

Wealth, Poverty and Ecology – a contribution of European churches to the global ecumenical process

Project of CSC/CEC in cooperation with WCC and other ecumenical partners in Europe

Background

Economic concerns and evaluation of a progressive globalisation have emerged as a divisive issue for the churches. This underlines the need for a genuinely open, connected and critical dialogue on poverty, wealth and ecology. It is therefore envisaged that this study process will enhance understanding and synergies among churches in addressing questions of wealth, poverty and ecology.

9th General Assembly of the WCC in Porto Alegre (2006):

The Assembly proposed that churches and partners in the ecumenical movement embark on a study process aimed to provide reflections and analyses on wealth and how wealth creation is related to poverty and ecology. Building on the results of the earlier process on Alternative Globalisation Addressing People and Earth (AGAPE), the current project is aimed to lead up to the 10th Assembly of the WCC in 2013. According to the WCC Assembly it should:

- Engage churches and specialized ministries in consultative research on poverty, wealth and ecology, which will be undertaken in all continents following an established ecumenical calendar:
- contribute to the ecumenical history of the 'Life and Work' movement in developing social ethics on economic life:
- draw energy from previous ecumenical theological and ethical reflections, which were done through the programmes on Church and Society, Diaconia and Service, as well as the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation process.

As methodological instrument of the process has been identified a series of continental consultations organised in cooperation between WCC and respective regional ecumenical organisations, accompanied by an extensive study process focusing on the situation in each respective continent. In 2010 the attention of the project will be focused on the situation in Europe.

13th CEC Assembly in Lyon (2009):

The Assembly commits CEC that the future work should:

- deepen our ethical and spiritual reflection on the causes and meaning of the financial and economic crisis;
- revitalize the Christian culture of solidarity;
- promote examples of faith-based economic praxis which provide alternatives to current economic structures;
- offer a space of dialogue on global concerns with partners of other continents.

This follows the spirit of the 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu (2007), which in its conclusions recommends to launch a consultative process, addressing European responsibility for ecological justice, facing the threat of climate change,

European responsibility for the just shaping of globalisation and to do it in a cooperation with the churches of other continents.

Following those guidelines the CSC/CEC is engaged in an intensive preparation of a European input to the WCC project in the form of the consultation under the heading Wealth-Poverty-Ecology in European context. In this way the CSC/CEC is serving as a partner for the WCC in organising a European contribution to the global WCC project. Preparations are coordinated by the CSC Task force on globalisation.

Aims of the project

The aims of the project are:

- To offer the churches in Europe the space for sharing of experiences and sharing information about their initiatives addressing globalisation;
- to offer the possibility of the exchange of experience between churches from Europe and from other continents;
- to enable coordinated response of the churches in Europe to the challenges of globalisation;
- to demonstrate effective cooperation of CEC and WCC in addressing the global issues.

Thematic focus of the consultation

A number of churches in Europe are intensively involved in work of various aspects of globalisation. Under the guidance of the CEC/CSC Task Force on globalisation there is under way a study process focusing on the joint response to globalisation of churches from Europe and Latin America. Outcomes of this dialogue will make a strong contribution to the outlined consultation. Along with that other thematical contributions will be prepared in a form of studies in the cooperation of the CSC with other European ecumenical partners, in particular with CCME, Eurodiaconia, EYCE, WSCF as well as with some particular churches, notably Evangelical Church of Westphalia and Church of Sweden. Studies presented to the consultation will be:

- o Poverty in Europe
- o Impacts of globalisation and economic crises in Central and Eastern Europe
- o Economy in a service of life – a concept of social market economy
- o Impacts of globalisation – commonalities and differences, as outcomes of the dialogue of churches from Europe and Latin America
- o Sustainable lifestyle

Particular attention will be given to the topic of migration, as well as to the theological aspects and role of the youth.

Structure of the consultation

The structure consultation is guided by the 3 methodological clusters:

- A/ Thematic inputs under three thematic sub-headings:
 - o Wealth and poverty in Europe
 - o Challenge of low carbon and sufficiency economy
 - o Dialogue and participatory governance
- B/ Hearings – enabling:

- Reactions to the presented inputs;
 - Reports from the CEC member churches and ecumenical partner organisations on best practices and involvement in addressing the above mentioned topics;
 - Interaction with the ecumenical guests from other continents;
 - Dialogue and sharing among participants.
- C/ Presentations of church leaders to the theme: The role of the churches in global transformation process

The programme of the consultation will offer an excursion presenting work of the churches in Hungary in addressing poverty and social exclusion. Recommendations for further work of CEC and the WCC will be presented on the final day.

Expected outcomes

The consultation will contribute to:

- Strengthening of the networking among churches Europe in addressing the impacts of globalisation;
- deepening of a dialogue between churches from Europe and other continents;
- strengthening synergies between projects addressing on the one side issues of wealth distributions and poverty and on the other side environmental degradation and a need for a sustainable lifestyle;
- WCC programme on Poverty-Wealth-Ecology and the CSC/CEC programme in addressing the impacts of globalisation.

The consultation will provide the recommendation for further work of the WCC and CEC.

Participants

At the meeting will participate up to 80 participants from Europe and ecumenical guests from Africa, Asia, Pacific, and North & South America.

Partners

Consultation is a joint project of the CSC/CEC with the WCC in cooperation with the churches in Hungary. Preparations for the consultation are coordinated with other ecumenical partner organisations: Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), Eurodiaconia, EYCE, WSCF, Syndesmos and others.

Time and venue

The consultation will take place in Budapest (Hungary) from 8-12 November 2010

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Annex I:

WCC - Ecumenical Calendar: Poverty, Wealth and Ecology (PWE)

2007

March – May	Conduct research on PWE in Africa
June 25-26 (Geneva)	PWE Group discusses findings of research and plans for Churches Encounter in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania
November 5-6 (Dar Es Salaam)	Women, Youth and Theologians hearings which include the just peace convocation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology.
November 7-9(Dar Es Salaam)	Churches encounter on PWE in the context of the AGAPE Process.

2008

February 21-22 (Geneva)	PWE Group meeting to discuss research proposal on PWE in Latin America and Caribbean.
March – May	Conduct the research
June 25-26 (Geneva)	PWE meeting to discuss findings of research and prepare for the church encounter
November 5-6 (Guatemala)	Theological, youth and women hearing which include the just peace convocation on PWE
November 7-9 (Guatemala)	Churches encounter on PWE in Latin America and the Caribbean

2009

January	Seminars at the World Social Forum
February 21-22 (Geneva)	PWE Group to meet to discuss research proposal on PWE in the Pacific and Asia
March-May	Conduct research on PWE
June 25-26 (Geneva)	PWE meeting to discuss findings of the research and prepare for church encounter in November
November 5-6 (Asia)	Theological, youth and women hearings, which include just peace convocation on PWE
November 7-9 (Asia)	Churches encounter on PWE in the Pacific and Asia

2010

February 21-22 (Geneva)	PWE Group to meet to discuss research proposal on PWE in Europe, particularly Eastern and Central Europe.
March-May	Conduct research on PWE

June 25-26 (Geneva)	PWE meeting to discuss findings of the research and prepare for church encounter in November Theological, youth and women hearing on PWE Churches encounter on PWE in Eastern and Central Europe
November 5-6	
November 7-9	
<i>2011</i>	
January	Seminars at the World Social Forum and plan on Peace Convocation Platform- where PWE will be one of the pillars
February 21-22 (Geneva)	PWE Group to meet to discuss research proposal on PWE in North America and Canada
March-May	Conduct research on PWE
June 25-26 (Geneva)	PWE meeting to discuss findings of the research and prepare for church encounter in November, which will take place at Stony Point.
Nov 5-6 (Stony Point)	Theological, youth and women hearing on PWE
Nov 7-9 (Stony Point)	Churches encounter on PWE in North America