

Expectations of CEC from the Protestant Churches in Austria

Since there have been detailed responses from various churches and church families which we can endorse in many ways – especially the structural proposal from the EKD – we have tried to concentrate our expectations on a few areas of concern.

– CEC’s main task, in our view, is and will continue to be to maintain and preserve the link among the Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant church families. This requires increased efforts to implement the positive intentions already expressed in the *Charta Oecumenica*, which will hardly be possible without expanding the work of the Commission “Churches in Dialogue”. Particularly in dialogue with Islam, the Austrian churches have some positive experiences and outcomes on which to build. For us, this also includes a clear and distinctly heard protest against those who misuse the Christian faith for the purposes of party politics.

– Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation continue, for us, to be on the agenda. This includes working for peace within the churches, but we also call for the churches’ prophetic voice to be raised against public policy decisions which do not respect human rights and human dignity. We find that support for minorities, whether religious or national, attention to and promotion of women’s and children’s rights and their implementation and enforcement in Europe continue to be important. We recognise with gratitude the accomplishments of the Commission “Church and Society” and its various working groups in these areas in past years. We welcome the Commission “Migration in Europe” as the third CEC Commission, and see this as an important step for the churches’ participation in the main tasks of today’s Europe.

– On all these issues, the various agreements and resolutions resulting from the work of the WCC should not be disregarded, but rather taken up and further developed.

– Finally, for us as churches in a predominantly Roman Catholic country, the continuing and strengthening of dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church is an important concern. The conclusions reached in the CEC-CCEE Joint Committee are scarcely known in the churches. We would wish CEC as a whole to carry on the future dialogue at the European level with the Roman Catholic Church, and not leave it to individual member churches to conduct bilateral meetings.

– As we look forward to the coming Assembly, we urge once again that the schedule make room for a confessional meeting. We are aware that the time will be short, yet we would be happy if such a possibility could be reconsidered.

We congratulate CEC on its 50-year anniversary, and it is our wish that in the years to come this European ecumenical organisation will be and remain a good builder of bridges, in the service of Christ who is our hope and in service to humankind, to whom it is our mission to offer lasting reasons for hope.

For the Evangelical Churches of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions in Austria and the
Evangelical Methodist Church in Austria
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