring the common voice and witness of Christian Churches into the decision-making processes of Europe. It is also meant to provide guidelines in times when the complexity of decisions in the political arena and their manifold implications even confuses experts. The ability to live together in diversity is an important precondition for sustainable development in Europe and, at the same time, needs to be reflected within CEC itself.

The challenges of social development, globalisation, justice and peace not only need laws and guidelines, not only technical and practical approaches, but also a spiritual and ethical foundation. The work of CEC in favour of social justice and human dignity is an expression of the Christian faith. This is what the churches, and CEC stand for. CEC, therefore, needs to be heard not only as a prophetic voice, but also as a chorus of churches preaching the gospel and singing the song of faith and spiritual strength.

For the sake of CEC and sustainable development in Europe, it will be important to keep both these sides of witness and responsibility together. This should become visible in the area of gender awareness and ethical investment. Theology, church-based advocacy and diplomacy, the prophetic voice and the songs and prayers of the faithful all belong together. Only when they are seen to be inter-related do they constitute a complete witness which is credible and trustworthy to the world.

This is what makes a stronger cooperation between the Commissions and the inter-relation between all parts of the organisation so important and necessary.

Recommendations

In line with this understanding, CEC shall in the years to come:

- Continue to be an instrument whereby churches in Europe can relate effectively to the European Institutions, and at the same time, prove itself to be a fellowship of churches based on a spiritual foundation and therefore proceeding on a common way.
- Recognize that CEC's common witness is enhanced by harvesting the expertise of its Member Churches and of partner organisations. Before CEC takes up an issue, due consideration needs to be given to whether there are others who are better placed to do the work. Given the financial restrictions, it is necessary to have a clearer understanding and practice of the principles of division of work, cooperation and networking.
- Offer a space of dialogue on global concerns with partners of other continents.
- Offer a forum where questions on the borders between theology, socio-ethics, policy and society can be explored and shared. The Commissions and the Secretariat of CEC will work according to their approved goals.
- Achieve inclusiveness and in turn the full participation at all levels of its life and work of women and men of all ages. This is particularly important with regard to those belonging to migrant churches, ethnic minorities (e.g. Roma and Sami) and people with disabilities.
- Work with the *Charta Oecumenica* as a fundamental achievement in the life of CEC; reaffirming the implementation of its commitments, with priority being given especially to the mutual recognition of Baptism.



- Provide opportunities for Member Churches to share and exchange their experiences, ideas and resources in order to strengthen, inspire and motivate each other in their mission.
- See Christianity as integral to the culture of Europe and, therefore, reflect upon the different approaches and attitudes of the churches towards secularization.

Concluding affirmations

As churches in Europe we are sustained by our “One Hope in Christ” which helps us to live and to work together. On our ecumenical journey in the years to come we will strengthen our mutual commitment and our engagement for and within CEC.

This leads us to the following affirmations:

We believe CEC to be a forum for mutual learning and ecumenical formation, for bridge-building and for strengthening relations between the churches and for common witness.

We believe CEC to be the common voice of the Member Churches in Europe and an ecumenical instrument for cooperation with and advocacy to the European institutions.

We believe CEC to be a platform for dialogue with other Christian churches and other faith communities in Europe.

We believe CEC to be a community living the diversity with migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities.

Appendix 1

Mandates of the Commissions

Mandate of the CiD

Looking back at 2003, the CiD was given its mandate with the following priorities of work by the 12th Assembly of CEC:

1. Relations between the Orthodox churches and other Member Churches of CEC
2. Our common mission in Europe
3. Majority and minority churches
4. Cooperation among theological Faculties in Europe
5. Spirituality and worship life at ecumenical meetings
6. Theology of Religion
7. Ecumenical training & formation in Europe
8. Healing of Memories

Mandate of the CSC

The commitment of the churches for European integration is reflected in the mandate of the CSC.

The mandate reads as follows:



- (a) Study and examination of Church and Society questions in a socio-ethical perspective such as EECCS and CEC have undertaken up to now (for example: peace, justice and the integrity of creation, reconciliation, churches and governments);
- (b) Monitoring the European institutions: European Union, Council of Europe, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in relation to themes such as the European integration process, democratisation, establishment of the rule of law, human rights and minority questions, European security, economic and social questions, the environment;
- (c) Dealing with the specific responsibility of the churches in the member states of the European Union for international policies of the EU.

Mandate of the CCME (of CEC)

As outlined in the joint memorandum of understanding “Different Backgrounds – Joint Future” signed by the leadership of CEC and CCME in Vienna in November 2007, the CCME General Assembly and CEC Central Committee have affirmed the mandate of the CCME of CEC, namely to

1. serve the churches in their commitment to strangers, responding to the message of the Bible, which insists on the dignity of every human being, in order to promote an inclusive policy at European and national level for migrants, refugees and minority groups;
2. work on issues of migration and integration, asylum and refugees, and against racism and discrimination, undertake research, initiate, develop and implement projects in these fields;
3. represent the common voice of the churches in Europe on the above issues vis-à-vis the European institutions.



Public Issue Statement Called to value migrant people

Every year thousands of people die on their way to Europe. The Mediterranean Sea, far from being a crossroad of peoples and cultures, is becoming a new Wall of separation. Within Europe and internationally, migrants in irregular legal situations face exploitation, uncertainty, exclusion and violation of some of their basic human rights, such as the right to health care, education, family life, etc. Many migrants and their family members, even those who have lived for years in European societies or were born in Europe, are considered irregular and are often in danger of being expelled back to countries they have never lived in. We are also concerned that emigration can impoverish the churches of the countries of origin. We also note that immigrants can bring benefits to the countries that they come to and from.

Christian approaches to migrants are rooted in scripture and particularly in the clear command of Christ: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). “The stranger who lives with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:34).

Building good, fraternal relations with migrants has become an important task for many churches in Europe in recent decades. Migration poses considerable challenges and opportunities for the witness and unity of the church in Europe as well as in society at large. Some of those people who have been forced to leave their countries because of poverty, wars, persecutions or environmental disasters, arrive in Europe in the search of a better future for themselves and their families. However they often find it impossible to receive the much needed protection which they deserve.

Migration has increased cultural and religious diversity across Europe and in European churches. While this diversity is a source of great enrichment and joy, it can also evoke feelings of insecurity and prejudice in society and churches. Increasing poverty and rising levels of unemployment contribute to social tensions in society and often migrants are used as scapegoats. In recent years there has been an alarming increase in racism and in acts of violence against migrants and ethnic minorities in Europe, in particular the Roma minority, which has lived in Europe for centuries.

European churches have proclaimed 2010 as the “European year of churches responding to migration” in order to make more visible the churches’ commitment to strangers thereby responding to the message of the Bible and in order to promote inclusive policies at European and national level for migrants, refugees and ethnic minority groups.

As churches in Europe we commit ourselves:

- to speak out publicly against violations of migrants rights and to denounce any acts of racial discrimination and institutional racism;
- to set up and maintain services for the vulnerable among migrants and refugees in Europe; to address fears in societies about migration and to facilitate churches’ initiatives on finding ways to live peacefully together:
- to include migrants who are fellow Christians as equal members of our churches and
- to encourage their full participation and leadership within the churches, and to promote fraternal relations with migrants and minority ethnic churches;
- to commemorate those who have died on their journey to find a dignified life in Europe through an annual day of prayer;



- to support and accompany churches living under critical conditions in other parts of the world.

As churches in Europe we ask the public authorities:

- to improve the social and legal protection of the most vulnerable migrants in particular of trafficked persons;
- to ensure basic human rights of undocumented migrants, particularly those in detention centres;
- to remove legal and other obstacles to the family life of migrants;
- to guarantee effective access to refugee protection for those in need;
- to create a clear legal framework to combat racism;
- to refrain from any discriminatory legal or administrative measures which result in the singling out of particular racial groups;
- to strengthen development aid amongst the poorest of the world.



Public Issue Statement

Called to promote ethical principles in financial and economic structures

The 13th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches takes place at a time of the deepest global economic and financial crisis for 70 years. As we meet under the theme “Called to one Hope in Christ” we call for renewal of worldwide financial and economic structures and declare our firm hope that ethical principles embedded in faith can significantly contribute to change. Confronted by this crisis and its symptoms, the churches of Europe offer hope and recognize that this crisis provides opportunity. From the present crisis we have the opportunity to lay the foundations of a new solidarity between people in Europe and from other continents. “Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.” (1 Peter 3:15)

The crisis calls into question many basic assumptions about the economic order that have been unexamined for decades. The substance of the current crisis is not limited to the realm of economics, but has also highlighted, for example, the relationship between economics and politics and between economics and the environment. In revealing the scale and impact of economic factors on human life, the crisis has also highlighted its significant ethical and spiritual dimensions.

Announcements of signs of economic recovery, welcome in as much as they may alleviate some immediate suffering, must not lead to an easygoing assumption that all is well and to an avoidance of substantial questions about the deep causes of the crisis. In addition, many of the most significant symptoms of the crisis have a long term and systemic character. Unemployment amongst some groups will be long lasting; poverty domestically and internationally has been greatly increased.

The crisis reminds us that debt has underpinned the economic fabric of society and it needs to be subjected to serious reconsideration. Prosperity built on the levels and patterns of debt of recent years cannot be accounted as real prosperity. We have heard little from responsible decision makers that indicates an intention to address in a fundamental way these structures of debt within the global financial system that led to the current crisis.

Our understanding of Christian faith and ethics leads us as churches of Europe to commit ourselves:

- To deepen our ethical and spiritual reflection on the causes and meaning of the financial and economic crisis.
- To work towards changing our lifestyles to respect the limits of our resources and to encourage personal Christian ethics of self-restraint in the face of the needs of others.
- To revitalize the Christian culture of solidarity, love of neighbour and care for the vulnerable in our communities, workplaces and society at large.
- To apply our ethical principles in our own economic activities, especially in how we invest our money.
- To promote examples of faith-based economic praxis which provide alternatives to current economic structures (e.g. fair trade, international debt relief and interest free credit).

As churches in Europe we ask the public authorities:

- To consider the ethical dimension of the crisis and to evaluate the effects of our current economic and financial system on different stakeholders in society.



- To introduce greater accountability in leading financial institutions and greater transparency in the current financial systems
- To improve the situation of the poorest and most vulnerable members of society as the primary responsibility of public authorities.
- To ensure a financial system that is subordinated to the principles of justice and sustainability in order to not destroy the means of livelihood of future generations.



Public Issue Statement Called to strengthen human rights, religious freedom and relationships

“Called to One Hope in Christ”, the 13th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches, meets in the context of a Europe which is becoming increasingly diverse religiously, ethnically and linguistically. There are many positive consequences of this but there are also real concerns that human relationships are under strain and human freedoms are being restricted. These include growing misunderstandings between religious communities, religious discrimination and violation of religious freedom.

In this context the Christian churches must bring to the forefront of their policies and programs their fundamental insistence on the equal dignity of all human beings as made in the image of God and loved equally by God.

This love of God for the world (John 3:16) and its people is expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and is at the heart of the churches' commitment to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and to their open relationships with people of other religions within and beyond Europe.

As churches in Europe we commit ourselves:

- To the equal dignity and worth of all human beings under God and in consequence to their equal treatment in the laws of all countries.
- To insist that all human beings and communities are everywhere entitled to hold, practice or change their religious beliefs without hindrance.
- To practice both the hospitality and the embassy of God in our relations with people and communities, including those of other religions, both by welcoming in love and by reaching out in friendship for the good of the world and to the glory of God.
- To increase participation in inter religious dialogue.
- To deepen our understanding of the concepts of human rights and religious freedoms.

As churches in Europe we ask the public authorities:

- To enforce respect for holy sites and religious monuments.
- To protect the freedoms of all religious communities.

Amongst the many places where these commitments are of particular relevance, we highlight the following situation; the countries of the Middle East in relation to the need for inter religious dialogue and serious concerns about the continuing decline of historic Christian communities; the Republic of Georgia in relation to legislation on religious minorities; the Republic of Turkey in relation to its policies on religious education, and in relation to the restoration of churches for Christian worship in occupied northern Cyprus; Kosovo in relation to religious freedom.



Public Issue Statement Called to a Better Stewardship of Creation

It is now apparent that climate change is taking place more quickly and in more complex and dynamic ways than had been predicted even in recent years. The earth's climate system has tipping points and once certain thresholds are passed, the rate and variation in climatic conditions may increase dramatically. In addition there is no certainty that a new natural equilibrium on a higher level will be achieved. There is an imperative to act as individuals, on a community level, and also nationally and globally.

In the act of creation God entrusted the whole earth to humanity to exercise responsible stewardship for the oikoumene. The command of God to human beings to have dominion over every living creature presupposes an accountability and a stewardship to the Creator. Humanity's lack of due attention to the responsibilities of stewardship and to care for the creation of which we are part, has brought us to the loss of the intended harmony and symphony of the whole.

Despite the greater contribution of wealthier countries to climate change, the impact falls disproportionately upon the poor and vulnerable both through the different distribution of physical consequences and through unequal availability of resources to counter the effects. Therefore the financial contribution of richer countries should be greater.

Amongst the signs of hope and opportunity that we discern in facing this serious challenge to God's good creation are the forthcoming UN climate change conference in September 2009 and the subsequent world conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The 13th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches urges politicians, scientists and others with responsibility at these meetings not to delay the decisions of substance that are urgently needed, and to make of these meetings a time of return to a better stewardship of the gifts of the creation. The Assembly recommends the celebration of the "creation time" from 1st September to 4th October as highlighted in the declaration of the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu.

As churches in Europe we commit ourselves:

- To increase involvement in promoting changed life styles and promoting the "economy of enough" for a more sustainable and just development.
- To intensify inter church and inter religious cooperation in addressing the need to care for creation.

As churches in Europe we ask the public authorities:

- To adopt precise and binding commitments within specified timetables for the reduction of the causes of climate change by the Conference participants in Copenhagen in December 2009
- To provide additional financial support to assist developing countries to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change.



Public Issue Statement Called to a world free of nuclear weapons

2009 commemorates the end of the Cold War 20 years ago bringing with it the hope that Europe would no longer be a divided continent. It also brought the hope of a Europe free of the fear of a new war that would bring nuclear annihilation. Yet today nuclear weapons continue to pose just this threat. Although their numbers have been drastically reduced, some 25.000 nuclear weapons still exist, many of which are ready to be launched within minutes. Furthermore, the world is faced with new threats of more states developing nuclear weapons and of terrorist groups acquiring them.

During the Cold War, many churches strongly voiced their moral rejection of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, considering it to be contradictory to their deepest beliefs and convictions that security should rely on a readiness to destroy the world which God has entrusted to us.

Since the ending of the Cold War however awareness of this threat faded but now, at the time of this 13th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches, new hope has emerged that a world free of nuclear weapons may yet be achieved. On April 1 of this year, in a joint statement in London, US President Obama and Russian President Medvedev committed their countries to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and President Obama has repeated this call in a speech in Prague in April. This Assembly strongly supports the aim of removing all nuclear weapons.

The Assembly regrets that in this new and hopeful situation, European institutions, in particular NATO and the EU, have been reluctant to endorse this new call and have failed to announce new steps of their own. Several thousand “tactical nuclear weapons” are still in Europe, as relics of the Cold War. Most are Russian, and five NATO countries still host a few hundred US bombs. Moreover, the UK and France continue to have their own arsenals.

On March 30, on the occasion of NATO's 60th anniversary, the Conference of European Churches, the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, and the Canadian Council of Churches, wrote a letter to the Secretary General of NATO and to NATO's member states. The letter asked for an end to NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons, using three arguments:

- Such a step would help to revitalise the Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968), which includes the obligation for nuclear disarmament by the nuclear weapons' states.
- The new vision of a nuclear weapons free world brings hope to citizens and churches in all member states and must be supported.
- Security must be sought in resolving injustices and conflicts, and in affirming and enhancing human interdependence within God's one creation.

The Assembly strongly endorses the call by President Obama for a world free of nuclear weapons. We appeal to all nuclear weapons states to publicly endorse this goal, to refrain from modernisation of nuclear weapons, and to set a time schedule for their dismantling. We appeal to NATO and the EU, to their member states, and to Russia to address the issue of those nuclear weapons in Europe that are not included in current negotiations. We appeal to those states that in the context of NATO still have nuclear weapons on their soil to signal that their role must be ended. And we appeal to our Member Churches to express their full support for a nuclear weapons free world. In 1989, it was the people who ended the Cold War. Today, it may be people who end the threat of nuclear catastrophe.



Churches called to stand in solidarity with the Roma minority in Europe

Public Statement 21 July 2009

According to Art. 1 I of its Constitution one of the tasks of CEC is to issue public statements, which can, in accordance with Art. 5 III No. 5 be adopted directly by the Assembly. Having realized that despite the ongoing integration with CCME, it was not possible to address ethnic minority issues sufficiently, the Steering Committee has set up a CCME working group in accordance with SO 7.14 to address an issue at the heart of the work of that Commission. It has been submitted to them according to SO 8.3. The Steering Committee submits it to the Assembly with the recommendation to adopt it as a public statement of the Conference of European Churches

The 13th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches expresses its dismay and deep concern that the situation of the Roma, Sinti and travellers' communities have not improved in the last years and programmes for Roma integration especially in Central-East Europe are not pursued sufficiently.

The social exclusion of the largest European ethnic minority is severely exacerbated by increasing racist violence in the past years.

The Assembly commends those churches which have provided shelter and stood at the side of the victims of such attacks. The Assembly affirms the Christian conviction that every person is created in the image of God; the dignity of every person needs to be upheld.

We also regret that churches have not yet achieved sufficient inclusion of these groups in parishes and churches, which is also exemplified by the fact that there is no Roma, Sinti or traveller delegate at our Assembly.

The Assembly urges the European institutions and the CEC Member Churches to introduce effective integration strategies and viable steps and actions for the integration and social inclusion of Roma, Sinti and travellers' communities.

The Assembly calls on governments across Europe

- To uphold and protect the rights of ethnic minorities and vigorously work against racism and racist violence.
- To intensify the work for Roma inclusion in European societies in the framework of the Council of Europe and the EU decade for Roma Inclusion launched in 2008.
- To initiate programmes underpinned with the necessary financial resources in the field of education to provide a form of education that meets the needs of the Roma.
- To protect and promote the cultural heritage and dialects of Roma, Sinti and travellers.
- To realise a comprehensive social and employment system which recognises the Roma's right to work without any discrimination.

The Assembly of CEC calls on churches across Europe

- To denounce racism and racist violence as a sin.
- To stand at the side of victims of racist violence and advocate for bringing the perpetrators of racist violence before a court of justice.



- To cooperate with the national authorities in the framework of the Council of Europe work with Roma, Sinti and Travellers and the EU Decade for Roma inclusion.
- To work with representatives of the Roma minorities in European countries in the processes of healing of memories, to recognise the history of slavery and exclusion, and to identify steps and processes for living together while respecting traditions and cultures.

The CEC Assembly expresses its respect for the Roma minority in Europe.



Motion Adopted on the Revision of the CEC Structure

Referring to the discussions in the Plenary concerning the renewal of the CEC, raised by the Motion of the EKD, the Assembly establishes, on the proposal of the Nominations Committee, a working group of 15 members to carry out a revision of the CEC as a whole, including a common purpose and vision and the setting of strategic goals and which structures would serve these goals in an optimal way and in accordance with the wishes and needs of the Member Churches. In this process, it is important to pay due consideration to the present status of the General Assembly, the Central Committee and the Commissions. This revision should include both constitutional, legal and decision-making aspects deemed necessary.

This working group is to be accountable to the Central Committee and has to make a first draft available no later than 31 December 2011, after which the Member Churches and the Commissions are to be consulted.

The Central Committee has to bring a final proposal to an advanced constitutional and general assembly to be held in the summer of 2013.

Mandate for the Working Group

1. The Working Group shall make sure that this revision takes account of the need for a concise and coherent body of constitutional, legal and decision-making provisions and procedures that is easily manageable.
2. It is set up as a special task force. As its work will be conducted between Assemblies, it shall not be a committee according to Nr. 8.12 SO, but be constituted as a body of experts representative of the regions, the denominational families and of majority and minority churches within CEC. It shall present a report on the current state of its work at every meeting of the Central Committee for discussion and take the recommendations of that body into account. The President and the two Vice-Presidents can, in an advisory capacity, take part in the meetings of the working group.
3. The Working Group shall be convened within five months of the closure of this Assembly. The Group shall constitute itself and adopt standing orders in line with the general legal framework of CEC to regulate more detailed procedures. The General Secretariat shall provide the logistic support asked for by the presidium of the Group.
4. The Central Committee shall transmit the final proposal to all Member Churches no later than six months before the Constitutional Assembly, as stated in the Bye Laws.
5. The Working Group presents the final proposal submitted by the Central Committee to the Constitutional Assembly and advises it on the feasibility and/or impact on the entire body of revised texts of any amendment to its proposal submitted at that Assembly.
6. When convening the Constitutional and General Assembly in 2013 the Central Committee has to take into consideration the date and place of the General Assembly of the WCC as well as the financial consequences for CEC and its Member Churches.



Report of the Finance Committee

1. Financial development from Trondheim to Lyon

The Finance Committee examined for its work a.o.:

- From Trondheim to Lyon report
- Accounts 2008 (receipts and expenditures, balance sheet and contributions expected and received)
- Audit statements “Bouquin Frères et Béran SA”
- Remarks from the (chair of the) budget committee
- Comments from the secretary for finance and administration

General picture:

- 2002-07 increase total income *appr.* CHF 500.000 ($\pm 18\%$)
- 2002-07 increase member contributions CHF 480.000 ($\pm 28\%$)
- However inflated by exchange rate CHF-£ - Euro
- Lower contributions churches on the Rhine, donations, development and solidarity fund
- Higher income seconded staff
- 2008-2009 reduction of contributions due to financial situation of Member Churches, crisis and economic recession

2. Financial results from Trondheim to Lyon

In general finances developed well. Income and expenditure could be increased. The years of 2003/2007 could be closed with small positive results, only 2008 ended with a small deficit due to the financial and economic crises. This could be realized by tight budgeting and a strict balanced budget regime. Most of the program cost was financed through additional income from both Member Churches and other parties; a strict policy honouring the earmarking continued to be exercised.

It has to be stated that these results could be realized despite the fact that a number of churches did not contribute at all and others far below their ability and due to the fact that several other churches contributed (considerably) more than was requested from them.

3. Sibiu accounts

The 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly by CEC/CCEE took place in Sibiu – Romania September 2007. Additional to the regular and program accounts, CEC had to seek finances for her share in the cost amounting to CHF 1,986,955

This was made possible by considerable additional earmarked donations from CEC Member Churches, subsidies from the Romanian government and the European Union, grants from agencies and donors, participants fees, etc. In the end this major event did not cause a deficit to be covered by CEC accounts. It should be mentioned that the financial aspect of Sibiu has been in good control.



4. Preparing the integration of CCME

Based on the decision of Trondheim intensive discussions with CCME (executive) board and staff have taken place, including those concerning finances. The discussions gradually shifted from policy to practice. As a token of joint commitment CEC started to contribute to the CCME work from 2004 on. It is recommended that there will be continued support from general CEC funds to CCME work over the next period.

In view of the Migration Year 2010 we appeal to the Member Churches of CEC to also participate financially in it.

5. Member contributions

It is clear that over the Trondheim – Lyon period membership contributions have increased, at least in CHF terms. However the situation has not been satisfying as there is still a relatively large number of churches that either do not contribute at all, or only incidentally, or only symbolically, or far below their capability to share the common financial burden. This situation endangers both the continuity and the solidarity. In 2008 there were 28 Member Churches that did not pay at all, corresponding to CHF 71.070. Above this 13 Member Churches paid less than 90% of the request, corresponding to CHF 263.229 (a total sum of CHF 334.299, or about €222.800 for CEC general budget).

A review of the key used in setting the expected contributions of each member church was not recommended to the Central Committee by the budget committee as long as there is still a lack of real effort of some of the Member Churches to pay accordingly.

Membership of an organization - be it secular, church or ecumenical- entitles the member with rights as well as with obligations. One of these is paying a fair share of the common burden in solidarity. Not contributing to CEC can not be left without consequences for the rights of a member in the period beyond Lyon. The Committee recommends the explicit obligation of each CEC member to contribute in accordance with its capacity, including an absolute minimum contribution of € 500 per year. Consequences we recommend are: suspension of the right to vote or to be elected, suspension of the right to be invited to CEC activities, seminars, consultations etc and no CEC travel subsidies been given, etc. The Central Committee is asked to follow up the matter. The legal aspects of this can be looked at in the special working group set up by this Assembly.

6. Member contributions /designated contributions

The work of CEC is basically financed from member contributions and from designated contributions. The latter include membership contributions for specific commissions, churches of the Rhine, specific funds, etc. Apart from this, members also respond to funding appeals of specific program activities like consultations, workshops, seminars, expert groups, etc. Where general member contributions are meant to cover the cost of the core organizational cost of CEC and designated contributions to enable specific work of programs executed by the commissions or general secretariat a review of the cost involved in the two areas can lead to another type of funding. It could be imagined that financing of CEC will become more designated and less in member contributions. This implies a stricter definition of what the core of the CEC structure is and a new set up of the budget presented. It is advised to undertake such new budget set up.



7. Locations

As recommended by the Finance Committee of Trondheim the issue of studying the possibility of combining the three CEC offices (Geneva, Brussels and Strasbourg) continued to be on the agenda. During this period a study of cost levels between Brussels and Geneva were inconclusive. Recent calculations showed more favourable conditions in Brussels; notwithstanding the cost for an operation to move people and offices.

It is recommended that once the organization considers for reasons of her own to concentrate CEC offices mostly in Brussels the decision should be based on a sound and comprehensive feasibility study including all financial and legal consequences and a solid and transparent financial plan.

8. Fundraising and sponsoring

The tendency in financing CEC and all of its programs and activities goes in the direction of less generally granted member contributions and more designated funding. This has been visible already over the last period and it will become more important over time. It is recommended that transparent protocols for both fundraising and sponsoring are prepared and agreed. These should include guidelines for internal use as well as a code for contracting contributions, sponsorships, donations, subsidies, grants, co-financing etc with Member Churches, church departments/organizations, (protestant) charities and enterprises. It is recommended that an expert fundraising working group is set up to assist the organization in this.

9. Sustainable investments

It is true that at the moment CEC does not have considerable funds to invest. But sustainability is not confined to (church) investments only. It also includes sustainable cash management and savings. CEC as the largest European ecumenical organization has to set an example on this in times when the credibility of investments and the banking system is at stake. It is recommended CEC draws up a policy on this.

10. Finances of the Lyon Assembly

According to the latest information available at the end of this event due to a sudden reduction unexpected subsidies and some foreseen and unforeseen additional costs the financial result of this Lyon Assembly is expected to be a deficit of possibly € 250.000.

The Assembly Planning Committee takes responsibility for this. Steps are undertaken as to recover part of the deficit in close contact with the Lyon/Rhône administration. It is estimated that not all can be recovered in this way. Therefore the committee advises to have a close look at the CEC provisions as an additional source of recovery. It is the intention that a final uncovered balance of the deficit will in the end **not** influence negatively the operational budget of CEC in the period 2010-2013. However if there will still be a deficit by December 2009 this has to be revised again.

11. Request by the Central Committee to the Budget Committee

As the situation due to this sudden unexpected deficit needs immediate urgent attention and a new Budget Committee will only be chosen by the newly elected Central



Committee, the outgoing Central Committee proposes to the Assembly that the outgoing Budget Committee continue their work until the first new Central Committee meeting which is due in December 2009. The task during this interim period will be to secure a balanced budget for 2009, to review in detail a realistic and transparent budget plan for 2010 based on the latest information available, and to develop a strategy to overcome the deficit resulting from this Lyon Assembly. The task includes recommendations for a realistic staffing plan based on finances available and the working priorities set by this Assembly.

12. Advanced CEC Assembly 2013

During the assembly the motion from the EKD/Nordic Baltic Churches has been discussed and adopted. In the light of this motion there will be additional preparatory work, meetings and consultations coming up ending in this advanced CEC Assembly. Both the work of this new Working Group and the advancing of the Assembly give additional cost as yet not covered by the regular budget of CEC. An additional budget has to be set up for this and additional funding has to be secured at the start of the activities of the Working Group.

13. Recommendations for upcoming assemblies

The Committee, in its analysis of the process of organizing the Lyon Assembly, has found that the mechanism to keep finances in control has not been in place. It is therefore recommended to have a person appointed by the budget committee. In future it is understood that:

- the budget shall be balanced,
- the standard of facilities and the organization of the event should be adequate, realistic and not too ambitious,
- contracts both on grants as well as on expenditures are to be screened carefully,
- and the budget should be approved by the Central Committee at each stage of the process ahead of the assembly.

14. Budget/financial plans 2010- 2013

Some remarks on the budget:

- the financial plan is based on the personnel/staffing plan as envisaged.
- the plan is drawn up in Euro as this is the main currency in use, contribution requests are in euros, and the location might change during this period to Brussels-Strasbourg in Euro countries;
- the plan is valid on condition that the contributions and other income will be secured – the balanced budget policy has to be continued
- the 14th Assembly has again partly to be financed by a contribution from the year to year budget of CEC. Even in that case an important part of the funding will have to be secured from other sources. It is recommended to start some years ahead with fundraising for this;
- special events like for instance an EEA4 (if felt necessary) are not included in the budget;



- program activities like has been the case in the period Trondheim – Lyon need additional financing from churches, agencies, EU- governments and/or sponsors; as they cannot be specifically projected, these are left outside the budget.

15. Resolutions

The Finance Committee proposes the following resolutions to the Assembly:

- To adopt as presented the financial plan for the years 2010 – 2013
- In view of the financial situation to ask the outgoing Budget Committee to stay on until the new Central Committee convenes in December 2009
- To state clearly that an advanced CEC Assembly in 2013 as a result of the adoption of the EKD/Nordic Baltic motion can only take place if additional financing can be found, as is included in that motion.



Composition of new Central Committee of CEC

Central East

	Title	Name	Church	Country	M/F	L/O	Remarks
1	Ms.	Alina Patru	Orthodox	Romania	F	L	
2	Ms.	Katarena Dekanovska	Hussite	Czech Republic	F	L	Youth
3	Ms.	Krisztina Rajos	Reformed Church of Hungary	Hungary	F	L	Youth
4	H.E.	Irineu of Oltenia	Orthodox	Romania	M	O	
5	Dr.	Joanna Mizgala	Reformed	Poland	F	L	
6	Ms.	Julija Vidovic	Orthodox	Serbia	F	L	Youth
7	Rev. Dr.	Andrzej Kuzma	Orthodox	Poland	M	O	
8	H.G.	Grigorije of Zahum-Herzegovina	Orthodox	Serbia	M	O	

Central West

9	OKRin	Dine Fecht	EKD Lutheran	Germany	F	O	
10	OKRin	Cordelia Kopsch	EKD United	Germany	F	O	
11	Bishop	Frank Otfried July	EKD United	Germany	M	O	
13	Rev.	Thomas Wipf	SEK	Switzerland	M	O	
14	Pfarrer Mag.	Thomas Hennefeld	Evang. H B Austria	Austria	M	O	
15	Pastorin	Silke Tosch	Bund Evang. Freikirchlicher Gemeinden	Germany	F	O	
16	Ms.	Carol Soland Faessli	Old Catholic	Switzerland	F	L	

East

16	Archimandrite	Hovakim Manukyan	Armenian Apostolic Church	Armenia	M	O	
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Nordic Baltic

17	Very Rev	Karin Burstrand	Church of Sweden	Sweden	F	O	
18	Rev	Elise Sandnes	Church of Norway	Norway	F	O	
19	Very Rev	Rauno Pietarinen	Orthodox Church of Finland	Finland	M	O	
20	Rev.	Peeter Kaldur	Evang.-Luth. Church of Estonia	Estonia	M	O	
21	Mr.	Erlend Rogne	Church of Norway	Norway	M	L	Youth
22	Rev.	Tapani Rantala	Evang. Luth. Church of Finland	Finland	M	O	
23	Rev.	Mette Ladefoged	Evang. Luth Church of Denmark	Denmark	F	O	



North West

24	Ms.	Anthea Cox	Methodist	Great Britain	F	L	
25	Prof. Dr	Goos Minderman	Remonstranten	Netherlands	M	L	
26	Very Rev. Dr	Sheilagh Kesting	Church of Scotland	Great Britain	F	O	
27	Rev.	Arjan Plaisier	Protestant Church of Netherlands	Netherlands	M	O	
28	Apostle	Adejare Oyewole	Council Of African & Carib. Churches	Great Britain	M	O	
29	Bishop	Christopher Hill	Church of England	Great Britain	M	O	

South

30	Mr.	Edouard Kanza Kibongui	Baptist Union of Italy	Italy	M	L	
31	Bishop	Sifredo Teixeira	Methodist Church of Portugal	Portugal	M	O	
32	Rev.	Claire Sixt-Gateuille	Église Réformée de France	France	F	O	Youth

South East

33	Prof. Dr.	Marina Kolovopoulou	Orthodox	Greece	F	L	
34	H.G.	Porphyrios of Neapolis	Orthodox	Cyprus	M	O	
35	Metropolitan	H.E. Athanasios of Achaia	Orthodox	Greece	M	O	
36	Ms.	Sonila Dedja	Orthodox	Albania	F	L	Youth
37	Rev.	Dimitrios Boukis	Greek Evangelical	Greece	M	O	
38	H.E.	Metropolitan Michael of Austria	Ecumenical Patriarchate	Austria	M	O	
39	H.E.	Metropolitan Emmanuel of France	Ecumenical Patriarchate	International	M	O	
40	H.E.	Metropolitan Gennadios of Sassima	Ecumenical Patriarchate	International	M	O	



Constitutional Working Group of CEC

	Title	Name	Church	Country	M/F	L/O	Youth
1	Ms.	Charlotte Kuffer	Swiss Protestants	Swiss	F	L	
2	Rev.	Zoltan Tarr	Reformed	Hungary	M	O	
3	Ms.	Heidi Paakjaer Martinussen	Lutheran	Denmark	F	L	
4	Rev.	Anders Lindberg	Church of Sweden L	Sweden	M	O	
5	Rev.	Michel Charbonnier	Waldensian Church	Italy	M	L	
6	Rev.	Gunnar Grönblom	Church Of Finland L	Finland	M	O	
7	Dr.	Christoph Thiele	United, EKD	Germany	M	L	
8	Mr.	Colin Ride	Methodist	Great Britain	M	L	
9	Deacon	Julian Theodor Bendo	Orthodox	Albania	M	O	Y
10	Rev.	Klaas van der Kamp	United	The Netherlands	M	O	
11	Rev.	Graham Sparkes	Baptist union of Great Britain	Great Britain	M	O	
12	Dr.	Charles Reed	Church of England	Great Britain	M	L	
13	Mag.	Katerina Karkala-Zorba	Orthodox	Church of Greece	F	L	
14	Fr.	Georges Tssetsis	Ecumenical Patriarchate	International Area	M	O	
15	Rev.	Shahe Anainian	Oriental Orth	Armenia	M	O	Y

Regions: CE 1, CW 2, E 1, NB 3, NW 4, S 1, SE 3.

Confessional Families: Reformed 3, Lutheran 3, Orthodox, 4, Anglican 1, Baptist 1, Methodist 1, United 2.

Female	3	20%	Male	12	80%
Lay	7	47%	Ordained	8	53%

Youth 2 13%

Criteria: The nominees are a diverse group, ranging in age from 28 to 75, possessing a cross section of talents and gifts that include:

- expertise in Ecumenical Constitutional Work, Comparative European Law, International Law;
- experience with Planning and Implementation processes of Ecumenical Structures, National Church Councils and International Councils;
- persons with present and past involvement in Youth Commissions;
- institutional memory of Ecumenical formations processes;
- extensive work with CEC at a diverse variety of levels.