

## ***Different Backgrounds – Joint Future***

### **Merger of the Conference of European Churches and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe**

#### **Background:**

Migration is an overall reality in society today. Aware that migration is posing challenges to societies, political institutions and churches, the Assembly (of CEC) confirms the obligation on churches and each Christian to "welcome the stranger". (CEC 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Trondheim, 25 June- 2 July 2003).

*CCME is an ecumenical organisation that serves 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. (CCME Mission Statement, CCME Assembly, London, October 2005)*

In January 2000, CEC, CCME and the World Council of Churches signed an Agreement of Cooperation:

"Through this agreement, CCME agrees:

- to speak out on these issues in the name of its members
- to advise CEC and WCC when actions are needed from these two partner organisations on these issues so that they can be taken up with the appropriate bodies
- to assist CEC and WCC to advise their member churches on issues related to uprooted people (migrants, refugees, internally displaced) and on racism/xenophobia in Europe
- to enable the sharing of information and resources on these issues
- to encourage co-ordinated action by the European churches
- to work towards a more inclusive structure and membership in which regional and confessional balance is assured
- to contribute, from a European perspective, to the Global Ecumenical Network on Uprooted People and to speak out on global issues as needed and possible.

Through this agreement, CEC and WCC express their commitment to

- work with CCME to enable the organisation to become more representative of all CEC and WCC-member churches in Europe and to work more intentionally to raise awareness of issues related to migrants, refugees, asylum and racism/xenophobia among the churches
- support CCME in its efforts to secure sufficient funding to enable it to responsibly carry out its extended mandate
- share information with CCME on issues related to its mandate."

Following an evaluation of the agreement of cooperation undertaken in 2001, the Central Committee of the Conference of European Churches (Morges 2002) and the General Assembly of Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (Aegina 2002) in agreement with the World Council of Churches agreed to go beyond cooperation and work towards the merger of the two organisations.

Following the decisions of the CEC Assembly in Trondheim which paved the way by adopting changes to the bye-laws and committing CEC to identifying and providing necessary resources, a further study on the implications of a merger for the structure of CEC was undertaken in 2003-2004 and presented to CEC Central Committee in Prague 2004. A group working on restructuring elaborated proposals for governance and management of CEC, which were adopted by the Central Committee of CEC in June 2005 for an exploratory phase.

The CCME Assembly in October 2005 agreed to the merger and appreciated and accepted the offer by the Central Committee of CEC to participate in the new structure with a CEC leadership team starting its work in December 2005, and mandated the CCME Executive Committee (the ExCom) to continue the work with the Negotiation Group.

In 2006, the Negotiation Group worked on a number of crucial issues and adopted recommendations in its meeting on 31 May-1 June 2007, which form the basis of the following memorandum of understanding.

Some issues tackled in the process of negotiation have been addressed in the CEC group on restructuring. Other issues will need to be addressed by CEC in the future, an important one among these is the question of membership and associate membership in CEC and its Commissions, rights and duties, possibilities of participation in the ecumenical work in Europe. An other one is the development of working instruments. The Lyon Assembly may be the appropriate place to open space for reviewing the current stipulations in light of ecumenical priorities for the coming years.

**Interim provisions and time table:**

- Decision on memorandum of understanding at CCME ExCom 12-13 November and CEC CC 14-17 November 2007;
- Signing of memorandum by President of CEC and Moderator of CCME, as well as General Secretaries
- CCME Assembly adjust CCME statutes (October 2008)
- CEC Central Committee to affirm the appointment of the General Secretary of CCME as Director of the CCME of CEC and executive staff of CCME as executive staff of CEC – 2008
- Budget plans of CEC and CCME 2008-2009 to be merged for joint planning and fundraising
- Staffing plan of CEC to be adjusted in 2008,
- Salary adjustment until 2010
- CCME Assembly 2008 to adopt priorities of work to be proposed to CEC Assembly in Lyon
- CEC and CCME to work on communication and fundraising for inclusion and activation of more member churches in migration related work
- CEC Assembly in Lyon to launch a European year of churches responding to migration.

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of CEC and the Executive Committee of CCME in November 2007 respectively:**

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### **MEMORANDUM of Understanding between the**

### **Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe and the**

### **Conference of European Churches**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The natural starting point for Christian reflection and action on migration is the clear command in both the Old and the New Testaments to act humanely and compassionately towards the stranger who share with all human beings in the dignity of the Being of God, (Genesis 1:26-27; John 1:1). That "*You shall love the alien as yourself*" (Leviticus 19:34; Hebrews 13:1-3 ) is typical of the humane attitude towards 'the other' found in the Moses law, an obligation accepted by the three Abrahamic world religions and other faith communities. It is believed to have been given both by revelation and Natural Law, that is, a moral principle which is capable of being recognized by all human beings. As such, it requires no further theological support.
- 1.2 Migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum are beyond doubt the most obvious class of person to whom this command applies in Europe today. Migration is intimately connected with the stories of the foundational documents of the Christian tradition, which evidence the fact that people movement has been a constant feature of historical reality. It can become an occasion for either 'blessing' or 'curse', depending on the way in which it is engaged with and responded to. The need for the Churches to develop policies and act on migration comes from the importance the Churches in Europe place on speaking with a common and prophetic voice, and on identifying common actions to be undertaken in the light of the social, economic, cultural, political and religious implications for Europe and migrants themselves. The Christian faith makes a claim upon Christians and upon Churches to assist those who suffer and experience injustice, and to act, where necessary, on their behalf.
- 1.3 Behind this Memorandum of Understanding lies the recognition on the part of CEC that its ability to speak on all these issues which are so important in our days for the Churches and for Europe as a whole will be strengthened by merging with CCME, as well as the recognition by CCME that the merger with CEC will enable it to witness to these important issues across a wider constituency.

#### **2. Merger between CEC and CCME:**

Recognising that migration is an overall reality in society today, and aware that migration is posing challenges to societies, political institutions and churches, the

Assembly (of CEC) confirms the obligation on churches and each Christian to “welcome the stranger”.

*CCME is an ecumenical organisation that serves 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.*

The Conference of European Churches and the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe intend to strengthen their organisations and their work through the merger, to draw on synergy effects and make the CEC with its Commissions more effective and responsive to the needs of the Churches in Europe. Thus the merger seeks to build on the strength of the formerly separated organisations and include the broader constituency of CEC.

Therefore the relations of CEC's overall decision making bodies to its Commissions need to be based on values: accountability and subsidiarity; serving the constituency better and spending as much energy as necessary and at the same time as little energy as possible on structures. These relations have been discussed in the CEC Restructuring Group in the past two years. The Central Committee meeting in Vienna 14-17 November 2007 has taken decisions with regard to further fine-tuning this process.

### **3. Mandate of CCME as a Commission of CEC:**

3.1. The CCME Assembly and CEC Central Committee mandate the future CCME to:

- *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.*
- 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;
- represent the common voice of the churches in Europe on the above issues vis-à-vis the European institutions.

### **4. Membership of the CCME of CEC**

4.1. The CCME of CEC shall consist of 20-25 members.

4.2. As it is desirable and necessary that black and migrant churches are included and have a role particularly in the work of CCME, their participation will be assured in the composition of the future CCME.

4.3. Members of the present CCME, which are not yet members of CEC, shall be invited to join CEC as members or, in the case of members which are not churches, to become associated members of CEC.

As long as such membership cannot be assured, the current members of CCME can participate in the work of the CCME of CEC.

CEC will review its criteria for membership and/or provide special conditions for these churches and organisations to facilitate that they can become part of CEC.

- 4.4. As all other CEC Commissions, the future CCME will be appointed by the Central Committee upon recommendation of the Nomination Committee of the CC. Prior to the nominations, member churches of CEC and members of the present CCME will be invited to suggest persons to be included as members of the CCME of CEC.
- 4.5. 1/3 of the members of the CCME of CEC shall be selected from among the members of CCME which are not (yet) members of CEC at the date the merger enters into force.
- 4.6. Member churches of CEC shall be encouraged to suggest persons with special expertise on issues to be addressed by the future CCME for membership in the Commission.
- 4.7. The World Council of Churches shall be invited to be represented at the Commission plenary and Executive Committee of CCME.

## **5. Decision Making Bodies of the CCME, Frequency of Meetings**

- 5.1. The Plenary Meeting of the future CCME meets at least every second year. In that year, it shall convene (*if at all possible*) prior to the meeting of the CEC Central Committee. In-between meetings of the Plenary, mechanisms and instruments will be in place in order to keep members of the Commission informed and involved.
- 5.2. "The CCME is empowered to elect an executive committee and working groups to discharge its mandate in accordance with the overall programme agreed with the Central Committee and within the limits of the budget." (Bye laws art 7(4)c; Trondheim Assembly 2003)
- 5.3. The CCME will maintain its memberships and roles in other organisations and networks as long as these do not contradict the overall aims and objectives of CEC. In the case of potential future memberships, the Senior Management Team will decide on which body of CEC is best placed to seek membership – *a procedure which will also apply to other Commissions of CEC*.
- 5.4. CCME will maintain its contacts to relevant bodies and teams of the World Council of Churches in consultation with the CEC Senior Management Team.

## **6. Status of the Commission**

- 6.1. In order to express the common identity of CEC and the relationship between CEC and CCME as a Commission of CEC, the Commission will be referred to as the "Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe of the Conference of European Churches", wherever that does not infringe on the status of CCME as an aisbl (association internationale sans but lucratif) according to Belgian law.
- 6.2. As a Commission of CEC, the CCME will act under and in accordance with the legal provisions of the Conference of European Churches (Constitution, Bye-Laws, as amended by the Trondheim Assembly, etc) and the recommendations of CEC's decision-making bodies.
- 6.3. For several legal purposes, CCME will keep the legal status of an aisbl under Belgian law. In this capacity CCME and CEC have to ensure that the CCME fulfills the legal requirements under Belgian law.

- 6.4. Wherever CCME has to act in its capacity as an aisbl under Belgian law, it will be referred to as "Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe".

## **7. Public Statements**

- 7.1. The Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe is empowered to make public statements within its respective sphere of competence, in the name of their Commission and in consultation with the General Secretary of CEC. (agreed, Bye-Laws 7(4) ii, Trondheim 2003)

## **8. The relationship between CEC and the CCME (decision-making, communication, synergy)**

- 8.1. CCME as a Commission of CEC shall prepare work priorities for the period in-between two CEC Assemblies to be adopted by the Assembly as part of its Policy Reference Committee Report.
- 8.2. Within the framework of the parameters of the Commission's mandate and within the parameters given by the CEC Assembly, CCME establishes a work programme to be agreed with the CEC Central Committee. The Commission reports annually to the Central Committee on the implementation of the work programme.
- 8.3. The CEC Commissions shall be equally represented at Central Committee. At least one member of the Commission's Executive Committee shall be a member of the Central Committee. This will require a change of the CEC constitution and/or bye-laws.
- 8.4. If no member is elected by the CEC Assembly, one member of the Executive Committee is permanently invited in an advisory capacity to the Central Committee.
- 8.5. Within the parameters of the adopted work programme and the adopted budget, the Commission decides on how to discharge its work programme. (Bye-Laws: The Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe (is) empowered to elect an executive committee and working groups to discharge (its) respective mandate in accordance with an overall programme agreed with the Central Committee and within the limits of the budget.")
- 8.6. The General Secretariat with the help of the Senior Management Team working within the parameters set by the Assembly and the Central Committee has to ensure the coherence of the work of CEC. It has to ensure best possible ways of inside and outside communication as well as the best possible services across the sectoral departments of CEC (communication, finances, administration etc.) for all sections of CEC.

## **9. Finances, Budget and Fundraising**

- 9.1. The future CCME, based on the work programme, elaborates a budget proposal. This budget proposal is incorporated into the overall CEC budget by the Finance Secretary of CEC, adopted by the Finance Committee and referred to the Central Committee for adoption. The Executive Committee of the future CCME **maintains the right to adjust the budget** in the course of



the year, provided that this does not imply additional funding from other areas of CEC. The future CCME will consult the senior management team and Finance Secretary of CEC when budget changes are envisaged or planned.

For projects, provided own funding can be proven, the decision rests with the Commission which authorises the Director.

Collective fundraising is necessary for the coherence of the organisation and needs to be coordinated with the senior management team.

- 9.2. Incoming unearmarked funding or funding reaching CEC as a result of collective fundraising efforts will be allocated upon decision of the senior management team in consultation with the Finance Secretary, where appropriate in consultation with the Finance Committee.
- 9.3. For legal purposes, an annual separate and audited financial report of the future CCME will be secured.

## **10. Property and reserves:**

- 10.1. The CCME reserves and properties, including the charges reserve at the date of merger, remain the property of the future CCME and can only be used for the work of the future CCME in the framework of CEC. They will be reported in the annual financial report for the future CCME.
- 10.2. The joint property of CSC and CCME (the building Rue Joseph II 172-174 in Brussels) remains the property of the CSC (aisbl) and CCME (aisbl). The joint Owners Association will continue to take all decisions in relation to the property. The budget of the Owners' Association will be annexed to the CEC budget.
- 10.3. CSC and (the future) CCME form the owners' association for the Ecumenical Center, Rue Joseph II 172-174 in Brussels responsible for the administration of the building. On investments or divestments the Finance Committee of CEC is consulted.

## **11. Staffing**

- 11.1. CEC adjusts its staffing plan to incorporate the present staff of CCME.<sup>1</sup>
- 11.2. Executive staff and the director of the future CCME will be appointed by the Central Committee of CEC upon recommendation of a nominations committee; in the case of the Commissions, the nominations committee will consist of the Director of the Commission, the General Secretary of CEC, a member of the CEC Presidium, and at least one member of the Executive Committee of the Commission will be included.
- 11.3. Project staff and seconded staff not included in the CEC staffing plan is appointed by the Commission Director in consultation with members of the Executive Committee of the Commission and the General Secretary of

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<sup>1</sup> Legally, it is the competence of the CEC Assembly to adopt a staffing plan. This may be an area to be checked when the CEC statutes are revised as this may not be feasible

CEC provided the budget is secured. The (amended)<sup>2</sup> CEC staff regulations apply except for the salary scheme.

- 11.4. CEC and CCME agree to elaborate a revised salary scheme with at least 4 staffing categories and approximately 14 steps. The scheme shall aim at coherence of salaries between the different CEC locations and at transparency for staff on assessments of placing of each staff. It shall include criteria for a review-based progression of staff between steps and lines.
- 11.5. Current work contracts remain valid until equality of salaries and working conditions of CCME and CEC are achieved.

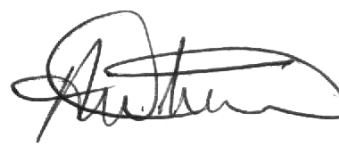
## 12. Journey Together

To realise this Memorandum of Understanding, we have a challenging journey to go. This journey starts now and must be done professionally and with inspiration and enthusiasm. The negotiation group recommends a campaign to highlight and include migration in the core work of the churches in Europe: new priorities, new programmes and new funds, to be discussed at the CEC Assembly in Lyon in 2009. A focal point to make the churches' commitment and engagement visible shall be a European Churches year on migration, preferably in 2010. Therefore, the Central Committee of CEC, the Executive Committee of CCME and all the members are called upon to commit themselves to and invest in this journey together.


Vienna, 16.11.07




Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont  
President of CEC



Rev. Arlington Trotman  
Moderator of CCME



The Venerable Colin Williams  
General Secretary of CEC



Doris Peschke  
General Secretary of CCME

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<sup>2</sup> A revised proposal for staff regulations has been adopted by the CEC Personnel Committee in June 2007