

**8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the  
Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE)  
– Leuenberg Church Fellowship –  
Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> 2018, in Basel**

**FINAL REPORT**

**1. Introduction**

“Liberated – connected – committed” was the theme for the 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the “Community of Protestant Churches in Europe – Leuenberg Church Fellowship” (CPCE), which took place in Basel from 13 to 18 September 2018. It was co-hosted by the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches and the Evangelical Reformed Church of the City of Basel. 96 delegates represented the member churches, accompanied by another 52 advisors and guests.

Fellowship in worship has played a predominant role in realising the communion between the churches since the General Assembly held in Budapest in 2006. Thus, the joint celebration of worship also stood at the heart of proceedings in Basle, conducted in the city’s late-Romanesque cathedral and the adjoining Bishop’s Palace. The opening service of worship was arranged by representatives of the local Protestant churches, while the newly elected Council was inaugurated during the closing worship. On Sunday, the General Assembly participants celebrated Switzerland’s Day of Prayer of Thanksgiving, Repentance and Prayer together with the cathedral’s congregation. Morning and evening prayers as well as lunchtime prayers were expressions of our shared spiritual life. Fellowship was also enjoyed on the opening evening, in the company of the host churches on the Swiss Day, and during the closing evening.

The ecumenical importance of the CPCE was evident in the greetings presented by, amongst others, General Secretary Olav Fykse Tveit from the World Council of Churches and the President of the Conference of European Churches, Christian Krieger. Representatives of the Lutheran World Federation (Klára Tarr Cselovzky for Martin Junge), the World Communion of Reformed Churches (Martina Wasserloos-Strunk), the European Baptist Federation (Anthony Peck), the Anglican Churches of Britain and Ireland (Jonathan Gibbs), the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Matthias Türk) and the European Christian Convention (Katerina Karkala-Zorba) also addressed the General Assembly. In her greeting on behalf of the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches, its General Secretary Rosangela Jarjour spoke about the lasting strong relationship, while Richard Fasunloye, the General Secretary of the Unification Council of the Cherubim and Seraphim Churches, heralded an imminent link with those churches in Europe rooted in other continents. A special highlight was the ceremonial signing of a “Declaration of Intent to Commence Joint Dialogue” by the President of the CPCE and the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christianity, Cardinal Kurt Koch.

It was a particular pleasure for the General Assembly to welcome the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad as 108<sup>th</sup> signatory church.

The Presidium and General Secretary of the CPCE delivered two very comprehensive reports. The Presidium's Report summarised the work conducted during the preceding six years. A paper entitled "Being church together" outlined the key considerations in setting the aims for the period until the next General Assembly.

General Secretary Michael Bünker contextualised the CPCE and its activities within the social and political situation in Europe. He emphasised the churches' duty to foster reconciliation and social cohesion, reiterating the CPCE's task of raising the common voice of Protestantism in Europe. He rounded off by presenting an overview of fundamental decisions about the direction of the CPCE, including anchoring the head office in Vienna long-term and establishing a formal legal status. It was his final report as General Secretary, and the General Assembly received it with a prolonged standing ovation.

In his talk entitled "Responsibility for the future of Europe", Andrea Riccardi, the founder of the Community of Sant'Egidio in Rome, spoke about fear as the new European malaise. Christians have the chance to be liberated from this and thus to turn their backs on the grey horizon by refocusing on their neighbour, the "sacrament of the poor".

The documents compiled and other projects conducted during the previous six years were discussed in five working groups and six focus groups. Five "workshops on the future" set the main emphases for the CPCE's forthcoming work during the six years ahead. The outgoing Council prepared the groundwork for these discussions through compiling a strategy document entitled "Being Church Together". The conclusions of these groups have been incorporated into this Final Report.

The General Assembly resolved to amend the statute of the CPCE (see Appendix 1) and elected the new Council (see Appendix 2). It discussed and passed a statement commemorating the centenary of the end of the First World War (see Appendix 3) and a statement on the situation in the Middle East (see Appendix 4).

## **2. Resolutions regarding the work done in 2012-2018**

### **2.1. Church communion**

1. The General Assembly amends the text at four places (five in the German text) in the paragraphs 90, 91, 99, and 112 (see Appendix 5).
2. The General Assembly thanks the participants in the 2015 consultation and the editorial group for compiling the outcome of the doctrinal conversation on church communion.
3. It welcomes the discussion of the findings of the doctrinal conversation amongst the member churches and expresses its thanks for the range of responses, the evaluation of which has been incorporated into the final version.
4. The General Assembly considers the outcome of the doctrinal conversation to be a good description of the model of church communion on which the CPCE is based. It adopts the outcome of the doctrinal conversation and asks that it be taken into account in the future when determining the CPCE's internal organisation and external relationships.

5. The General Assembly supports the deepening of communion of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, and that this continue to be done in conformity with the legislative provisions of member churches.
6. Recognising the content of the report “Church Communion”, the General Assembly requests the Council to engage in a process to re-name, in English, the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe to the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe.
7. The Council is instructed, with regard to the reception of the text “Church Communion”, to particularly focus on the question of what it means to speak of the CPCE as church / one church / church together.

## **2.2. Plurality of Religions**

1. The General Assembly thanks the participants in the 2015 consultation and the editorial group for compiling the study document on religious plurality.
2. It welcomes the discussion of the study document amongst the member churches and expresses its thanks for the range of responses, the evaluation of which has been incorporated into the final version.
3. The General Assembly considers the document to be a helpful contribution towards a shared understanding of the basic principles of the inter-religious work performed by the Protestant churches in Europe. It approves the document and recommends that the member churches study it.

## **2.3. Continuing theological education**

1. The General Assembly thanks the participants in the 2015 consultation and editorial group for compiling the study document “Continuing education for ordained office in the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe”.
2. It also expresses its thanks for the range of responses by the member churches, the evaluation of which has been incorporated into the final version.
3. The General Assembly approves the study document and recommends that the member churches consider the study document with regard to reforms in continuing education for ordained officeholders and for comparable voluntary ministries in the areas of preaching, administering the sacraments and pastoral care.

## **2.4. Theology of Diaspora**

1. The General Assembly thanks the participants in the study process and the editorial group for compiling the study document “Theology of Diaspora”.
2. It receives the document and suggests its discussion by the member churches.
3. It mandates the Council to develop a discussion paper with theses and open questions for use in congregations.

## **2.5. Study document “Education for the Future”**

1. The General Assembly thanks the South-East Europe Regional Group for compiling the study document “Education for the Future”.

2. It receives the document and welcomes its discussion by the member churches.
3. The CPCE promotes educational exchange between the member churches.

## **2.6. Consultations CPCE – PCPCU**

1. The General Assembly thanks the CPCE delegation led by Church President Christian Schad for compiling the “Report on Church and Church Communion” with a delegation from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.
2. The General Assembly receives the report. It expresses an appropriate description of the Protestant model of church communion. The General Assembly is pleased about the lines of convergence with the Roman Catholic standpoints that the report was able to identify.
3. The General Assembly regards the report as a source of encouragement for opening official dialogue. It authorizes the president of CPCE to sign the respective Declaration of Intent with the president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. It mandates the Council of the CPCE to shape an appropriate form of dialogue with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

## **2.7. Migration and church communion**

1. The General Assembly thanks the expert group on “Migration and Church Communion” for its work and report on this subject.
2. The General Assembly receives the report.

## **2.8. Ethics of reproductive medicine**

1. The General Assembly thanks the participants of the hearing and consultation meeting and the Expert Group on Ethics for compiling “*Before I formed you in the womb...*” *A Guide to the Ethics of Reproductive Medicine*.
2. It takes note of the guide and recommends it to the member churches for discussion and further work.

## **2.9. Statute**

1. The General Assembly resolves to amend the Statute of the CPCE that was approved by the 2006 General Assembly in Budapest.
2. It approves the draft of the amended Statute presented by the Council.

## **3. Resolutions on the fields of work from 2019 onwards**

### **3.1. Theological Work**

The General Assembly asks the Council to initiate theological work on the following themes:

1. The General Assembly asks the Council to initiate a process on how to understand the role and task of the CPCE. On the basis of the mapping of CPCE's self-understanding and its perception by member churches, this process should set out the

consequences of the agreement on the understanding of the Gospel and the mutual recognition of the churches as churches for the joint worship/spiritual, theological and diaconal life of the churches in church communion. The result could be a *charta* of church communion which would include a collection of commitments that have already been made, results that have already been achieved and their spiritual impact on member churches.

2. The General Assembly asks the Council to initiate a study process on practice and theology of the Holy Communion. The process should start with the challenges arising from church practice. The process should reflect the following questions: What does it mean to be an inviting Church in a multi-cultural context? Who is invited: the baptized, the instructed, the confirmed, the church member or everyone? The discussion will have to reflect ecumenical implications.
3. The General Assembly requests the Council to install a working group to study and to give practical advise on how the Gospel can be presented in a way that is relevant to people from young to old.
4. The General Assembly asks the Council to seek appropriate ways of reflecting the following topics which were also regarded of importance by member Churches:
  - Speaking about God from a Protestant perspective
  - Theology of ministry and service - reflecting anew on the relationship of lay and ordained ministry, non-stipendiary and full-time ministries, and shapes of congregations
  - To be a Serving Church – the diaconal dimension of being church
  - Soteriology and ecclesiology

### **3.2. Social ethics**

1. The General Assembly asks the Council to initiate a study process on the topic “Ethical differences and church communion” which addresses the following issues:  
What questions belong to those calling for ethical discretion, which ethical questions are to be decided by individuals, part of their responsibility? What points of disagreement are tolerable within the definable limits of diversity, and what ethical disagreements threaten church communion? How do we concretely deal with differences that endanger church communion? And what impacts do ethical differences have for ecumenical conversations with other churches? How can the believed unity in reconciled diversity be preserved and prove itself in the tension between consensus and conflict?

The Assembly asks the Council to initiate study processes on the following topics of social ethics:

#### **2. Democracy**

In recent years, the understanding of democracy has been plunged into crisis by various developments. In view of the highly complex interrelationship of world affairs parliamentarianism appears to be overtaxed and at the mercy of expert knowledge. Various processes such as globalisation, the growth of social inequality, the experiences of refugee and migration movements, etc. have also promoted a considerable increase in populism, nationalism and xenophobia, which also calls the European integration process into question. The Protestant churches in Europe have

very different historical experiences with their relationship to society, state, nation and political Europe in the form of the EU and the Council of Europe. Even today their situations are very different. In view of the centrifugal forces in Europe it is the task of the Protestant churches in Europe with reference to their self-understanding of a "unity in reconciled diversity" to reflect again on the Protestant understanding of democracy. The South-East Europe Regional Group is invited to participate in this study process on 'Democracy as a Challenge for Churches and Societies' through case studies from this region.

### 3. The moral significance of nature and what is 'natural'

Nature often encounters ethical judgements. Therefore, an intensive examination of the concept of nature is inevitable. In contrast to the Catholic tradition, the more recent Protestant theology and ethics are in part critical of the tradition of natural law. In connection with the natural there are questions about illness, health and disability. An anthropology that not only considers people with disabilities, but is designed from their point of view, is still to a large extent an unredeemed desideratum. In bioethical, medical-ethical and ecological contexts, but also in connection with sexuality, marriage and family, a redefinition of the natural seems urgently desirable from an evangelical-theological perspective.

### 4. Sexuality and Gender

How can Protestant ethics deal with issues of marriage, family and gender? What theological statements can be made on marriage and family and on sexual ethics in general - including the questions that arise with the themes of intersexuality, transsexuality and the queer movement? And how should the CPCE deal with existing dissent on these issues? Sexuality and gender have influences on other ethical issues, e.g. migration.

### 5. Human Dignity related to Digitalisation and Media

Social media and the advancing digitalization pose new challenges to the formulation of human dignity. What is the human being in the digital world? In this context the question of the future of the next generations arises. The Forum of Young Theology in Europe could be a suitable platform for cooperation in this field.

### 6. The General Assembly welcomes the research groups about „Mixed Economy“ and „Churches in Rural Areas“ which emerged from the document „Ecclesia Semper Reformanda“. It recommends to the Council to continue to support them and to collect results and to disseminate them among regional groups.

### 7. The General Assembly asks the Council to continue to promote the guide *“Before I formed you in the womb...”* and to collate responses to it. This might be through: drawing together interested professional practitioners in consultation; the production of materials for local use regarding particular topics that arise in pastoral contexts; and the promotion through existing European bodies and networks, for example European networks of teachers of Religious Education.

## 3.3. Education

### 1. The General Assembly asks the Council to establish an advisory board for education.

2. The General Assembly welcomes the participation of young people in the work of CPCE and recommends the Council to strengthen their participation. The General Assembly asks the Council to initiate study processes involving young ecumenists.
3. Based on the positive experiences gained in the "Forum on Education in Europe", the General Assembly requests that the Council conduct consultations between the education officers of the CPCE's member churches.

### **3.4. Witness and Service**

1. The General Assembly asks the Council to advise member churches and their diaconal institutions in suitable ways about possible European cooperation and if possible to facilitate such contacts. The General Assembly asks the Gustav-Adolf-Werk to continue the projects undertaken within the framework of the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Diasporawerke in Europa" (AGDE) in an operative way.
2. The General Assembly asks the Council to test further decentralized forms of contribution in the CPCE beyond the regional groups.
3. The General Assembly asks the Council to intensify contacts with CEC to strengthen the common witness and service in Europe.

### **3.5. Reformation Anniversary**

In recognition of the positive experiences attached to the wide range of events commemorating the anniversary of the Reformation, the General Assembly asks the Council of the CPCE to record the results of these events in an appropriate manner, to continue to nurture the Cities of the Reformation network, and to carry on working on the theme of the perpetual reformation of the Church.

### **3.6. Migration**

1. The General Assembly asks the Council to establish an advisory board replacing the current expert group. This will be responsible for all work on the topic "migration and church communion". It is to make suggestions to the Council of CPCE relating to relationships with migrant churches. This will include dialogue and encounters relating to theological/ecclesiological considerations as well as the area of witness and service (e.g. liturgy, worship, pastoral care and education).
2. The General Assembly asks the Council to continue and to intensify the dialogue with the Unification Council of the Cherubim and Seraphim Churches in the years to come. Exploratory talks shall be commenced with other migrant churches.
3. The General Assembly asks the Council to begin explorative talks with other migration churches, to create a framework for mutual learning, and to reflect on the meaning of "migration and church communion" for other projects.

### **3.7. Ecumenical Relations**

1. The General Assembly asks the Council of CPCE to ensure that the dialogue with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity will be undertaken in consultation with the Christian World Communions (Lutheran World Federation, World Communion of Reformed Churches, World Methodist Council).

2. The Assembly asks the Council to initiate further active relationships with the Anglican churches in Europe, taking into account the concrete situations in which member churches work with the Anglican churches. The question of recognizing one another as churches and partners in mission and the implications of this for the recognition of ministries might make an initial starting point.
3. The General Assembly asks the Council to intensify its engagement with the Fellowship of Middle-East Evangelical Churches.
4. The General Assembly asks the Council to engage in further conversations with the European Baptist Federation to evaluate developments and relationships since the last round of conversations.
5. The General Assembly asks the Council to take steps towards building relationships with churches of Evangelical, Charismatic and Pentecostal spirituality.
6. The General Assembly requests the Council to find ways to further contact with the Orthodox churches, perhaps in conjunction with CEC. This might be on matters of interest to the Orthodox churches such as developments within Orthodoxy currently, or theologies of diaspora.
7. The General Assembly requests the Council to assess whether there is a need to invite the member churches' ecumenical officers to a joint meeting and, if possible, to install a Protestant conference for ecumenical issues in Europe with them.
8. The General Assembly asks the Council to develop an instrument for the sharing of experiences of interreligious engagement between the member churches. This should continue to promote the study text *Plurality of Religions* and monitor its reception. It should aim to equip the Protestant engagement with such processes through continued theological reflection and the sharing of good practice.

### **3.8. Statute**

1. The General Assembly passed the amendment to the Statute unanimously. It welcomes the fact that this can also make the CPCE legally capable and formalises the various processes and responsibilities within the CPCE.
2. At the same time, calls were made at the General Assembly for the clarification and specification of certain points. In particular, this relates to the description of the duties and responsibilities of the bodies cited in § 3: namely, a clearer distinction between the duties and responsibilities of the Presidium of the Council versus those of the Council. Equally, it was felt that the duties and responsibilities of the regional groups also need citing; in particular, pointing out the role of the written agreement between the Council and the regional group in ensuring the regional group's recognition. Furthermore, with regard to the regulation on official assistance in §2 (II), clarification was called for that this is subject to the voluntary compliance of the member church in question.
3. The Council is asked to address these points and potentially present proposed amendments to the Statute to the next General Assembly.

### **3.9. Priorities**

The General Assembly mandates the Council to prioritise these projects, to examine their practicability and, taking into account resources, to commission their realisation.

# **S t a t u t e**

## **of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe<sup>1</sup>**

### **– Leuenberg Church Fellowship –**

#### **§ 1**

##### **Community of Protestant Churches in Europe**

- (I) <sup>1</sup>The Reformation churches in Europe assenting to the Agreement of Reformation Churches in Europe declare and realise church communion amongst one another. <sup>2</sup>These churches form the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe – Leuenberg Church Fellowship (CPCE). <sup>3</sup>The CPCE serves to bring about church communion as described in IV.2 of the Agreement of Reformation Churches in Europe, specifically through “their common undertaking of witness and service” and continuing theological work.
- (II) <sup>1</sup>More churches may enter this church fellowship on the basis of the Agreement of Reformation Churches in Europe by specific agreement. <sup>2</sup>Details are set out in the guidelines establishing membership of the CPCE adopted by the Council.

#### **§ 2**

##### **Legal status and head office**

- (I) <sup>1</sup>The CPCE is a public corporation within the meaning of the Austrian law of 6 July 1961 on external legal relations of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions (the “Protestant law”, Federal Law Gazette No. 182/1961 in the valid version). <sup>2</sup>Its head office is in Vienna, Austria.
- (II) The CPCE may avail itself of administrative assistance from its Member Churches.

#### **§ 3**

##### **Governing bodies**

CPCE’s governing bodies are the

1. General Assembly
2. Council
3. Presidium of the Council
4. General Secretary
5. regional groups.

#### **§ 4**

##### **The General Assembly**

- (I) <sup>1</sup>The General Assembly is responsible for taking all decisions, particularly those of fundamental importance, unless otherwise stipulated in this statute. <sup>2</sup>It has the following tasks, in particular:
  1. taking policy decisions for CPCE activity, especially for the work of the Council;
  2. deliberating and deciding on the motions of members and on documents for decision presented by the Council;
  3. electing the members of the Council;

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<sup>1</sup>A list of the Member Churches of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) is accessible at: <http://www.leuenberg.net/member-churches>

- <sup>3</sup>The General Assembly shall adopt its own rules of procedure.
- (II) <sup>1</sup>The CPCE General Assembly shall, as a rule, convene every six years. <sup>2</sup>It shall comprise the following members:
1. up to two delegates from each Member Church with the right to vote, speak and move motions;
  2. up to ten delegates appointed by the Council with the right to vote, speak and move motions;
  3. up to two delegates from each participating church with the right to speak and move motions, but not to vote;
  4. those members of the Council in office who are not delegates, as well as the CPCE General Secretary, who have the right to speak and move motions, but not to vote;
  5. advisors invited by the Council, who attend the General Assembly with the right to speak.
- (III) <sup>1</sup>The General Assembly shall have a quorum if at least half of voting members are present at the opening. <sup>2</sup>A resolution shall be carried (passed) if more votes are cast in favour than against. <sup>3</sup>Abstentions and invalid votes shall not be counted as votes cast. <sup>4</sup>In the event of a tied vote the motion shall be deemed rejected.
- (IV) <sup>1</sup>The proceedings in plenary are public unless decided otherwise in an individual case.

## **§ 5 The Council**

- (I) <sup>1</sup>The Council is responsible for the work between general assemblies. <sup>2</sup>It has the following tasks, in particular:
1. promoting church communion on the basis of the Agreement of Reformation Churches in Europe and the resolutions of general assemblies;
  2. implementing the resolutions of the General Assembly;
  3. preparing the ground for new resolutions of the General Assembly;
  4. defining policy and issuing individual instructions for the work of CPCE, as long as this does not impinge on any exclusive competences of the General Assembly;
  5. accompanying the theological doctrinal conversations and working groups (advisory boards, regional groups, project groups);
  6. preparing for and holding General Assemblies;
  7. supervising the head office;
  8. adopting the CPCE budget;
  9. commissioning the audit and voting to approve the activities of head office staff, as required.
- <sup>3</sup>The Council shall adopt its own rules of procedure.
- (II) <sup>1</sup>The Council shall be elected by the General Assembly. <sup>2</sup>It shall have 13 members and a corresponding number of substitutes personally allocated to each one. <sup>3</sup>The election of the Council must take appropriate account of the denominational and regional structure of CPCE. <sup>4</sup>Retiring members shall be replaced by cooption.
- (III) <sup>1</sup>The Council shall generally convene once or twice a year. <sup>2</sup>It shall meet for the first time during the General Assembly and elect from its midst a Presidium consisting of three presidents, one of them an executive member. <sup>3</sup>The presidents shall represent the CPCE externally. They shall report to the Council.

- (IV) The term of office of the Council shall end when the Council elected by the next General Assembly has met and elected its Presidium.

## **§ 6**

### **Head office, General Secretary**

- (I) <sup>1</sup>The work of the General Assembly and the Council shall be supported by a head office. <sup>2</sup>The head office shall work according to the instructions of the General Assembly and the Council.
- (II) <sup>1</sup>The head office shall be directed by the General Secretary. <sup>2</sup>The General Secretary shall be appointed by the Council. <sup>3</sup>He or she shall manage the day-to-day business. <sup>4</sup>He or she shall be accountable to the General Assembly and the Council. <sup>5</sup>The Council shall adopt rules of procedure for the head office.

## **§ 7**

### **Representation in legal transactions**

- <sup>1</sup>The CPCE shall be represented by the Executive President or the General Secretary.
- <sup>2</sup>Transactions with a total value exceeding EUR 50,000 in the individual case may only be undertaken jointly by the above-mentioned persons.

## **§ 8**

### **Applicable law**

Unless otherwise determined, applicable law shall be that of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions in Austria, as well as of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Austria and the Evangelical Church of the Helvetic Confession in Austria.

## **§ 9**

### **Budget**

- <sup>1</sup>The CPCE budget shall be financed by contributions from all churches and from grants.
- <sup>2</sup>The assessment of contributions is designed to take account of the size and financial capacity of the Member Churches. <sup>3</sup>Attending CPCE events and participating in its governing bodies presupposes the regular payment of contributions. <sup>4</sup>The budget shall be generally based on the financial year and must balance income and expenditure. <sup>5</sup>The budget shall be adopted by the Council.

## **§ 10**

### **Amending the statute**

- (I) <sup>1</sup>This statute can only be amended by a resolution expressly changing or supplementing its wording. <sup>2</sup>The resolution shall require the approval of two thirds of the voting members present at the General Assembly.
- (II) <sup>1</sup>At least three months before the discussion, relevant documents for decision, along with an explanation by the Presidium, must be available to the members of the General Assembly and the church executives of the Member Churches, so that they can respond. <sup>2</sup>These documents must contain the wording of the proposed amendments and a statement of reasons.

## **§ 11**

### **Withdrawal of a Member Church**

- (I) Withdrawal from the CPCP takes place when a Member Church informs the Council in writing of its wish to leave.
- (II) <sup>1</sup>Irrespective of paragraph 1, a Member Church shall leave the CPCE if the theological preconditions for the declaration of church communion are no longer given and this has been established by resolution of the General

Assembly. <sup>2</sup>The resolution shall require the approval of two thirds of voting members present; the withdrawal shall take effect with the resolution.

- (III) The withdrawal of a Member Church from the CPCE marks the termination of office of all members of the General Assembly and the Council belonging to the relevant Member Church.

## **§ 12**

### **Final provisions**

- (I) <sup>1</sup>The General Assembly shall decide on the disbanding of the CPCE. <sup>2</sup>The resolution shall require a majority of two thirds of voting members present at the General Assembly. <sup>3</sup>In the event of the CPCE disbanding, its assets shall – after settling all liabilities – fall to the CPCE Member Churches in proportion to their average contributions over the last five years.

## Appendix 2: Elections

The General Assembly elected a new CPCE Council on 14.9.2018. The following persons belong to it:

Members of the Council	Substitute members of the Council
1. Christian Albecker France, Lutheran	1. Agnès von Kirchbach France, United
2. Ingrid Bachler Austria, Lutheran	2. Daniel Zikeli Romania, Lutheran
3. John Bradbury United Kingdom, Reformed	3. Jan-Gerd Heetderks Netherlands, United
4. Marcin Brzóska Poland, Lutheran	4. Thomas-Andreas Pöder Estonia, Lutheran
5. Pawel Gajewski Italy, Reformed	5. Dimitris Boukis Greece, Reformed
6. Gottfried Locher Switzerland, Reformed	6. Martin Hirzel Switzerland, Reformed
7. Michael Martin Germany, Lutheran	7. Klaus Rieth Germany, Lutheran
8. Georg Plasger Germany, Reformed	8. Ulrike Trautwein Germany, United
9. Miriam Rose Germany, Lutheran/United	9. Frank Kopania Germany, United
10. Barbara Rudolph Germany, United	10. Susanne Bei der Wieden Germany, United
11. Ulla Schmidt Denmark, Lutheran	11. Tron Fagermoen Norway, Lutheran
12. Klára Tarr Cselovszky Hungary, Lutheran	12. Sándor Fazakas Hungary, Reformed
13. David Turtle Ireland, Methodist	13. Jørgen Thaarup Denmark, Methodist

The Council was constituted on September 17, 2018 and elected a three-member Presidium consisting of Gottfried Locher (Executive President), Miriam Rose and John Bradbury.

### Appendix 3:

#### Together for Europe

The centenary of the end of the First World War – remembering together for the sake of the future

*“For whoever would love life  
and see good days,  
... they must seek peace  
and pursue it.”*

(1 Peter 3:10f.)

The Protestant Churches of Europe are delivering their first joint message commemorating the end of the First World War. Their experiences and stances are as different as the countries in which they reside. This makes it all the more remarkable that the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe has found a common voice to address the issue of guilt, the task of reconciliation, the subject of migration, and the challenge to democracy and civil society. This is an expression of unity in reconciled difference on the part of the CPCE. The Protestant Churches agree to seek to discuss this message with one another and to voice it in the societies in which they live. In the face of the devastating and lasting effects of the war, the Churches are well aware of the importance of acting to promote peace and prevent civil conflict.

One hundred years ago, after a series of ceasefire agreements, the First World War officially ended on 11 November 1918.

The **outcome of the war** showed a hitherto unknown degree of destruction and terror. Virtually all the major and colonial powers and smaller states in existence sent almost 70 million people into the first global and total war in history – known at the time and until the Second World War as the “Great War” – killing more than 17 million. The First World War not only spelled the end for the world order that existed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. As former multi-ethnic major empires collapsed and new states emerged, the power balance and spheres of influence in the Middle East were also completely overturned (San Remo conference in 1920). The different peace agreements between 1919 and 1923 created new states, but also far-reaching territorial changes and borders that caused injustices and fuelled thoughts of revenge and revision. As the First World War and its dire consequences caused confusion and upheaval in all spheres of life, in the private and public realm, at national and international level, it is collectively remembered and recorded in history by many of the nationalities involved – particularly the western and central powers of that time, as the great seminal catastrophe of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The **repercussions of the war** persist subliminally and indirectly to this day in some countries, as generations of descendants of the vanquished continue to mourn their lost cultural heritage and diminished territories. Some of the victors considered the outcome and territorial gains as the status quo and continued to nurture the national pride gained through this victory as a key aspect of their collective identity in their own remembrance culture. In reality, all those involved and their descendants are actually losers, as the repercussions and consequences of the accords in the wake of the First World War and the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have shown in dramatic fashion that they failed to achieve peace.

Nonetheless, the Protestant Churches in Europe gratefully recall the **start of the ecumenical movement** in the turmoil of that time, with its explicit commitment to peace. Theological discussions around then focused on overcoming nationalism as a task for the

Christian message and a requirement for lasting peace.<sup>2</sup> Today, in an era of clearly resurgent divergent political forces in Europe, the Protestant Churches in Europe recognise their ongoing duty to promote peaceful coexistence in a common Europe.

The heavy legacy of the First World War presents the Protestant Churches and European societies with questions and challenges that have emerged time and again during the past 100 years but have hardly been resolved.

Protestant Churches in Europe are conscious of the multifarious repercussions and effects of the First World War and **reflect upon...**

a) ... **the question of guilt.** In every war and after each war, the question arises as to who bears the guilt. Public debate and a recollection policy steered by one side seek to simplify things and apply mono-causal interpretations. Thanks to historical research, we now know that a local conflict escalated into a global catastrophe because certain major powers viewed the war as a way out of their own crises. A constellation of global and economic factors enabled things to escalate this way. In the light of the Gospel, it is curative for every individual, but also for a society, to examine the question of guilt, without overlooking the complex historical circumstances. This is precisely how things can be turned around and new beginnings achieved.

However, it is even more true in the light of the Gospel that no nationality and no nation can or should be eternally ascribed the role of perpetrator or victim.

Remembrance provides the churches occasion to ask where they observed the enthusiasm for war uncritically during the various conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or even supported or helped incite it? Where might they have been so bound up in the political, social, economic and nationalistic spirit of the day that they were able to legitimise a political system ideologically and theologically (whether in military conflict, or in peace – for example, mobilisation in the German Empire, the Church in socialism, blessing weapons during the Balkan crisis)? Where did the Church and theology fail to or desist from analysing current affairs or political and social processes, reflect upon them in theological terms and speak out on behalf of the disenfranchised? “The church and theologians often failed their charge of being in the world but not of the world. (John 17:11-14) This bitter experience reminds us still today of the need for continuous self-criticism within the church and theology.” (CPCE Council Statement, June 2014)

We are therefore grateful for the wide range of theological work conducted with regard to peace and the associated rethinking processes in our churches and the broad ecumenical community. We recall the X<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the WCC in Busan, the Republic of Korea, with its declaration on the pathway to just peace and invitation to a pilgrimage of justice and peace. Education in our churches and church associations towards peace and non-violent conflict resolution is also part of this turnaround prompted by painful lessons learned in those times.

b) ... **the question of minority rights.** The newly established world order turned hundreds of thousands of members of ethnic groups into minorities in their own homeland. This was particularly the case in the countries and societies in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Although the victorious or winning countries had committed themselves to respecting the collective rights of these minorities and these were also supposed to be upheld by the League of Nations, history has shown that these rights were often wilfully and tendentiously ignored in these countries. Ethnic groups in diaspora situations are still fighting to this day for their rights to be recognised and for the ability to exercise and maintain their

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<sup>2</sup> “The Christian mission is by its very nature supranational, a spiritual entity that addresses people as human beings and not as speakers of given languages and members of given races and nationalities.” From Nathan Söderblom’s address at the awarding of the Nobel Prize in 1930 “The role of the Church in promoting peace”, with reference to the Ecumenical conference in Uppsala, Sweden, in summer 1917, (accessed 15.08.2018). [https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1930/soderblom-lecture.html](https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1930/soderblom-lecture.html).

linguistic, religious and cultural identity not only in private, but also collectively.<sup>3</sup> Diaspora Protestant Churches have often also taken on the task of nurturing and maintaining their members' cultural as well as confessional identity. The CPCE's churches are well acquainted with this historical experience.<sup>4</sup> In pondering a relational understanding of the "theology of diaspora", the CPCE promotes churches and congregations perceiving themselves as a bridging place "linking separated elements without eliminating their difference".<sup>5</sup> This inevitably has a public dimension that helps shape how people really live together locally and regionally and aids reconciliation, such as in the "Healing of Memories" project that helps people to process wartime and discriminatory experiences.<sup>6</sup>

c) ... **the question of exile and migration.** An estimated 9.5 million people were forced into exile and relocated throughout Europe during the First World War and as a result of the consequences until 1926.<sup>7</sup> In historical terms, streams of refugees and mass migration are by no means foreign to Christianity in Europe and to Protestantism. Expulsion, displacement and ethnic cleansing sent millions of people in search of refuge and new homes in the wake of both World Wars, but also during the Cold War and the Balkan crisis.

The influx of refugees and migrants that Europe is currently experiencing is an epochal event stemming from a complex pattern of historical and social circumstances around the globe. Although not the sole reason, in this case as well war is causing people to flee to European countries close-by or they are being forcibly displaced. In recent years, the CPCE has teamed up with other international ecumenical organisations to examine this development more carefully, based on respecting the dignity of every individual.<sup>8</sup> We are grateful for the figureheads on the European political stage who strive for a common European policy based on the values of the conventions on human rights and refugees and for churches and congregations who act to preserve the dignity of refugees and migrants and to protect them in accordance with the message delivered in the New Testament of the Bible, urging those empowered by faith to give refuge to strangers (Matthew 25:35). Experiencing love and affection is dependent upon acts of human interaction, but without attempting to deny the real fears that exist.

However, in Europe, and particularly in its economically robust northern and western parts, we cannot ignore the issue of how our economic, trade and agricultural policies have played a role in provoking the present migration from other regions and parts of the world.

d) ... **the question of reconciliation.** The injustice, suffering and repression that is suffered and dealt out, or an awareness of the reality of guilt and sin throughout history and in the lives of individuals and groups, leads the Protestant Churches to provide people with the space and opportunity to recount their life stories, reflect upon the suffering and injustice that they have endured and talk aloud about the pain they have suffered. In recent decades, the Churches in Europe have repeatedly initiated and shaped "Healing of Memories" processes to foster reconciliation in and between societies. Protestant Churches in Europe must sustain the longing for peace and reconciliation in the different post-conflict societies, also under the current economic, social and political circumstances, wherever they are perceived as unjust. At the same time, they are aware that reconciliation is not an ideal condition or a singular act, but rather a process that needs to be initiated or maintained. Reconciliation requires willing participants and the kind of structural measures that serve

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<sup>3</sup> e.g. the language that lessons are taught in at state schools in Ukraine.

<sup>4</sup> See Leuenberg Documents 7, Church–People–State–Nation, ed. by W. Hüffmeier, Frankfurt. A.M., 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Draft for the CPCE's 2018 General Assembly in Basle, Theology of Diaspora, study document of the CPCE to determine the situation of the Protestant Churches in pluralist Europe, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.61f.

<sup>7</sup> Marie-Janine Calic, Südosteuropa, Weltgeschichte einer Region, Munich 2016, p. 450.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the statement issued by the Council of the CPCE: "Shelter and welcome refugees – strengthen a common EU-refugee policy. To whom do I become a neighbour?", Brussels, 11 October 2015.

this aim. This explains why the Protestant Churches in Europe welcomed the process of European integration as an act of peace and reconciliation. The Reformation Churches in Europe should raise their voices at any attempts to instrumentalise relationships with the past, while also continuing to develop their own language and empathy for facilitating reconciliation processes between individuals and groups. Reconciliation can exert a revitalising force in our societies and social reality in Europe.

e) ... ***the question of democratic culture and civil society***. The end of the First World War was initially followed by a flourish of new or reinstated democracies and Republican state structures in Europe. During this time, new churches also emerged. However, a range of massive national and international troubles very quickly turned some societies into undemocratic systems, including dictatorships, even through democratically organised elections. Protestant theology and Churches were often not amongst the staunchest proponents of the democratic state during these years – although it is worthy of recognition that certain congregations and churches in clandestine acted as islands of freedom and cradles of civil society. We are currently once again seeing parliamentary democracy and the rule of law come under pressure in European countries. In contrast to the years following 1918, the Protestant Churches in Europe are now standing up for these democratic structures and principles and efforts to reinforce them at various state levels throughout Europe. These correspond with the dignity, freedom and equality of all people awarded by God's creation. By dividing, limiting and checking the sources of power, they take account of human fallibility and sin. Institutions based on the rule of law protect and enable the freedom of each and every individual and the coexistence of all. "Protestantism considers [democratic] participation and active involvement in decision-making processes as the absolute prerequisite for good neighbourly relations and peaceful co-operation within Europe."<sup>9</sup> However, besides the institutions there also needs to be a politically active civil society, with us citizens defending the accomplishments of democracy and the rule of law. Protestant churches and congregations are places where people participate and are actively involved. They thus contribute to the democratic culture of a society. We do not want to relinquish this and lose or squander it again. Protestant Churches in Europe should therefore revitalise their theological heritage and their experiences throughout history to help steer societies in the direction of sovereignty, self-government, efforts towards greater economic and political justice and fair participation, sustaining creation and respecting the dignity of our fellow humans.

The global political situation is very different now from 100 years ago. Nonetheless, certain ruptures and upheavals in regions of Europe – between its western and eastern or northern and southern parts, and between the "minor" and "major" states – are still directly related to the divides caused by the events at that time.

The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe is grateful that the churches affiliated within it are today commemorating and talking about this past together. This makes it possible to shape the future together.

The sorrowful experiences made 100 years ago and thereafter lead the Protestant Churches to reflect critically together upon the path that they followed in history, to analyse current social, economic and political processes, and to grasp the opportunity to establish fair structures. Further inspiration and analysis will be required to flesh out the details, depending on each church's local circumstances. But our input to this process should follow the prophetic advice: "**Seek the welfare of the city**". (Jeremiah 29:7)

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<sup>9</sup> "Free for the Future – Responsibility for Europe," Statement by the 7<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the CPCE in Florence, 2012.

## Appendix 4: Declaration on the situation in Syria and Iraq

### Rationale

1. The 2012 CPCE General Assembly in Florence welcomed the General Secretary of the FMEEC and heard from her how great the concerns are of the FMEEC with regard to the future of Christians and other religious communities in the region.
2. The 2012 General Assembly issued a declaration on the situation of Christians in the Middle East. In it, the General Assembly shared the concerns of the Christians in the Middle East with regard to the “constitutional, legal, and political developments” in Syria and Iraq, in particular as it pertained to the legal security of the so-called “minorities” there. The Assembly called upon the governments of Europe to advocate more actively for a framework conducive to cultural and religious plurality as well as a secure legal situation in the countries of the region. It underscored the close partnership between European and Middle Eastern Protestant churches and called for acts of solidarity.
3. Since then, several CPCE member churches have carried out acts of solidarity with the local churches, and supported assistance programs, even if their impact was like some drops on hot stones.
4. Today, in 2018, the General Assembly wants to express to the local churches its deep respect and high esteem for what they achieved in the last years, despite of the ag-grieving situation; we recognize their very impressive witness of courage, resilience, solidarity and care for the victims, in particular children and refugees, and by continuing to run their longstanding health and educational programs for all.
5. Unfortunately, the suffering of the peoples of the region has no end, and the danger persists that the consequences of the destruction are going increasingly unnoticed: bombardments, harsh fighting continue unabated or continue to threaten; the humanitarian international law is violated; refugees are not permitted to return; political and geostrategic conflicts preclude the war from ending soon or for sustainable political solutions to be adopted; reconciliation and rebuilding in the region are becoming more precarious and difficult. The war in Syria and Irak is also a war on Syria and Irak
6. Because of this finding and our bounds with the Christian sisters and brothers and all peoples in the Middle East, it is the sense of duty of the General Assembly to issue a new declaration on the situation in Syria-Irak.

### Declaration

a). The CPCE General Assembly calls upon its member churches to address their governments and ask that they advocate for the following, in particular before the governments of Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon and in the international organizations (EU, UN, etc.):

- It is necessary, both in the present and future, to ensure an immediate, secure and controlled ceasefire, to ensure that prevailing legal framework conditions guarantee the principle of equality and the inviolability of rights as well as the protection of all inhabitants, regardless of race, religion, or status.

- Humane living conditions need to be ensured by providing adequate living space, access to the job market, and education for all residents, especially for returning refugees and internal refugees.
- Those leaders and organizations of the region with responsibility and power should be identified and encouraged to play a central and leading role in reconciliation and in the rebuilding of Syrian and Iraqi civil society.<sup>10</sup>

Peaceful and just societies can only be sustainably developed under these preconditions.

b). The CPCE General Assembly calls upon its member churches to further strengthen their partnership and assistance programs in the region, in order to be able to help the victims and so that this Christian witness is taken seriously by the people and the leaders of the region.

c). The CPCE General Assembly tasks the Council to look for concertation with churches and church agencies in order to plan and implement supportive actions with the FMECC, local churches and networks (e.g. europewide collections, visits of delegations, invitations to Europe, collaboration with church's networks on Syria, communication measures, etc.).

Basle,  
on the Swiss National Day of repentance and prayer 2018

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<sup>10</sup> See the text of the petition "1 million signs of hope" of 2017 (in German):  
<https://www.opendoors.ch/aide/uber-800000-unterschriften-der-un-ubergeben>

## Appendix 5: Changes in the outcome of the doctrinal discussion *Church communion*:

90) If communion in worship is an expression of realized visible unity in the CPCE, then it is necessary to strengthen the awareness that the churches of the CPCE are ~~one~~ church together and to profess that faith clearly (see above § 56).

91) This awareness of ~~together~~ being ~~one~~ church together, and not merely a league or federation of churches, does not in the least mean uniformity.

99) The experience of communion in worship implies something more than existing church communion. It implies that new challenges are to be recognized and confronted. In more and more countries in Europe, new congregations are arising, which are often closely related to the Lutheran, Reformed, United and Methodist traditions, and consciously appeal to these traditions, but have scarcely any contact with CPCE churches. These are often new ethnic congregations, usually of migrants, or (neo)Pentecostal groups.

~~Diversity here rests not so much on theological decisions, but it is experienced particularly in spirituality and in the forms of piety and worship.~~

Diversity here is experienced particularly in spirituality and in the forms of piety and worship, but can also rest on theological decisions.

112) ~~Most of the churches in the CPCE regulate the task of their mission and their common life in the framework of a church order. For the CPCE it is desirable that there should be, in addition to its statutes, a *Charta of church communion*, yet to be developed. In this would be worked out what follows from what was established on the basis of the Leuenberg Agreement: agreement in the gospel and the reciprocal recognition of churches as churches for the worshipping, spiritual, theological and diaconal common life of the churches in the church communion. The *Charta* should describe the mutual spiritual commitments of the churches in the five forms of experience of church communion in the CPCE that have already been identified.~~