

Response to the CEC CSC Work Programme by the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland, the Church of England's House of Bishops' Europe Panel, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church.

Introduction

1. The Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland, the Church of England's House of Bishops' Europe Panel, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church welcome the opportunity to contribute to the preparations for the Lyon Assembly by offering the following response to the draft CEC CSC Work Programme. This joint response emerged following a meeting of Church and Society Secretaries in Leuven, October 2008, where an earlier version of the CEC CSC work programme was first presented.

Why this Consultation Matters

The future life of the Conference of European Churches

2. The Lyon Assembly comes at a particularly critical time in the life of CEC and its Member Churches. Member Churches face growing pressures for financial retrenchment leading them to re-examine existing priorities as well as methods of working. Against a global financial crisis and the reality of a significant economic downturn across Europe, the financial pressures faced by CEC and its Member Churches will only intensify in the period 2009-2015.
3. At the same time, there is a growing concern amongst some Member Churches, not least within the United Kingdom, that despite noticeable achievements on the road towards full and visible unity, the ecumenical process faces a crisis of confidence and identity. Against an uncertain ecumenical background new patterns of intensified co-operation are developing which if harvested properly can reinvigorate and refresh our common understanding of Christian mission and unity. We increasingly live in a world in which *ad hoc* coalitions are replacing static 'ecumenical' bodies. Functional coalitions around particular issues or projects are increasingly seen as more attractive than permanent bodies. This suggests a growing weariness and frustration with those ecumenical bodies that aim for goals that in an eclectic post-modern world seem less attractive.
4. Allied to these two points is the recognition that although CEC is a pan-European body, significant sections of the European public, including regretfully many within our own churches, are not convinced that Europe is on the right track. Less than one out of two citizens voted in the last European elections. The torturous history surrounding the EU Constitutional Treaty and the subsequent difficulties involved with ratifying the Lisbon Reform Treaty point to wider societal disillusionment and disassociation with the European project.
5. At a European level, CEC can only be effective if it is prepared to recognise these concerns and the changed context in which it operates. Although the

picture varies considerably between EU Member States and between CEC Member Churches, feelings of indifference to and misunderstanding of the European idea - whether ecumenical or political - are widespread and growing. The reasons for this reduced confidence are complex and include sluggish economic growth, heightened feelings of economic and personal insecurity, fears of loss of identity and a more general feeling of 'disconnect' between what happens in 'Brussels' and in people's every day lives. Recognising these facts does not entail endorsing the trends they represent. But the churches alone cannot change the climate of opinion about the European project and must recognise that their options are constrained by it.

6. Just as there is a need to demonstrate more clearly the value of what the EU brings and the legitimacy of its decisions, so too must CEC demonstrate more clearly the value of its work. We agree with the sober assessment provided by the CEC General Secretary in his Assembly Report. With the ecclesiastical, ecumenical and political landscape of Europe much changed since CEC's foundation, the General Secretary rightly observes that the organisation needs "to work harder to promote to Member Churches the value of membership of CEC, of what membership of CEC can bring of value to Member Churches, of how membership of CEC enables the voices of individual churches to be stronger within Europe, of how the voice of the Church can be much more effective when it is expressed collectively". The road to the Lyon Assembly provides therefore a valuable opportunity for CEC to articulate to its Member Churches what it is doing for them and to offer them a stake in a renewed and revitalised European ecumenical edifice.

The future life of the Church and Society Commission

7. The focus of this submission is primarily on those sections of the Lyon Assembly documentation that relate to the life of CEC CSC. There are several reasons for this focus. The General Secretary's Assembly Report notes that CEC's profile needs to be "more clearly that of an organisation which can excite and engage, and of an organisation which is able to communicate that excitement and engagement". If budgetary and staffing allocations are anything to go by, then the prospects of CEC engaging and exciting its Member Churches rests first and foremost with CEC's Church and Society Commission.
8. Chapter V of the Assembly Report makes clear that despite the retrenchment in some areas of CEC's work, not least the decision to close the Solidarity and Women's desk in 2005, CEC's structural costs have increased by 18.6% since 2003. This increase is the direct consequence of the personnel positions seconded by Member Churches to CEC CSC, which has allowed the CSC to extend and augment its activities significantly.
9. We note that two of the Executive Officers based with the CSC in Brussels have been provided by UK Churches. Since September 2003, The Rev Matthew Ross has been seconded by three UK Churches (the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and the Salvation Army) and more recently the Church of England seconded Canon Gary Wilton in April 2008. At a time of ecumenical weariness this renewal is encouraging, but it does suggest,

however, that some Member Churches have particular needs and interests that they believe, rightly or wrongly, aren't being adequately addressed through existing arrangements.

10. For many Churches, CEC CSC provides an avenue for functional ecumenicalism around specific issues of public interest both with other Member Churches and with the Roman Catholic Church. With the Vatican appearing to be taking a harder line on ecumenical relationships the practical and organically developed working relationship between CEC CSC and COMECE is reassuring. Whatever the long term desirability and feasibility of developing a pan-European ecumenical tent inclusive of the Roman Catholic Church, the organisation should not lose sight of the very practical and functional working relationships that already exist between CEC CSC and COMECE.
11. Given the budgetary resources underpinning CEC CSC, and the important mission opportunities that it provides, it is imperative that due attention is given to assessing the work of CEC CSC. This consultation therefore provides an important opportunity for Member Churches to take stock of the progress made since Trondheim in the field of 'Church and Society' and to make suggestions as to how subsequent work might build on past achievements, whilst learning important lessons from the past. It provides Member Churches with the occasion to reflect on their own work in areas covered by the CEC CSC remit and to make suggestions as to how the subsequent work of CEC CSC might add value to this work.
12. From a CEC CSC perspective, this consultation process provides it with an occasion to convey to its Member Churches a new sense that it understands the challenges of the future and that it has credible strategies in place to address them. CEC CSC can retain the trust and confidence of its Member Churches if it sets a clear and compelling vision of the direction in which it should be heading and demonstrates that it has the policies, resources and commitments to match this vision.

The importance of openness and transparency

13. Inherent in the idea of partnership is consultation and participation. Initiatives flowing from this consultation must be based on the full and active involvement of Member Churches. Ecumenical dialogue on 'Church and Society' matters must reach beyond the Brussels-based political debate into a full-blown European Ecumenical Public Space that helps to create understanding and respect for each others traditions, identity and thinking.
14. This consultation process and the preparations for the Lyon Assembly can play an important part in renewing and reinvigorating the ecumenical covenant between CEC CSC and its Member Churches. To be successful, however, CEC CSC must be open to public scrutiny and accountable for its work. This requires a high level of openness and transparency. It is not sufficient for CEC

CSC merely to advocate its own policies; it must be receptive to new ideas and suggestions even if these run contrary to original thinking.

15. To assist this process, we recommend that the results of this consultation exercise should be published as a consolidated text. This text should be made available to Member Churches ahead of the Lyon Assembly. This documentation should include not merely the individual submissions from Member Churches, but also a response from CEC CSC as to how the consultation process has visibly impacted upon the final version as presented to the Lyon Assembly.
16. It is not enough merely for CEC CSC to say that it has consulted with its Member Churches; it must demonstrate through its subsequent actions the utility of the exercise. The aim of the consultation exercise and the Assembly *per se* must be to encourage open and transparent debate on the future priorities of CEC rather than confirming the *status quo ante* the Assembly. To do otherwise risks alienating Member Churches and devaluing the whole consultation exercise.
17. The risk of using the Lyon Assembly merely to confirm the existing *status quo* is illustrated by certain sections of the General Secretary's Assembly Report. The final paragraph of Section 17 of Chapter 1 of the Assembly Report appears to suggest that CEC, through the work of CSC and CCME, are already equipped to tackle the long list of issues listed in the prior paragraph. This appears to foreclose discussion on the *a priori* question as to whether these issues are the right ones that CEC CSC should be focusing on and if the organisation is equipped sufficiently to address them.
18. The General Secretary is right to note in Chapter 1 of the draft Assembly Report that many churches of Eastern and Central Europe, not least those Orthodox Members of CEC, feel that their Western Christian Sisters and Brothers are not listening with sufficient attention to their own particular concerns. We suggest that making public the submissions and responses to this consultation exercise would make more transparent the positions of individual Member Churches, not least the Orthodox members of CEC, regarding the future work of CEC CSC. We believe that this would ease the decision-making process at Lyon by setting out clearly the Member Churches' hopes and aspirations.
19. We recognise that this recommendation is not without its costs. We would hope and anticipate that this recommendation would result in an integral document - revised work programme with supporting submissions from Member Churches - presented to the delegates ahead of the Assembly. If insufficient funds existed for this exercise then submissions and a CEC CSC response should be posted on the Lyon Assembly website.

Evaluating the CEC CSC Work Programme: The Need for Strategic Revision

20. We are grateful to receive the draft CEC CSC Work Programme, *The Europe we are hoping for*, and the opportunity to comment on it ahead of the Lyon Assembly. We are reassured to see that this document has been significantly revised and improved since it was first presented to a meeting of Church and Society Secretaries in Leuven, October 2008. Despite these revisions, we remained concerned that some confusion remains as to the primary aim of the document.
21. The document indicates that based upon the responses to this consultation a revised work programme will be presented and agreed by a meeting of the Church and Society Commission, 11-15 March 2008. A further revised version of the document will then be presented to a CEC WG prior to the Assembly, which is tasked with preparing the input for the Policy Reference Committee to be established at the Assembly. It's then down to the Assembly to establish the priorities for the work of CEC and its Commissions. We understand that these priorities will then be translated into a 5-year work programme, which will then be endorsed by the CEC Central Committee. It is then the responsibility of the annual meeting of the Church and Society Commission to review and adopt an annual work programme.
22. The protracted nature of this decision making process obscures the reality that insufficient attention and consideration has been given to what CEC CSC's strategic priorities should be for the next five years. All that is provided is a long wish list of proposed activity. The document fails to explain sufficiently why these areas are important or how they relate to CEC CSC's wider mission or indeed that of its Member Churches. We are told that any future work programme needs to take account of the Commission's mandate and yet the mandate provided in the work programme is distinctly different from that provided on the CEC website.¹
23. The document correctly notes that it is important to ask: 'What is CEC CSC best placed to do' and 'what can be better done by individual Member Churches and/or partner organisations'? Yet, having asked these all important questions, the document fails to spell out any criteria by which CEC CSC will reach a decision on whether a particular piece of work might usefully or more effectively be carried out by others. How CEC CSC draws on and is sustained by the work of sub-regional organisations of Churches is insufficiently explained. If, as expected, enhanced patterns of ecumenical cooperation

¹ According to the CEC website the CSC mandate is as follows:

- To foster greater ecumenical dialogue, co-operation and fellowship between CEC member churches on Church and Society issues
- To create a space for member churches to meet and find ways to act together for the common good in Europe
- To encourage and sustain a Christian contribution to political, social and economic life in Europe
- As a strong partner to the European institutions, to advocate and promote a Europe of solidarity, reconciliation and human dignity.

<http://www.cec-kek.org/content/commission.shtml>

between a small number Member Churches develops further over the next six years, the work programme needs to articulate more clearly what this variable ecumenical geometry might mean for CEC CSC both in terms of areas covered as well in terms of working methods.

24. We recommend that further efforts be made to spell out what subsidiarity might mean as an organising principle for CEC CSC. We suggest that attention should be paid to both its understanding within Catholic Social Teaching, as first explored by Pope Leo XIII in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of 1891, and as an organising principle of the European Union and other federal organisations. We suggest that the following criteria might prove a useful starting point for subsequent discussion:
 - The action must be necessary because actions of Member Churches alone will not achieve the objectives of the action;
 - The action must bring added value over and above what could be achieved by individual Member Church action;
 - Decisions should be taken as closely as possible to Member Churches.
25. We hold that if properly adhered to these criteria would guard against the emergence of an agenda that overwhelms the organisation. The absence from the document of any strategic narrative or criteria against which the work might be evaluated and judged, merely invites Member Churches to add further areas to the wish list.
26. This unwieldy situation is compounded by the recognition that “past work experiences shows that such a work programme must remain sufficiently flexible to be able to react to new challenges arising in the churches, in society and in the political institutions”. There is little within the document to suggest, however, that CEC CSC has learnt from past work experiences. A cursory examination of this document and that presented to the Trondheim Assembly shows more continuity than change.
27. We recognise that attempts have been made to rationalise the work programme. Yet this rationalisation has been achieved through merging pieces of work rather than any conscious attempt to prioritise the work or contextualise the work within a broader strategic framework. This presentational rationalisation is then undone by CEC CSC’s inability to resist the temptation to add new pieces of work considered relevant, such as ‘Intercultural Dialogue’. We remain concerned, therefore, that the organisation risks repeating past mistakes by advocating an ever-expanding work programme. At a time when the resources at CEC CSC’s disposal are likely to contract, this can only diminish further its capacity and capability to respond to new challenges.
28. We are naturally sympathetic to the situation that CEC CSC finds itself in at this junction. The Lyon Assembly provides the Commissions of CEC with the legitimacy and authority to carry out its work for the next five years. It is important that it is responsive to both the needs of its Member Churches as well as developments in the major policy areas of the European institutions. It appears, however, that its strategy for securing this balancing act is to propose

a long list of thematic issues to satisfy Member Churches' agendas, but to keep these issues as vague and as undefined as possible.

29. The net result is that the document is imbued with a culture of creative ambiguity as to what the work might mean in practice. This provides CEC CSC with a degree of flexibility necessary to respond to external pressures, but it is achieved at the expense of loosening the lines of accountability between it and its Member Churches. We fear that in the end the document has aspirational but little practical purpose, other than to provide CEC CSC with a license to roam freely across the broadest of policy continuums.
30. As already noted, we believe that many of the criticisms levelled against this document originate with a lack of clarity and understanding regarding its primary aim and purpose. We appreciate the difficulties faced in producing a document of this nature, but it is no different to the five yearly strategic planning exercises that a number of Member Churches are charged to undertake. Unfortunately, based on the information provided we are not entirely convinced that CEC CSC understands the challenges of the future or that it has credible strategies in place to address them.
31. We suggest that the primary aim of this document should be to provide a strategic framework for CEC CSC's future work. This framework should set out what CEC CSC believes should be its 3 or 4 strategic objectives for the next 5 years and how it will endeavour to meet these expectations by 2015. CEC CSC should commit itself to producing an Annual Policy Strategy Paper setting out its priorities for the following year and how these priorities deliver the strategic objectives agreed by the Lyon Assembly. This Annual Policy Strategy Paper should form the basis for renewed discussion between CEC CSC and its Member Churches. The results of this consultation exercise should influence CEC CSC's Annual Work Programme, which fleshes out those priorities and provides detailed plans for the year ahead.
32. We believe that this approach would provide a higher level of transparency and openness than currently proposed by the draft work programme. We recognise that there are similarities between this process and the one envisaged by the CEC CSC document. The fundamental difference between the two, however, is that this recommendation, if adopted, would provide a strategic framework to structure and guide subsequent work.
33. An approach such as this would enable Member Churches to evaluate the progress that CEC CSC has made on an annual basis in meeting its strategic objectives. In turn, it would allow CEC CSC flexibility and space to make corrections when and if necessary. CEC CSC would therefore be better positioned to manage the resources at its disposal by delivering on a small number of agreed objectives, rather than finding these resources stretched beyond breaking point by finding itself held prisoner to ten thematic areas of work that have little or no strategic purpose. Taken together – Strategic Objectives 2009-2015, Annual Policy Strategy Paper and Annual Work Programme - this approach would offer greater strategic cohesion, even a convincing narrative to the work of CEC CSC that might demonstrate more

clearly the value of what it brings to its Member Churches and the legitimacy of decisions taken.

Towards a Strategic Framework 2009-2015: Called to one Hope in Christ

34. Central to this submission is the proposition that the jump from CEC CSC's mandate to its draft work programme is too severe and that what is missing is any evidence of strategic planning as to where CEC CSC should be going over the next 5 years. In order to determine where it is going, the organisation needs to know exactly where it stands, then determine where it wants to go and how it will get there. Put simply, strategic planning is an organisation's process of defining its strategy, or direction and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy, including its capital and people. It involves analysing what the situation is today, defining goals and objectives and mapping a route to achieving them.
35. The introductory comments to this submission have touched on some of the more pressing realities facing CEC today. It is evident that further situational analysis needs to be undertaken. It is hoped that the timing of the Lyon Assembly, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the founding of CEC, provides a prime opportunity to evaluate soberly and honestly the current situation and how it came about. We recognise that CEC is alert to this strategic deficiency as illustrated by the convening of a 'Future Conference' in Lyon, 15-21 July 2008. It is evident, however that where the Lyon Future Conference was found wanting was in providing a goal sequencing or a goal stairway to realise the Conference's more extreme long term goals.
36. What follows is one attempt to provide a strategic framework for the CEC CSC over the next five years. It is informed by our own understanding of the opportunities and threats of the external environment as well as the strengths and weaknesses of CEC CSC. The first two objectives are about CEC CSC engaging with Europe on behalf of and in the service of its Member Churches. The last two are about CEC CSC engaging with its Member Churches.

Strategic Objective 1: Developing CEC CSC as a EU and Pan European Public Affairs Resource for its Member Churches

37. A common theme to the draft work programme is the role of CEC CSC in monitoring the EU institutions and pan-European institutions and engaging with these institutions on behalf of the churches. With its office located opposite the Berlaymont, the headquarters of the European Commission in Brussels, and situated a short walk from the European Council and the European Parliament, CEC CSC is ideally placed to provide advice and support to its Member Churches on legislative issues of note and concern. CEC CSC needs to use its understanding of the European political system to offer political and public policy advice to its Member Churches. Keeping abreast of political developments in order to advise its members on possible responses to particular issues and concerns is vital to this role.

38. For many Member Churches being kept informed of legislative developments in Europe is a core priority. With over 67% of national legislation originating in Brussels, it is imperative that this dimension of CEC CSC's work is further developed and strengthened. The institutions of the EU are varied and complex, but significant decisions are made there every day. The flow of regulation from Brussels often develops at a bewildering speed and sometimes with little warning. A monitoring brief and appropriate engagement right from the outset, as proposals are first brought forward prior to decisions being made, is the best way to influence this process. Such early warning and participation in consultations can often avoid the need for more intense activity and emergency lobbying that are otherwise necessary in emerging crises.
39. CEC CSC is well placed to provide a whole range of public affairs services to better link its Member Churches with the decision-making centres of the European Union. It should build up contact with key stakeholders in the Commission, the Council and Parliament and it should use that influence to secure the best policy outcomes, long before regulation is finalised. It should support Member Churches in getting across their key messages to officials and MEPs; it should help Member Churches understand the complicated decision making and legislative processes that are the hallmark of the EU at work; and it should help Member Churches to map out the future regulatory agenda in the sectors that affect them.
40. By offering a regular and specialised monitoring service of the EU legislative process, CEC CSC should help ensure that its Member Churches are kept up to date with the latest developments, vital if policy making is to be informed, timely and effective. In those instances where there is a common and agreed position between Member Churches a case can be made for CEC CSC taking the lead on behalf of its members. In other instances where consensus is less forthcoming, or where a Member Church is particularly concerned or affected by a piece of legislation, CEC CSC needs to be willing to play a more supportive role by resourcing and facilitating the representation of its Member Churches.

Strategic Objective 2: Developing CEC CSC as a European Ecumenical Think Tank

41. A common theme to the working areas covered by the draft work programme is recognition that the work is underpinned by theological and ethical reflection. The draft work programme stresses, "that the CSC is not just another NGO in Brussels and Strasbourg. The CSC is a faith-based organisation in the service of its constituency. The work of the Commission is foremost theological work, starting from a faith-based ethics and guiding principle for all the Commission's work." Despite this emphasis, the theological and ethical reflection provided by CEC CSC appears lost within a competing mass of subsidiary objectives with the result that the full potential of CEC CSC as an analytical and research focused body is often lost.
42. Developing CEC CSC as the premiere source of ecumenical analysis, informed Christian debate and influential ideas on how to build a values based

Europe, should be a key strategic objective for the next 5 years. Greater emphasis needs to be given to CEC CSC undertaking independent and rigorous analysis with the aim of setting the agenda and shaping policy by encouraging new ideas and forward thinking in European affairs.

43. We believe that this strategic objective could be achieved in the following four ways:
 - by CEC CSC drawing on its membership to promote open as well as confidential debates about significant developments in European affairs and about the context and content of policy responses;
 - by producing independent and rigorous analysis of critical EU and pan-European challenges;
 - by offering new ideas to decision-makers and shapers on how these could best be tackled from the near to long term;
 - by disseminating its findings and views through a regular flow of publications and public events.
44. It is not the purpose of this submission to stipulate the specific research areas that CEC CSC should undertake. We suggest, however, that a legitimate case can be made for subordinating the working areas to specific programmes of activity. This would ensure a coherent approach and give CEC CSC the flexibility required to respond to fast moving developments on the European and global stage. One suggestion would be to organise the work under three flagship programmes: EU integration and citizenship; Europe's political economy; Europe in the world.
45. Each programme could then focus on a number of core themes, with fora, task forces and projects set up to explore issues of particular importance. The fora would provide a platform for discussion on topics that require ongoing debate, while task forces and projects (which have clearly defined timelines and aim to deliver specific outputs) would change over time to reflect developments in the external political and economic environment. The existing CEC CSC networks could be restructured in such a way as to become collaborative research networks involving the active participation of other highly reputable institutes and specialists drawn from the Member Churches.

Strategic Objective 3: Developing CEC CSC as a capacity-building resource for its Member Churches

46. A common theme emerging throughout the draft work programme is the need for CEC CSC to work with Member Churches. This may be expressed in terms of enabling shared reflection to take place, strengthening member engagement, providing specific support, or helping individual members to develop their own strategies; in whatever ways it is expressed, there is this recurring recognition that CEC CSC must continually listen and respond to those who are its primary stakeholders. Yet even when there is an expressed desire for genuine partnership, it is very easy for institutions to lose such connectedness as internal agendas take over – not least because there is considerable hard work involved in relating to a diverse base constituency. But, as noted above, both CEC and CEC CSC in particular will increasingly need to demonstrate the ability to meet the expectations of its members in

order to maintain trust and confidence. The covenant partnership needs to be renewed. This strategic requirement of working collaboratively with Member Churches is becoming ever more crucial, and must be a priority.

47. There is no doubt that CEC CSC is right to locate its secretariats in Brussels and Strasbourg. But it also needs to acknowledge the inherent dangers in doing so, and to indicate within any work programme how these are to be compensated for. The reality is that for many in Europe, including the churches, there appears to be a radical disconnect between Brussels and its institutions, and the peoples whom they are meant to serve. The lack of proper listening and responding is the source of much disillusionment. Thus, CEC CSC has the opportunity to develop a strategic framework that deliberately models alternative patterns of working, in which European ecumenical space is developed beyond the confines of Brussels, and capacity building the Member Churches to address European issues is seen as key.
48. What might this look like within any work programme? We would suggest that if this is recognised as a strategic objective, then it will shape identified outputs and outcomes of any programmes and projects pursued. There will be an intentional commitment to, for example: develop clear two-way methods of communicating regularly with Member Churches; facilitate opportunities for Member Churches to share experience and develop action plans on specific areas of engagement; acknowledge, recognise and draw upon the diverse views that exist amongst the different Church confessions within Europe; identify particular sources of experience and expertise within Member Churches and, as appropriate, allow these to be made available to all members of CEC. In such ways, the Member Churches would be helped towards a far greater ownership of the work of CEC CSC, and at the same time CEC CSC will no longer need to see itself as having to achieve an impossible list of goals, but rather as the catalyst that allows a much wider participation in the work programme.

Strategic Objective 4: Developing CEC CSC as a model for new organisational relationships.

49. If the three key strategic objectives explored above are to become central to the future work of CEC CSC, then we would propose that a fourth is needed: the renewing and transforming of the organisation. Since CEC CSC was established in 1999, it has undertaken highly significant work that has greatly enhanced the Christian contribution to the social, economic and political life of Europe. This deserves to be recognised and affirmed. But as we look towards the 13th CEC Assembly in Lyon, we are being challenged to reflect on a vision that will guide the work for the next twenty years, and we have stated above our belief that this requires a renewed relationship with the Member Churches, and that this should take place around certain key strategic objectives. In order to achieve such a vision, CEC CSC will need to work in new ways and this radical change of direction will require investment of time and energy.
50. CEC CSC has to deal with increasing diversity and complexity. The EU is now larger than ever and subject to deep and conflicting tensions. The

churches within Europe have differing approaches to such core issues as human rights. Major concerns such as migration and climate change place upon everyone immense challenges with few clear ways forward. The ecumenical vision is under strain, with honest divisions existing alongside the genuine hope of reconciliation. All this points to the importance of the strategic objectives we have identified. It points to the need for CEC CSC to be deeply engaged with EU and pan-European institutions, to provide the space needed for ecumenical thinking to go on around key complex issues, and to find new ways of listening to and engaging with the different realities faced by Member Churches. But if this is to happen, then there must be an intentional programme of renewing and transforming the organisation. It will not simply happen by making adjustments to present practices.

51. The requirement upon CEC CSC would be to examine anew its mandate, its core values, its methodologies and ways of working, its priorities, its stated objectives and outcomes. The challenge this would place on the staff should not be underestimated, as it would inevitably mean that certain past practices would cease and new patterns would emerge. Thus, this task of forming new models of organisational working should itself be identified as a strategic priority in order to ensure that it is given the required space and time to be carefully developed. We believe that such investment by the staff – supported as necessary by the Executive Committee and the CEC Central Committee – would be immensely beneficial in setting up the organisation to meet the challenges of the next twenty years.

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