



Conference of European Churches
Conférence des Églises européennes
Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen
Конференция Европейских Церкве

GENSEC-2022-200

To CEC Member Churches

Call for CEC Member Churches to actively participate in our church fellowship, promoting justice, peace, and reconciliation in Europe

Brussels, 14 December 2022

Respected church leaders,
Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Warm Advent greetings from the CEC Secretariat in Brussels.

The last few days of November, the CEC Governing Board meet in Tallinn, Estonia. It is my privilege to address you regarding an initiative adopted by the Governing Board for the establishment of justice, peace, and reconciliation, so urgently needed in Europe today.

Following the decision to adopt the Call and Witness Strategy in November 2021, urging CEC to prioritise, focus and sharpen its efforts, 2022 has been a year of organisational transition for CEC. At the same time this year saw the outbreak of war on European soil. A development that has given rise to much concern among our Member Churches.

The Governing Board meeting in Tallinn discussed in depth the political situation in Europe. This led to members carefully considering how CEC in the framework of the Call and Witness Strategy can play a significant role as a fellowship of churches reflecting theologically on its nature and purpose and taking advantage of being situated at the heart of European decision making.

In this light, the Governing Board agreed to launch the attached Pathways to Peace initiative.

The initiative builds on the principles of the Call and Witness strategy. It emerges out of numerous interviews this autumn with experts from Member Churches and Organisations in Partnership, taking advantage of CEC as a cooperating fellowship. At its core it is a concerted, coordinated effort, backed by resources from our constituency while addressing the currently most demanding political issue in Europe.

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The Pathways to Peace initiative reaches back to the early history of our fellowship, aiming for European unity through work in the areas of justice, reconciliation, and peace. Contemporary Europe demonstrates that these are areas that remain relevant for churches to address in a unified manner.

Furthermore, the Pathways to Peace initiative serves a greater purpose within CEC's Call and Witness mission statement "to claim and safeguard space for faith as a legitimate element in a European political discourse".

Churches will gain space as a legitimate element and credible voice in a European political context if we demonstrate how we make a difference to the benefit of Europe and her citizens. The Pathways to Peace initiative within justice, peace, and reconciliation and with its focus on Human Rights, Freedom of Religion and Belief and youth concerns is designed to make a difference.

The CEC Governing Board envisages Member Churches to become closely related stakeholders in this initiative. We need to act as a fellowship of churches to fulfil the plans in their entirety. I therefore encourage you to study the document in detail to establish where you see yourself as an active player in our common promotion of justice, peace, and reconciliation in Ukraine and beyond.

Concretely, as you read through the document Pathways to Peace, I invite you to consider the following questions and to report your interest back to the CEC Secretariat:

- Does your church have skilled human resources within justice, peace, and reconciliation, who can allocate time for the implementation?
- Would your church be able to explore possibilities for fundraising nationally and/or internationally for this initiative?
- Would your church be able to support Pathways to Peace financially allowing CEC to employ temporary project staff?
- Does your church currently conduct Ukraine related projects that would fit into or support the Pathways for Peace initiative?

The Pathways to Peace initiative holds exciting potential in implementing concrete actions to strengthen peace and promote the freedom of religion or belief and human rights in Ukraine and beyond, but only with robust and committed engagement from CEC Member Churches.

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Please send us your response by 16 January 2023 to my assistant eng@cec-kek.be. I look forward to hearing from you and to discussing further ways of cooperation in the context of justice, reconciliation, and peace in Europe today.

In Christ,



Dr Jørgen Skov Sørensen
General Secretary

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