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CSC Update on European Affairs

TOPICS COVERED:

Church Action for Labour and Life launched in April; Implementation of Article 17; Post-Lisbon Strategy (EU 2020); European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010; Priorities of the Spanish EU Presidency; Results of the December European Council; Latin American and European churches discuss globalisation; CSC wants all young people to have access to learning mobility; Failure in UN Climate Change Conference a reason for more efforts; Strasbourg Human Rights Court increases efficiency; Year of European Churches Responding to Migration 2010; upcoming events.

New Christian Network on Employment

Join the CALL Network! Church Action for Labour and Life launched at the European Parliament on 28-30 April

With the economic downturn the need to address employment and social issues also in the context of European Union has become more pressing. Right now the Member States are defining a new economic, social and ecological framework strategy for the next decade (see the article on EU 2020 in this issue). At the same time, the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 seeks to highlight these realities in Europe (see the article Poverty Hurts Soul in this issue).

The churches feel responsibility over the well-being of people in Europe including its economic and social dimensions and they act to this end, *inter alia*, by providing social and health services. In order to strengthen churches' work on employment and related economic issues the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CSC of CEC) is now launching a European Christian Network "CALL". The Church Action on Labour and Life will provide a platform to exchange views and experiences on these questions in different parts of Europe and, thereby, to bridge gaps between European societies. CALL shall promote a Christian perspective in the European debates. Moreover, it will build the capacity of European churches to act on these issues, for instance by offering educational and information material and training. CALL is being established upon the

requests of member churches of CEC and is intended to provide a network for experts both in churches and in faith communities.

The CALL network will be launched on 28-30 April 2010 with a Conference in Brussels jointly organised with the editors of the Yearbook Justice IV which is a German ecumenical initiative. If you are interested in participating in the Conference and/or in joining the CALL Network, please let us know at: csc@cec-kek.be For further questions about CALL, please contact Rev. Dr. Dieter Heidtmann (dht@cec-kek.be).

Lisbon Treaty

Churches consulted on the implementation of Article 17

On 18 December 2009, all the Member Churches and Associated Organisations of CEC received an invitation to provide their views on the implementation of Article 17 (3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Lisbon Treaty). This article provides the legal basis for an open, transparent and regular dialogue between the EU institutions and churches and religious communities. The deadline for comments is the end of January 2010.

The letter was accompanied by a draft working paper of CSC the Commission of the Bishop's Conferences of the European Community (COMECE). This text drew on the discussions at the CSC Europe Secretaries meeting and CSC Executive Committee meeting, both held in November, and at the Assembly of COMECE. The draft was also shared with the Central Committee of CEC which met in Geneva on 16-19 December but comments made to the text in that meeting had not yet been included in the consultation document. Based on the feedback, the draft text will be reviewed together with COMECE. The document is expected to be adopted early in 2010 and then discussed with the EU institutions.

For more information contact: Ms Elina Eloranta elo@cec-kek.be.

Europe 2020 and 2010

CSC wants EU 2020 Strategy turn European values into reality

Between late November 2009 and mid-January 2010 the European Commission consulted the citizens on the new "EU 2020" Strategy. The objective of this strategy is to develop EU economy into "a new sustainable social market economy, a smarter, greener economy, where our prosperity will come from innovation and from using resources better, and where the key input will be knowledge". In its response, CSC called for strengthening of the ethical dimension of the new Strategy. It deplored that the value basis of the European Union, as laid out in the Treaty of Lisbon, had hardly been taken up in the Working Document of the Commission on the future "EU 2020" Strategy. CSC suggested that implementation of "fundamental rights and values in a sustainable social market economy" should be a key priority in the EU 2020 Strategy. In its statement, CSC argued: "Providing framework conditions for the market alone is not enough. A socially, ecologically, and globally committed market economy is morally far more demanding than is generally realised. In order to endure, its structures must be embedded in a system of values supported by all

relevant stakeholders. Individual self-interest, a crucial structural component of a market economy, may deteriorate into destructive egoism. It is an ethical task to balance self-interest with economic, social and ecological responsibility." The statement of CSC sets out a number of examples for the implementation of ethical principles in the areas of education, science and technology, employment, social inclusion and democratic participation. For questions or comments on the contribution, please contact Rev. Dr. Dieter Heidtmann (dht@cec-kek.be).

The European Union will convene an informal Summit on 11 February to discuss climate change and the economic crises, including the EU 2020 Strategy. The Strategy will be further discussed at the Spring European Council of 25-26 March, prior to the eventual adoption (postponed from March) at the European Council of 17-18 June.

CSC Statement on EU 2020 Strategy:

http://csc.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/csc/Social_Economic_Issues/CSCContributionEU2020Consultation.pdf

Read also the Church of England contribution to the consultation:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/socialpublic/europe/europe2020sub.pdf>

Consultation document: http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/eu2020_en.pdf

"Poverty Hurts Your Soul" - European Churches support the European Year 2010 for Against Poverty and Social Exclusion

The European Union has made 2010 the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. CSC participated in the opening conference in Madrid on 21 January. During this year CSC will encourage the European institutions, EU Member States and other stakeholders to come to a more holistic understanding of the reasons which lead to poverty and social exclusion, as well as of the manifold impact of poverty and social exclusion not only on the people affected but on the society as a whole. "In Christian understanding, poverty and social exclusion are not only economic-related phenomena but affect all dimensions of life; and not only the individual, but also the community," explains Rüdiger Noll, Director of CSC. CSC activities in this area this year are linked to "Migration 2010 - European churches responding to migration 2010" (see more below).

CSC Statement: <http://csc.ceceurope.org/index.php?id=838>

Website of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion:

www.2010againstopoverty.eu

Spanish EU Presidency

After Sweden, the leadership of the Council of the European Union was handed over to Herman Van Rompuy, its first permanent President on 1 January 2010. However, it has already become clear that the rotating presidencies are far from being over. Van Rompuy will chair the meetings of EU heads of states and governments (the European Council or "the Summits") and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Catherine Ashton if the European Parliament says ok) the gatherings of foreign ministers but all other

Council meetings whether ministerial, ambassadorial or of working level will continue to be conducted by the rotating presidencies. In addition, the new Spanish EU Presidency has shown that it wishes to have its imprint in the EU affairs during the coming six months.

The Spanish Presidency intends to achieve the following:

- Consolidate Europe's social agenda with special attention to gender equality and the fight against domestic violence;
- More of People's Europe;
- Overcome the economic crisis, restore job creation and enhance Europe's competitiveness;
- Enhancing energy security and the fight against climate change;
- Enable Europe to speak with its own voice on the international scene and promote its common values, peace and well-being; and
- Make the Union a safer place for its citizens by responding to the challenge of immigration and establishing a shared space of judicial and police cooperation.

Interestingly but not surprisingly, the first Presidency after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty does not press for the famous "one phone number" or one voice for Europe vis-à-vis the rest of the world but "its own voice". Moreover, Spain is *de facto* in charge of many of those areas which in the future shall fall to the two-hat's Commissioner & High Representative simply because the new Commission is not yet appointed and the External Action Service still to be set up and made operational.

Programme of the Spanish EU Presidency:

http://www.eu2010.es/export/sites/presidencia/comun/descargas/Spanish_Presidency_Program.pdf

European Council

The last "old style" summit discussed the crises and rubberstamped a new five-year programme for justice and home affairs

The main item on the agenda of the December European Council was climate change and the preparations for the Copenhagen Climate Conference. More on the results of that Summit and the future perspectives can be read in the article below.

Besides climate change, the EU leaders adopted the new five-year work programme related to the areas of justice, freedom and security (immigration and asylum, fundamental rights, organised crime, counter-terrorism, visa and border management policy etc.). This Stockholm Programme is - alongside with the future Europe 2020 Strategy - another key document laying out steps for a vast area of EU work.

The Summit also reviewed the work done to overcome the economic crisis and accepted the annual conclusions concerning EU enlargement. In addition, it invited the High Representative to present a proposal on the organisation and functioning of the new External Action Service by the end of April 2010.

Conclusions of the European Council of 10-11 December 2009:
<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/st00006.en09.pdf>

Stockholm Programme:
http://www.se2009.eu/polopoly_fs/1.26419!menu/standard/file/Klar_Stockholmsprogram.pdf

Council Conclusion on enlargement (as adopted by the European Council):
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st17/st17169-re01.en09.pdf>

Globalisation

European and Latin American churches meet for the second time to compare realities of globalisation in the two continents

An atmosphere of growing mutual trust marked the second meeting of the joint project of CSC of CEC and the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) on the impacts of globalisation (for the first encounter see Europe Update N° 26). The meeting on 26-29 November 2009 also benefited from an extensive support by their local host, the Church of Norway.

Latin American colleagues learned about the “Nordic model”, one of the models of a functioning social market economy. The meeting with the State Secretary at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Norway focused on the interaction between the state, economy and civil society. It also provided an opportunity to get an overview of the Norwegian Government’s involvement in the area of development. The group also met with Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, the new General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC). In addition, the meeting offered a chance for warm mutual exchange and worship. The Sunday worship service in the Cathedral of Oslo allowed for an active participation of members of the Task Force. On that occasion, the sermon was delivered by the President of CLAI, Bishop Julio Murray.

The meeting worked further on the joint document which is hoped to be finalised, adopted by the relevant decision-making bodies and shared to the wider public and media in early 2010. However, even more than the joint document, the project in itself has resulted in a significant rapprochement between the delegates and churches of both continents. The spiritual distance of the beginning has turned into trust, friendship and spirit of cooperation.

In the words of Franklin Canelos, CLAI’s Executive Secretary responsible for economic justice, the most substantive outcome was that: “as the process is going on, we are arriving to consensus on a number of themes. Although still having different positions in other fields, which result from historical experiences, we are able to identify a number of common areas of concern and to define joint actions.” Speaking on behalf of CLAI he added: “we will always remember with gratitude, all work that CSC/CEC and the Church of Norway did for the dialogue.”

For further information about the project, please contact Rev. Dr. Peter Pavlovic (ppt@cec-kek.be).

Education

Learning mobility for young people should not exclude those in unfavourable situations, says CSC

Together with CEC associated youth organisations EYCE and WSCF as well as with AGDF (Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden) CSC took part in the European Commission consultation on the Green Paper "Promoting the learning mobility of young people". The Green Paper sees mobility as a crucial element of education which helps develop new linguistic skills and intercultural competences. CSC welcomes the Commission's engagement in the field of learning mobility to strengthen intercultural relations throughout Europe and bring people together. The ecumenical activities of church-related organisations contribute a lot to these aims and open possibilities for people of all ages to gather and exchange with people from different cultural and denominational backgrounds. The joint answer underlines the importance of equal opportunities for all in access to mobility. Persons with special needs, unclear legal status, precarious financial situation or persons in the care of others (children, relatives...) should not experience any disadvantage, either on the labour market because of lacking mobility experiences or in their access to mobility programmes and financial resources. Mobility as a point of qualification on the labour market "bears the danger of discriminating those without formal mobility experience and can reinforce already existing imbalances."

The Green Paper says that learning mobility helps to "strengthen Europe's competitiveness by helping to build a knowledge-intensive society, thereby contributing to the achievement of the objectives set out in the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs." The CSC-WSCF-EYCE-AGDF joint answer stresses that education means more than preparing young people for the labour market. In the understanding of CSC and its partner organisations, learning processes should first of all encourage active citizenship, solidarity and personal development for everyone in our societies and open up these possibilities to people of all ages, both women and men and regardless from the origin, financial background and life situation. Furthermore, voluntary service should be fully recognized in the framework of mobility programmes.

Green Paper and joint answer are available on the CEC homepage:

<http://csc.ceceurope.org/index.php?id=15>

Climate Change

UN Climate Summit in Copenhagen ends in failure – CEC calls upon churches to maintain efforts to protect God's creation

To the frustration of all those who had hoped for a joint and effective response to the challenge of climate change, the UN Climate Summit on 7-18 December 2009 ended with no binding commitment. Besides the 120 heads of the states and governments the conference brought together around 40.000 observers. The numerous activities organised by civil society organisations and churches both in the run-up to the Summit and during it demonstrated the

desire of people from around the globe for a strong and effective action by their representatives.

The final outcome of the meeting, the Copenhagen Accord, was proposed by US, China, India, Brazil and South Africa as a result of their negotiations on the spot. The text does not provide a legally-binding agreement nor a guarantee that the process which was now prolonged will lead to a successful outcome in the coming months. The agreement and the way it was prepared represents a step backwards in the UN process.

The agreement fails to set mitigation targets. It simply invites industrialized countries to inform UNFCCC by 31 January 2010 about the targets they are ready to commit themselves to in terms of emission reduction. In this new bottom-up approach countries can pledge to as much or as little reductions as they want with no guarantee that these targets add up to what science regards as necessary to counter climate change.

The more positive outcome is the agreement on financing. Industrialised countries agreed to provide USD 30 billion over the period 2010-2012, as 'fast start funding' for adaptation, emissions reductions, research and capacity building in developing countries, including funding to prevent deforestation. The agreement proposes a fund called the Copenhagen Green Climate Fund to channel financing of different counter-climate change measures. Mobilisation of financing for the needs of developing countries beyond the year 2020 is also addressed in the agreement and is estimated at USD 100 billion per year from 2020. Unfortunately, the agreement does not tell where that money will come from. Another positive result of the Summit is a new mechanism to intensify technology transfer between developed and developing countries.

The outcome of the meeting is an embarrassment for the EU. In spite of its efforts, the EU was not able to achieve its goals, in particular, "a legally binding outcome" for major global emitters of green house gasses. The EU was not even invited among the group which initiated the final outcome. Despite this, the Swedish Prime Minister Fredrick Reinfeldt, the (then) President of the EU Council, commented: "I would have liked more. This will not solve the threat of climate change. But it is a first step, an important step." German Chancellor Angela Merkel warned about the possible negative consequences the many harsh commentaries might have: "Copenhagen is a first step toward a new world climate order, nothing more but also nothing less. Those who are only putting Copenhagen down are helping those who want to blockade rather than move forward." For many, however, the Copenhagen meeting remains a missed opportunity. According to the UN climate chief Yvo de Boer, "the opportunity to actually make it into the scientific window of opportunity is getting smaller and smaller."

The Churches were widely present in Copenhagen. Most of the church delegations, including those of CEC and the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) acted in a coordinated way through the WCC ecumenical team. The delegations included personalities such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The culmination of the churches' presence was the televised ecumenical worship service in the Copenhagen Cathedral with the presence of the Queen of Denmark.

Part of the Copenhagen Accord is an agreement on the continuation of the UN process. In spite of many questions related to the content and the frame of the process, it is vital churches will continue accompanying it. This a reason why the Central Committee of CEC in responding to outcomes of the Summit invited CEC member churches, church communities

at grassroots level and individual Christians “to continue the efforts which are already visible in many places in Europe in reducing our ecological footprint, limiting energy consumption and in our efforts for climate justice. God’s creation needs to be protected, cultivated and sustained for future generations. In following this aim the CEC is committed to intensify its work in this area.”

CEC statement:

[http://www.ceceurope.org/index.php?id=53&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=176&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=17&cHash=4e6b65f353](http://www.ceceurope.org/index.php?id=53&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=176&tx_ttnews[backPid]=17&cHash=4e6b65f353)

WCC statement:

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/the-wcc-is-disappointed-b.html>

Copenhagen Accord: http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_15/items/5257.php

Human Rights

Russian ratification of Protocol 14 enables the European Court of Human Rights to enhance its work

Following the decision of the State Dume of the Russian Federation, Russia as the last Member State of the Council of Europe, is about to ratify the Protocol 14 to the European Convention of Human Rights. This means that the new procedures (the single-judge procedure and the new powers of the three-judge committees) aimed at improving the functioning of the Strasbourg Court of Human Rights and already applied in a large number of Member States, will apply to all 47 Member States. “The Protocol will help the Court to deal with its backlog of cases and reinforce its vital role in defending the human rights of individual citizens throughout Europe”, the General Secretary of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland says. President Medvedev recently assured that Russian membership in the Council of Europe is a key to his efforts to modernise Russia’s judicial system.

Press Release of the Council of Europe:

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1571749&Site=DC&BackColorInternet=F5CA75&BackColorIntranet=F5CA75&BackColorLogged=A9BACE>

Press Release of the European Court of Human Rights:

<http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/view.asp?action=html&documentId=861082&portal=hbkm&source=externalbydocnumber&table=F69A27FD8FB86142BF01C1166DEA398649>

Migration

Year of European Churches Responding to Migration 2010 launched in Budapest

On 26 November 2009, CEC and the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) launched the Year of European Churches Responding to Migration 2010 at the Synod Hall of

the Reformed Church in Hungary in Budapest. The event was part of a three-day hearing, organized by CCME and WCC and hosted by the Reformed Church, on European migration with focus on unity, witness and advocacy.

The website of the migration year: <http://migration.ceceurope.org>

Calendar for the Year of Migration

CCME has produced a special calendar for the migration year. It contains overviews, facts and figures as well as proposals for action in relation to each of the monthly focuses, for instance, on diversity in January, on irregular migration in February and discrimination in March. Hard copies of the calendar can be ordered at a cost of 2.5 EUR/piece and 2 EUR/piece for orders of 10 or more calendars. Other promotional items of the migration year such as scarves can equally be ordered. A list of products is available at: <http://migration.ceceurope.org/index.php?id=631>

The calendar is available online at:

http://migration.ceceurope.org/fileadmin/filer/mig/40_Calendar/2009-11-20_Calendar_2010_-_final.pdf

Upcoming events

Planned CSC events in 2010

CSC Task Force on Globalisation will hold its next meeting in Brussels on 17-18 February (for information, please contact Rev. Dr. Peter Pavlovic, ppt@cec-kek.be). On 2-3 March CSC will hold an expert meeting in Brussels to prepare the churches' contribution to the EU Common Position on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference scheduled in New York from 3 to 28 May (for more information, please contact Ms Elina Eloranta, elo@cec-kek.be). A new European Christian Network CALL "Church Action on Labour and Life" is launched in a conference in Brussels on 28-30 April (cf. article above; information can be obtained from Rev. Dr. Dieter Heidtmann, dht@cec-kek.be). There are initial plans to hold a human rights consultation in mid-May in Germany (contact: Ms Elizabeta Kitanovic, eki@cec-kek.be). CSC brainstorming group on education will meet in Strasbourg on 26-27 May (contact: Ms Carla Maurer, carla.maurer@cec-kek.fr). The 8th Assembly of the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) will take place in Prague on 9-13 June (contact: Rev. Dr. Peter Pavlovic, ppt@cec-kek.be).

Provided funding is secured, CSC will gather experts for a meeting in Brussels in the second week of June in order to devise a churches' contribution to the new Strategic Concept of NATO (contact: Ms Elina Eloranta, elo@cec-kek.be). There are also plans for a Dialogue Seminar to be held in May or June on the ethical dimension of a European social market economy. As usual, the Dialogue Seminar would be a joint endeavour of CSC, the Commission of Bishops' Conferences in the European Community (COMECE) and the European Commission (contact: Rev. Dr. Dieter Heidtmann, dht@cec-kek.be). CSC also hopes to organise a consultation on poverty to be held in Brussels at the end of September. This event is part of the co-operation framework between CSC, Caritas Europa, COMECE and Eurodiaconia during the European Year on Poverty (see article above; contact: Rev.

Dieter Heidtmann, dht@cec-kek.be). CSC is also involved in the organisation of the next event of the Wealth, Poverty and Ecology process of the World Council of Churches. This meeting is scheduled to take place in Hungary from 1 to 5 November (contact: Rev. Dr. Peter Pavlovic, ppt@cec-kek.be).

The first plenary meeting of the newly-elected Church and Society Commission will take place in or near Strasbourg either between 28 May and 1 June or from 16 to 20 June. Members are currently being consulted to find a convenient date.

Other events

A Hearing on Sunday Protection will be held in the European Parliament (Brussels) on 24 March (for information, please contact dht@cec-kek.be).

The French Catholics, under the leadership of Bishop François Maupu of Verdun and Bishop Pierre Raffin of Metz, invite CEC churches to a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the European Act of Robert Schuman, the Declaration of 9 May 1950. The event, which will issue a Schuman Declaration, will take place in Verdun (7 May), Douaumont and Scy-Chazelles (8 May) and Metz (9 May). For more information, visit www.9mai2010.eu or contact Father Cédric Burgun (cedrid@burgun.eu).



Church and Society Commission

Ecumenical Centre • Rue Joseph II, 174 • BE-1000 Brussels • Belgium
phone +32 2 230 17 32 • fax +32 2 231 14 13 • <http://csc.ceceurope.org/>

Edited by Elina Eloranta

The Church and Society Commission (CSC) is one of the commissions of the Conference of European Churches (CEC). The CSC links CEC's 125 member churches from all over Europe and its associated organisations with the European Union's institutions, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, NATO and the UN (on European matters). It engages its member churches and associated organisations in studies and projects relevant to church and society and thus supports and strengthens the common witness of European churches vis-à-vis the European Institutions and in the respective European societies.

This publication informs CEC members on European developments and related CSC activities. Members are welcome to use this publication as a channel to inform on their respective work. For comments or further information on the issues as well as to subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact csc@cec-kek.be. CSC Updates on European Affairs are also available on the CEC website at: <http://www.cec-kek.org/content/EuropeUpdates.shtml>

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