

Conference of European Churches
Work Priorities 2009 – 2015
General Secretariat

The General Secretariat of CEC is based in Geneva. The Constitution of CEC provides that “The General Secretary... shall be in charge of the General Secretariat of the Conference and shall be the head of the entire staff and shall also be Secretary of the Central Committee and the Presidium”. In addition the Bye-Laws of CEC provide that the General Secretary “shall be responsible for the administration of the Conference, for relations with the member churches and other ecumenical bodies, for the preparation and conduct of meetings of the Assembly and the Central Committee and meetings of the Presidium... as well as for informing the member churches and the public about the work of the Conference”.

In interpreting this mandate, the Restructuring Document which was adopted by Central Committee at its meeting in October 2008 speaks of the responsibility of the General Secretary to assume “special responsibility for strengthening the overall development and vision of the organisation”. It also envisages that he will specifically convene, prepare and chair the meetings of the Senior Management Team comprising the Directors of the Commissions (augmented as appropriate by the Secretary for Finance and Administration and the Secretary for Communications) and work with them to ensure the coherence of the whole organisation and in particular the coherent implementation across CEC of the overall work programme of CEC as assigned by the CEC Governing Bodies.

To assist in the fulfilment of these functions, the Communications and Finance and Personnel Departments of CEC are based within the General Secretariat, as is the CEC Assembly Office.

In furtherance of these functions, the following priorities are proposed for the work of the General Secretariat following the 13th CEC Assembly in Lyon. They are not stated in any particular order of priority.



To ensure CEC's visibility in the whole of Europe

The CEC Senior Management Team has proposed the need for CEC to work at a strategic approach to ensuring its visibility and effectiveness, especially in Eastern Europe. The CEC Central Committee has widened this discussion to seeking ways in which CEC is no less visible in one part of Europe than another. These strategic issues of visibility and effectiveness throughout Europe will need to be addressed by the new Central Committee in a discussion enabled by the General Secretary working with the Senior Management Team and with all executive colleagues.

To develop further patterns of common working with other ecumenical bodies, especially the WCC and GEKE/CPCE

In response to concern from CEC member churches that there should be greater coherence in ecumenical work on a European level, CEC and CPCE have already established patterns of common working, which are described in the CEC Activity Report. CEC and WCC have also been working to find ways of achieving greater coherence in their respective areas of work in Europe. Member Churches clearly expect of CEC that this process should be broadened and deepened in the coming years.

To facilitate a review, in the period immediately following the Assembly, of the location of the CEC General Secretariat

The question of the appropriate location of the General Secretariat of CEC, if CEC as a whole is to operate at its most effective, is a strategic question which CEC has been discussing for some years without coming to a conclusion. It is intended that Central Committee will address this issue before the Assembly is convened. In the light of that discussion, it may be necessary for the new Central Committee to give this question high priority. Whatever the outcome of this discussion, a further priority of The General Secretariat must be the following:

To continue to promote coherence in the work of CEC

One of the key roles of the General Secretary will remain to promote coherence in the work of CEC and he, working with his colleagues in the Senior Management Team and with all colleagues throughout CEC, will need to develop effective strategies to enable coherence within CEC to be maintained and further developed.



To complete the review of membership issues, including those arising from the integration between CEC and CCME

At the time of the agreement of the integration of the two bodies, it was accepted that questions arising from the different structures of membership of the two bodies would be left open at the time at which the integration takes effect, with transitional measures in place to enable those who at the time of integration were members of CCME to play as full a role as possible in the integrated CEC. It is intended that work on this will begin already before the Assembly in Lyon. Alongside this, recent discussions at Central Committee have revealed that CEC's existing definitions of membership are not sufficiently precise and the outgoing Central Committee has asked that this too be addressed.

To establish a Gender Desk

As outlined in the CEC Activity Report, a Gender Advisory Group established by CEC has been working to prepare the way for an appointment of a CEC Secretary for Gender Issues in order to enable CEC to relate more effectively to specific gender based issues. Work now needs to be done urgently to ensure that funding is in place for this post so that it can be established.

To build further the relationship between CEC and its associated youth organizations

The CEC Activity Report describes the Memorandum of Cooperation which has been arrived at between CEC and its Associated Youth Organizations. It is intended that this will be formally signed in Lyon. In the months before the Assembly our cooperation has very much focused on the preparations for the youth aspects of the Assembly. After the Assembly the relationship will need to be broadened and deepened in the interests of making the voice of young people more clearly heard in the life and work of CEC.

To clarify the relationship between CEC and CCEE

Before the Assembly, CEC has already begun to work with CCEE to redefine the guidelines which govern our work together. This work will need to continue after the Assembly.



To continue to promote Charta Oecumenica as a basic tool for common ecumenical work

As we gather in Lyon eight years will have elapsed since the *Charta Oecumenica* was signed. CEC needs to continue to promote *Charta Oecumenica* and, with our Roman Catholic partners, to reflect on whether we need to develop a process for reviewing and renewing the *Charta*. As this touches the whole of the life of CEC in all its three Commissions, the General Secretary will need to work to promote this discussion across CEC.

To enable a thoroughgoing review of the CEC legal texts

As delegates will see in the relevant papers, the Legal Advisory Group which met in the period before the 13th Assembly recognized that detailed work is needed on the CEC legal texts in order to bring them into line with CEC as it has evolved since they were first agreed in the early 1990s. The General Secretariat will need to bring recommendations to Central Committee for the setting up of a Group to carry out this necessary work.

To maximize CEC income from member churches

Important work has been done between Assemblies to increase the amounts received as membership fees from member churches. In a time of economic and financial challenge, this work will need to continue, with targeted approaches especially to larger member churches who do not pay their membership fees in full.

To develop alternative financial strategies

In a period when member churches are likely to be facing their own financial challenges, CEC will need to develop a strategy for fundraising from sources other than member churches, as well as exploring the question of sponsoring.

To develop the CEC communication policy and strategy

To continue the work which has already begun to develop clear communication policy and strategy for the whole of CEC.

To establish a new CEC website

To continue the work which has already begun to develop a new CEC website which will be interactive and attractive in its format.



Press Officers Network for European Churches (PONEC)

To continue supporting the development of this Network as an instrument for increasing Christian visibility in Europe.

Prize for Religion Writing in Europe

In recent years, CEC has administered the awarding of this Prize, funded by the John Templeton Foundation. It has served as an important instrument for stimulating and acknowledging writing on Religion within Europe. The Templeton Foundation has now withdrawn its funding for this and it will therefore be necessary to seek alternative funding so that this important initiative can continue.