Church & Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches

European Integration

WORK IN PROGRESS

A way forward?

Churches in Europe contributing to Europe's future: framework and issues

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Cover: Europa, Diptychon, acrylic on canvas, 1995 (author Jörg Frank)

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A guideline to the document

European integration is an important theme for the work of the Church and Society Commission of the CEC. Recent developments on the continent, such as: strengthening of the role of the European Union, its enlargement and impacts on society and deliberations about the future of Europe present constant challenges for the work of the churches. All these have an impact on the involvement of the churches in society, which belongs to the core self-understanding of churches' mission and witness.

The document 'European integration – a way forward?' is a response to the invitation of the CSC Executive Committee to consider, from a theological perspective, the challenges with which the churches are presented in the process of European integration and their deliberations about the Future of Europe. The document has been checked and discussed at various stages in the CSC Working Group on European Integration. The text presented reflects the richness and variety of backgrounds of the Working Group members.

European integration is a complex and dynamic process. Any text discussing it cannot be complete. There are a number of points, which can be clearly identified as being related to the integration process, and which are not addressed in the document. The emerging character of integration is a call for an open discussion in the broader society, as well as among the churches.

Churches are not only discussing various aspects of integration, they are in many ways significant contributors to it. This is one of the strong messages of the text. The document outlines concrete points of action which demonstrate that churches, in many respects, by their respective activities are not just passive observers, but are actors shaping the process. Church and Society Commission would welcome a broader discussion among churches in Europe on this point. Helpful background information for such a debate can be found on the CEC web site and in the information material about European issues presented there by the CSC.

There are several areas we would like to suggest for such a debate:

* European integration is a historical process shaping the continent since the middle of the last century. What do you see as the major challenge in the current stage of the process?

What kind of challenge is posed to the EU by the accession of Turkey and the Western Balkan countries?

* The text presents the views of church leaders of various church traditions. From their words, is clear that values are not abstract entities, but are very much dependent on the context. How do you see the diversity of opinion on values among church leaders?

* The text shows that integration is not a static and one-dimensional process. In reality, in Europe we can speak about different models of integration. What is your assessment of the situation of the coexistence of a variety of integration models? Is it more difficult for the citizens to identify with a Europe where different integration models are developing at the same time and expectations among Member States are becoming increasingly divergent? How do churches see their role in the current legitimacy crisis?

* The text presents culture as an integral part of the integration process. This recognition becomes increasingly a part of a wider European debate (see e.g. the question of integration of migrants). How do you deal with this at the national level?

* Impacts of the economic crisis increasingly influence the situation on the continent. The crisis puts the European economic and social model into a new context. What does it mean to speak in this context about solidarity? What forms should solidarity take at the European and national level?

We would like to encourage you to discuss the paper in your respective contexts. This may happen in various forms, such as seminars and workshops, in which churches would discuss the themes related to European integration and the Future of Europe, which would only strengthen recognition of the active role of churches in European society. Church and Society Commission would appreciate any indication of such an activity. Active participation in the debate along the lines of the questions outlined will help to focus the work of the churches at the European level. We will be pleased by any contribution to the debate.

Brussels, June 2009

Eine Leitlinie zu dem Dokument

Die europäische Integration ist für die Arbeit der Kommission Kirche und Gesellschaft (CSC) der KEK ein wichtiges Thema. Die jüngsten Entwicklungen in Europa, wie z.B.: die Stärkung der Rolle der Europäischen Union, ihre Erweiterung, so wie ihren Einfluss auf die Gesellschaft und die Verhandlungen über die Zukunft Europas stellen für die Arbeit der Kirchen eine ständige Herausforderung dar. All das hat Auswirkungen auf die gesellschaftliche Verantwortung der Kirchen, welche zum zentralen Selbstverständnis von Mission und Zeugnis der Kirchen gehört.

Das Dokument "Europäische Integration - ein Weg in die Zukunft" ist aus der Initiative des

Exekutivausschusses der CSC heraus entstanden. Es soll die Herausforderungen, mit denen die Kirchen im europäischen Integrationsprozess konfrontiert sind, so wie die Beratungen über die Zukunft Europas aus einer theologischen Perspektive prüfen. Das Dokument wurde durch die Arbeitsgruppe der CSC zur Europäischen Integration in den verschiedenen Phasen geprüft und diskutiert. Der Text spiegelt den Reichtum und die Vielfalt der Herkunft der Mitglieder der Arbeitsgruppe wieder.

Die europäische Integration ist ein komplexer und dynamischer Prozess. Kein Text, der sie behandelt, kann umfassend sein. Es gibt eine Reihe von Punkten, die eindeutig mit der Integration zusammen hängen und in diesem Text nicht behandelt werden. Die wachsende Bedeutung der Integration ist ein Aufruf für eine offene Diskussion sowohl zwischen den Kirchen, als auch in der Gesamtgesellschaft.

Kirchen diskutieren nicht nur die verschiedenen Aspekte der Integration, sie tragen in vielerlei Hinsicht Wesentliches dazu bei. Dies stellt der Text besonders heraus. Das Dokument nennt konkrete Maßnahmen, die zeigen, dass die Kirchen nicht nur passive Beobachter der Integration sind, sondern den Prozess durch ihre entsprechenden Aktionen aktiv mitgestalten. Die Kommission Kirche und Gesellschaft würde eine umfassende Diskussion zwischen den Kirchen in Europa zu diesem Punkt begrüßen. Nützliche Hintergrundsinformationen für diese Debatte sind auf der CEC-Website und in dem Info-Material zu europäischen Themen, die von der CSC angeboten werden, verfügbar.

Wir möchten u.a. folgende Bereiche zur Debatte stellen:

* Europäische Integration ist ein historischer Prozess der den Kontinent seit der Mitte des letzten Jahrhunderts gestaltet. Was sehen Sie als die größte Herausforderung in der aktuellen Phase des Prozesses? Welche Art von Herausforderung ergibt sich für die EU durch den Beitritt der Türkei und der Länder des westlichen Balkans?
* Der Text gibt die Ansichten kirchenleitender Persönlichkeiten aus verschiedenen kirchlichen Traditionen wider. Aus ihren Worten wird klar, dass Werte keine abstrakten Gebilde sind, sondern sehr von ihrem Kontext abhängig. Wie sehen Sie die Vielfalt der Meinungen zu Werten unter den kirchenleitenden Persönlichkeiten?

* Der Text zeigt, dass Integration kein statischer und eindimensionaler Prozess ist. In Wirklichkeit sprechen wir in Europa über verschiedene Modelle der Integration. Wie ist Ihre Einschätzung des Nebeneinander der verschiedenen Integrationsmodelle? Ist es für die Bürgerinnen und Bürger schwieriger, sich mit einem Europa zu identifizieren in dem sich verschiedene Modelle von Integration gleichzeitig entwickeln und die Erwartungen unter den Mitgliedstaaten zunehmend auseinander gehen? Wie sehen die Kirchen ihre Rolle in der aktuellen Legitimitätskrise?
* Der Text hält Kultur für einen integralen Bestandteil des Integrationsprozesses. Diese Sichtweise wird zunehmend Teil einer breiteren öffentlichen Debatte in Europa (z.B. die Frage der Integration von Migranten). Wie gehen Sie auf nationaler Ebene damit um?
* Die Wirtschaftskrise beeinflusst in zunehmenden Maße die Situation in Europa. Die Krise stellt das europäische Wirtschafts- und Sozialmodell in einen neuen Kontext. Was bedeutet es, in diesem Zusammenhang über Solidarität zu sprechen? Wie sollte Solidarität auf europäischer und nationaler Ebene aussehen?

Wir möchten Sie dazu anregen, das Papier in ihrem Umfeld zu diskutieren. Das kann auf verschiedenen Weisen geschehen, wie zum Beispiel in Seminaren und Workshops, in denen die Kirchen über die europäische Integration, die Zukunft Europas und damit zusammenhängende Themen diskutieren. Dies würde die Wahrnehmung der aktiven Rolle der Kirchen in der europäischen Gesellschaft stärken. Die Kommission für Kirche und Gesellschaft würde eine Rückmeldung über entsprechende Diskussionen und Aktivitäten sehr begrüßen. Eine aktive Debatte zu den erläuterten Fragen, wird den Kirchen helfen den Schwerpunkt ihrer Arbeit auf die europäische Ebene zu richten. Wir freuen uns über jeden Beitrag zu dieser Diskussion.

Brüssel, Juni 2009

Guide d'utilisation du document

L'intégration européenne constitue un thème important dans les activités de la Commission Eglise et Société de la KEK. Certains développements récents sur le continent, comme le renforcement du rôle de l'Union européenne, son élargissement et ses conséquences sur la société, ainsi que les délibérations sur l'avenir de l'Europe, représentent des défis permanents pour le travail des églises. Tout cela a un impact sur l'engagement des églises dans la société, engagement essentiel dans leur conception de leur mission et de leur témoignage.

Le document «L'intégration européenne – comment avancer? » est une réponse à l'invitation du Comité exécutif de la CES d'envisager sous un angle théologique les défis auxquels les églises sont confrontées dans le processus d'intégration européenne et dans leurs délibérations sur l'avenir de l'Europe. Le groupe de travail de la CES sur l'intégration européenne a examiné et discuté de ce document à divers stades de son élaboration. Le texte qui vous est présenté reflète la richesse et la diversité de la provenance des membres du groupe de travail.

L'intégration européenne est un processus complexe et dynamique. Aucun texte prétendant traiter ce sujet ne peut se prévaloir d'être exhaustif. Un certain nombre de points, pourtant clairement identifiés comme étant liés au processus d'intégration, ne sont pas abordés dans ce document. Le caractère émergent de l'intégration appelle à un débat ouvert dans la société plus large ainsi qu'au sein des églises.

Les églises ne se contentent pas de débattre des divers aspects de l'intégration; elles y contribuent aussi de manière significative et de diverses façons. C'est l'un des messages forts du texte. Ce document décrit des actions concrètes qui démontrent que les églises, à de nombreux égards, dans leurs activités respectives ne sont pas de simples observateurs passifs mais bien des acteurs impliqués dans l'élaboration de ce processus. La Commission Eglise et Société aimerait susciter au sein des églises d'Europe un débat plus large sur ce thème. Vous trouverez sur le site internet de la KEK de la documentation utile au débat ainsi que davantage d'informations sur les questions européennes dans la section CES de ce même site.

Voici quelques suggestions de sujets à débattre:

* L'intégration européenne est un processus historique qui façonne le continent depuis la moitié du siècle dernier. Selon vous, au stade actuel du processus, quel est le défi majeur ? Quel défi l'adhésion de la Turquie et des Etats de l'Ouest des Balkans représente-t-elle pour l'UE ?

* Ce texte présente les vues de dirigeants ecclésiastiques de diverses traditions religieuses. Il ressort clairement de leur discours que les valeurs ne sont pas des entités abstraites mais dépendent grandement du contexte. Comment analysez-vous la diversité d'opinion sur les valeurs parmi les dirigeants ecclésiastiques ?

* Ce texte montre que l'intégration n'est pas un processus statique ni unidimensionnel. En réalité, en Europe nous pouvons même parler de modèles d'intégration différents. Quelle est votre point de vue sur cette coexistence de différents modèles d'intégration? Est-il plus malaisé pour le citoyen de s'identifier à une Europe dans laquelle différents modèles d'intégration sont développés en même temps et où les attentes des Etats membres divergent toujours davantage? Comment les églises conçoivent-elles leur rôle dans la crise de légitimité actuelle?

* Ce texte présente la culture comme un élément constitutif du processus d'intégration. La reconnaissance de ce fait est de plus en plus présente dans le débat européen élargi (cf. la question de l'intégration des migrants). Comment abordez-vous cela au niveau national?

* Les conséquences de la crise économique se font sentir de manière croissante sur le continent. Cette crise place le modèle économique et social européen dans un contexte nouveau. Parler de solidarité dans un tel contexte, qu'est-ce que cela signifie? Quelles formes la solidarité devrait-elle prendre aux niveaux européen et national?

Nous souhaitons vous encourager à discuter de ce document dans vos contextes respectifs. Cela peut prendre des formes diverses, comme des séminaires ou des ateliers dans lesquels les églises débattraient de thèmes liés à l'intégration européenne et à l'avenir de l'Europe, renforçant par là-même la reconnaissance du rôle actif des églises dans la société européenne. La Commission Eglise et Société apprécierait d'être informée de vos activités dans ce domaine. Une participation active à ce débat s'inspirant des thèmes soulevés accroîtra la visibilité du travail des églises au niveau européen. Toute contribution à ce débat sera naturellement la bienvenue.

Bruxelles, juin 2009

Summary

This document sets out various perspectives for the integration process in Europe from the viewpoint of the member churches of the Conference of European Churches (CEC). The Church and Society Commission of CEC has the task of maintaining a dialogue with the European political institutions and of contributing to this dialogue from the viewpoint of Christian witness and the teaching of Christian theology and social ethics. The document contains analyses and comments, examines critical reactions, and proposes possible actions regarding the future of the integration process from the standpoint of churches within an overall vision for Europe.

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the current stage of the integration process in Europe. The integration process is described as the historical process that started after World War II. It explores different reasons for countries joining the Union and the nature of the tensions between the economic and political dimensions involved in the process. The background character of this process has remained the same: the European integration process goes beyond economy and politics, being a process underpinned by shared values. Human, ethical, and spiritual values are an inseparable part of the process, and it is therefore imperative that the churches are involved in the process. Its driving force has been from the very beginning the aim of bringing together the states and peoples of Europe. It is, therefore, a process which goes beyond the borders of the European Union and encompasses the whole continent. The subsections of Chapter 1 include discussion on:

- values behind political and economic integration in Europe
- motives and expectations
- challenges of EU expansion
- different models of integration
- culture as a factor in the integration process
- challenges of integration.

All these describe different facets of the process and indicate some challenges which Europe needs to face if it is to continue to grow together.

Chapters 2 and 3 are based on presentations of the personal experiences and reflections of various church leaders from different confessions across Eu-

rope, presented at the conference 'Values – Religion – Identity' in Brussels in December 2006.

In **Chapter 2**, there are three views presented, based on the experience of churches from the founding EU Member States, from the Member States joining the Union after overcoming the political division in Europe, and from a non-EU country.

Chapter 3 contains an outline of a vision for the Continent based on several aspects:

* basic values, strongly supported by the churches
* the idea of unity in diversity
* protection of the marginalised, the weak, and the excluded
* relation to migrants
* the need for dialogue between churches.

Elements of this vision offer a coherent picture of hopes and expectations of churches in Europe. It also highlights the challenge for the churches of an approach based on different experiences and traditions.

Chapter 4 offers reflections on some EU specific policies underpinning the integration process:

* Financial instruments of integration, such as the Common Agricultural Policy, the Structural and Cohesion Funds, and Research funds;
* Solidarity and social cohesion within the EU;
* The EU in relation to partners in the developing world, as an essential part of the EU policies closely linked with the integration process; and

* The EU initiative to address collectively the global challenge of climate change.

Chapter 5.1. is a presentation of the contributions of churches to the integration process, in particular as a broad expression of churches' understanding of diaconia (service). Churches are an integral part of European society and through their working structures they actively contribute to the shaping of communities at different levels. The chapter outlines different areas of the churches' activities:

* responding to the challenge of economy
* promoting community cohesion and enhancing community life
* renewing civil society through fostering equality and diversity and supporting active citizenship
* social integration and the work with migrant communities
  interreligious and interfaith dialogue
* responding to the challenges of climate change
* dialogue with political authorities.

The chapter outlines the way in which churches and their special ministries, as well as other religious communities, are engaged in and contributing to the wider society.

In **Chapter 5.2.** attention is drawn to the fact that European integration is not shaped on the high political level alone. European integration needs to overcome its technocratic frame. Churches and religious communities, in many places in Europe, contribute significant-

ly to the life of local communities. In this way they work with an idea of European integration on a level that brings it close to the day-to-day life of ordinary people.

The aim of this document is twofold:

to enable churches to engage more fully in the European process by understanding the integration process;
* to better understand and to discuss the contribution of the churches to the European community.

Kurzfassung

In diesem Dokument werden aus der Sicht der Mitgliedskirchen der Konferenz Europäischer Kirchen (KEK) verschiedene Perspektiven für die Europäische Integration dargelegt. Die Kommission für Kirche und Gesellschaft der KEK hat die Aufgabe, einen Dialog mit den politischen Institutionen in Europa zu führen und zu diesem Dialog aufgrund ihres christlichen Zeugnisses, so wie der christlichen Theologie und Sozialethik beizutragen. Das Dokument enthält Analysen und Kommentare, untersucht kritische Reaktionen, und schlägt mögliche Maßnahmen in Bezug auf die Zukunft der Integration Europas aus der Sicht der Kirchen innerhalb einer umfassenden Vision für Europa vor.

Kapitel 1 gibt einen Überblick über den aktuellen Stand des Integrationsprozesses in Europa. Der Integrationsprozess wird als historischer Prozess beschrieben, der nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg begann. Er untersucht die verschiedenen Gründe der beigetretenen Länder so wie die Art der Spannungen zwischen den wirtschaftlichen und politischen Dimensionen des Prozesses. Der Hintergrund dieses Prozesses ist nach wie vor der gleiche: Der Prozess der europäischen Integration geht über Wirtschaft und Politik hinaus, da dieser Prozess durch gemeinsame Werte getragen wird. Menschliche, ethische und spirituelle Werte sind ein untrennbarer Teil des Prozesses. Daher ist es zwingend erforderlich, dass die Kirchen in diesen Prozess einbezogen sind. Die treibende Kraft war von Anfang an das Ziel, Staaten und Völker in Europa einander näher zu bringen. Daher reicht dieser Prozess über die Grenzen der Europäischen Union hinaus und umfasst den gesamten Kontinent. Die Unterabschnitte des Kapitels 1 beinhalten Diskussionen über:

* Werte hinter der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Integration in Europa
* Motive und Erwartungen
* Herausforderungen der EU-Erweiterung
* Verschiedene Modelle der Integration
* Kultur als ein Faktor des Integrationsprozesses
* Herausforderungen der Integration

Alle diese Punkte beschreiben verschiedene Aspekte des Prozesses und zeigen einige der Herausforderungen auf, die Europa braucht, um weiter zusammenzuwachsen.

Kapitel 2 und 3 beruhen auf der Darstellung persönlicher Erfahrungen und Überlegungen von unterschiedlichen kirchenleitenden Persönlichkeiten verschiedener Konfessionen aus ganz Europa, welche auf der Konferenz, "Werte - Religion - Identität" in Brüssel im Dezember 2006 vorgestellt wurden.

In **Kapitel 2** werden drei Ansichten dargestellt, die auf den Erfahrungen von Mitgliedskirchen aus den Gründerstaaten der Europäischen Union beruhen, so wie Mitgliedstaaten, die der Union nach Überwindung der politischen Spaltung in Europa beitraten, als auch aus einem Nicht-EU-Land.

Kapitel 3 skizziert aufgrund verschiedener Aspekte eine Vision für Europa:
* Grundlegende Werte, stark unterstützt von den Kirchen
* Idee der Einheit in Vielfalt
* Schutz von Randgruppen, Schwachen und Ausgeschlossenen
* Beziehungen zu Migranten
* Notwendigkeit eines Dialogs zwischen den Kirchen.

Elemente dieser Vision bieten ein zusam-

menhängendes Bild von Hoffnungen und Erwartungen in den Kirchen Europas. Sie hebt die Herausforderung einer Annäherung von Kirchen aus verschiedenen Erfahrungen und Traditionen hervor.

Kapitel 4 bietet Überlegungen zu einigen bestimmten EU Politikfeldern, um den Integrationsprozess zu unterstützen:

* Finanzinstrumente der Integration, wie die gemeinsame Agrarpolitik, Struktur- und Kohäsionsfonds und Forschungsmittel
* Solidarität und sozialer Zusammenhalt innerhalb der EU
* Die Beziehungen der EU zu Partnern in Entwicklungsländern, als ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der EU-Politik steht in engem Zusammenhang mit dem Integrationsprozess
* Die EU-Initiative, gemeinsam die globalen Herausforderungen des Klimawandels anzugehen.

Kapitel 5.1 stellt Beiträge der Kirchen zum Integrationsprozess dar, insbesondere als Ausdruck des umfassenden kirchlichen Verständnisses von Diakonie als Dienst. Kirchen sind ein integraler Bestandteil der europäischen Gesellschaft und durch ihre Arbeitsstrukturen tragen sie aktiv zur Gestaltung des Gemeinwesens auf verschiedenen Ebenen bei. Dieses Kapitel behandelt die verschiedenen Bereiche kirchlicher Aktivitäten:

* Das Eingehen auf die Herausforderung durch die Wirtschaft
* Den Zusammenhalt der Gemeinschaft fördern und Bereicherung des gemeinschaftlichen Lebens

* Die Erneuerung der Zivilgesellschaft durch die Förderung von Gleichstellung und Vielfalt, so wie durch Unterstützung aktiven Gemeinsinnes

* Die soziale Integration und die Arbeit mit Migranten-Gemeinden
* Interreligiöser und interkonfessioneller Dialog
* Eingehen auf die Herausforderungen des Klimawandels
* Dialog mit politischen Behörden

Das Kapitel gibt einen Überblick, in welcher Art und Weise, sowohl Kirchen, mit ihren besonderen geistlichen Ämtern, als auch andere religiöse Gemeinschaften sich einbringen und einen Beitrag zur Gesamtgesellschaft leisten.

In **Kapitel 5.2.** wird darauf hingewiesen, dass die europäische Integration nicht allein auf hoher politischer Ebene gestaltet wird. Die europäische Integration muss ihren technokratischen Rahmen überwinden. An vielen Orten in Europa tragen Kirchen und religiöse Gemeinschaften erheblich zu dem Leben der lokalen Gemeinschaft bei. Auf diese Weise arbeiten sie mit der Idee der europäischen Integration auf einer Ebene, die diese näher an das tägliche Leben der Menschen bringt.

Hauptziele dieses Dokuments sind:

* Durch ein Verständnis des Integrationsprozesses die Kirchen dazu befähigen, sich stärker in den europäischen Integrationsprozess einzubringen.
* Den Beitrag der Kirchen zur Europäischen Gemeinschaft zu diskutieren und damit besser zu verstehen.

Résumé

Ce document présente différentes perspectives pour le processus d'intégration européenne du point de vue des églises membres de la Conférence des Eglises européennes (KEK). La Commission Eglise et Société de la KEK a pour tâche de maintenir le dialogue avec les institutions politiques européennes et de contribuer à ce dialogue sous l'angle du témoignage chrétien et de l'enseignement de la théologie et de l'éthique sociale chrétiennes. Ce document présente des analyses et commentaires, examine des critiques et propose des possibilités d'action concernant l'avenir du processus d'intégration du point de vue des églises dans le cadre d'une vision globale pour l'Europe.

Le **chapitre 1** présente un aperçu du stade actuel du processus d'intégration en Europe. Il décrit le processus d'intégration comme le pro-

cessus historique qui a débuté après la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale. Il explore les diverses raisons qui ont poussé les pays à adhérer ainsi que la nature des tensions entre les dimensions économiques et politiques impliquées dans le processus. La toile de fond du processus est restée la même : le processus d'intégration européenne, de par le fait qu'il est sous-tendu par des valeurs partagées, va au delà de l'économie et de la politique. Les valeurs humaines, éthiques et spirituelles sont indissociables de ce processus, et il est donc impératif que les églises soient impliquées dans le processus. Dès le départ, son élément moteur a été de rassembler les Etats et les peuples d'Europe. Il s'agit par conséquent d'un processus qui dépasse les frontières de l'Union européenne et englobe l'ensemble du continent. Les rubriques du chapitre 1 abordent les points suivants :

* les valeurs qui sous-tendent l'intégration politique et économique en Europe,
* les motivations et les attentes,
* les défis inhérents à l'expansion de l'Union,
* les divers modèles d'intégration,
* la culture comme facteur du processus d'intégration,
* les défis de l'intégration.

Tous ces aspects représentent diverses facettes du processus et mettent en évidence quelques-uns des défis auxquels l'Europe doit faire face si elle veut continuer à croître.

Les **chapitres 2 et 3** s'inspirent des expériences et réflexions personnelles présentées par des dirigeants ecclésiastiques de diverses confessions en Europe à l'occasion de la conférence « Valeurs – Religion – Identité » organisée à Bruxelles en décembre 2006.

Le **chapitre 2** expose trois visions basées sur l'expérience d'églises issues respectivement d'Etats fondateurs de l'Union, d'Etats ayant rejoint l'Union après la fin de la division politique en Europe, et de pays non-membres de l'Union.

Le **chapitre 3** présente un aperçu d'une vision pour le Continent basée sur plusieurs aspects :

* les valeurs de base, fermement soutenues par les églises,
* la notion de l'unité dans la diversité,

* la protection des marginaux, des plus faibles et des exclus,
* la relation aux migrants
* la nécessité de dialogue entre les églises.

Les éléments sur lesquels repose cette vision offrent une image cohérente des espoirs et attentes des églises en Europe. Elle met également en évidence le défi que représente pour les églises une démarche basée sur des expériences et traditions différentes.

Le **chapitre 4** offre des réflexions sur certaines politiques spécifiques de l'Union qui sous-tendent le processus d'intégration:

* les instruments financiers de l'intégration tels que la Politique Agricole Commune, les Fonds Structurels et de Cohésion, et les fonds alloués à la Recherche,
* la solidarité et la cohésion sociale au sein de l'UE,
* les relations de l'Union avec ses partenaires des pays en développement comme élément essentiel des politiques de l'Union étroitement liées au processus d'intégration, et
* l'initiative de l'Union d'aborder collectivement le défi global du changement climatique.

Le **chapitre 5.1** s'attèle à présenter les contributions des églises au processus d'intégration, en particulier la notion plus large de la compréhension de la diaconie (service). Les églises font partie intégrante de la société européenne et, à travers leurs structures de fonctionnement, contribuent activement à l'élaboration de communautés à divers niveaux. Ce chapitre présente un aperçu des divers domaines d'activité des églises :

* répondre au défi de l'économie,
* promouvoir la cohésion communautaire et améliorer la vie en communauté,
* renouveler la société civile en promouvant l'égalité et la diversité et en soutenant une citoyenneté active,
* favoriser l'intégration sociale et le travail avec les communautés de migrants,
* promouvoir le dialogue inter-religieux et le dialogue interconfessionnel,

* relever les défis posés par le changement climatique,
* dialoguer avec les autorités politiques.

Ce chapitre décrit la façon dont les églises et leurs ministères spécialisés, ainsi que d'autres communautés religieuses, sont engagées et contribuent ainsi à la société au sens large.

Le **chapitre 5.2** attire l'attention sur le fait que l'intégration européenne ne s'élabore pas seulement dans les hautes sphères politiques. L'intégration européenne a besoin de surmonter son cadre technocratique. En de nombreu-

ses régions d'Europe, les églises et communautés religieuses contribuent de manière significative à la vie des communautés locales. Elles oeuvrent ainsi avec une conception de l'intégration européenne à un niveau qui la rapproche de la vie quotidienne des gens ordinaires.

Ce document poursuit un double objectif :
* permettre aux églises de s'impliquer pleinement dans le processus européen grâce à une meilleure compréhension du processus d'intégration,
* mieux comprendre la contribution des églises à la communauté de l'Europe et en débattre.

Introduction

European integration is an important issue for the churches of Europe. Engagement in this process is an expression of a comprehensive understanding of the mission and witness of the church. The call to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to people cannot be separated from the churches' involvement in society. They are located in the world, the creation of God, in which they are required to contribute their views to an open debate in order to form a just, free, and democratic society where people can live with human dignity. The dialogue on aims, objectives, and the future perspectives of the European Union, has therefore been an important part of the agenda of the ecumenical community in Europe for several decades. Churches are active in Brussels and Strasbourg through the ecumenical offices of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CSC/ CEC)[1], together with the offices of a number of individual churches. These offices are seeking to maintain an active dialogue with the European political institutions.

Churches have been, since the inception of the process, driven by the conviction that the process of integration in Europe is not limited to the economic agenda. The primary motivation behind the churches' involvement is the theological understanding of engagement within God's creation, with consequences and benefits for the people in Europe and the participation of the European peoples in shaping a united continent. Therefore one aim of the churches' engagement with European integration is to supply it with a theologically-based ethical and anthropological perspective, which can provide criteria for the evaluation of European policies aimed at fostering integration. This perspective determines the framework for dialogue with the European institutions and shapes the churches' contribution to European integration.

Churches contribute to the debate about the place of values in Europe's future by their everyday work on many different levels. The churches in Europe represent a multifaceted network, which provides valuable and

[1] The predecessor of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CSC/ CEC) functioning until December 1998 and facilitating the communication between the churches in Europe and European political institutions, as well as organising a dialogue between them was the European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society (EECCS). In 1999 EECCS merged with the Conference of European Churches and was transformed into CSC/CEC.

long-lasting horizontal and vertical relationships. Well-established lines of communication within the ecumenical movement at grassroots, regional, national, and European level actively foster the European integration process. Speaking about Europe for the churches is neither an abstract nor purely academic exercise as it is part of their everyday life. Therefore the reason churches speak about values is because they are inextricably linked to building society and to developing community, a community of peoples and nations. The speaking and acting are practical steps to achieving 'unity in diversity'.

In the spirit of the Charta Oecumenica the churches are committed to work at dialogue on European integration.[2] Following this commitment they stand for a social Europe, a Europe with a human face. From this perspective it is obvious that European integration is an overarching issue affecting all the work undertaken by the CSC/CEC.

The following document is a successor to the previous document published in 2001 and reflects the current situation in the European integration process from the churches' and ecumenical perspectives. A significant part of that process leading to this document was the conference 'Values – Religion – Identity' held in Brussels in December 2006. The conference brought together church leaders from many member churches of the CEC. This was the first opportunity to speak about European integration at such a high level of ecumenical representation. The following text uses extensive contributions presented to that meeting as genuine expressions of the churches' reflection about European integration – concerns as well as joys, visions, and expectations. The quotations reflect diverse viewpoints related to the topic, arising from distinct experiences and theological traditions. They reflect the hopes of the churches of the CEC, as well as many individual Christians in Europe, in relating to the continuing process of European integration.

[2] Charta Oecumenica, was signed by the Presidents of CEC and CCEE in 2001, and later adopted by a significant number of churches in Europe as guidance for cooperation among churches of different confessions and different traditions, and as guidance for their common contribution to the development of European society.

1. Growing together in Europe

1.1. Values behind the political and economic integration in Europe

The integration process in the Western half of Europe after the end of World War II was a courageous and visionary effort to reconcile the arch-enemies, France and Germany, and to replace the law of force by the force of law and a vision of cooperation. It started in 1950 with a proposal by French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman. He proposed to turn the industries that are indispensable for making war into instruments for peace. The coal and steel industries of France and Germany were to be placed under a common High Authority. The West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, agreed and four other countries joined: Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg. The resulting European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC, Treaty of Paris, 1951) was without precedent in the history of Europe: states freely transferred part of their national sovereignty to a common legal authority that would make binding decisions. It was a supranational form of the rule of law.

Through different stages this revolutionary project, with 6 Member States, developed into what, today is the European Union, with 27 Member States and several others knocking on its door. The core values of this project were already mentioned in the Schuman plan of 1950: *peace, reconciliation, solidarity* and *justice*.[3] Commitment to these values does not make integration in Europe a Christian project. The Christian conviction of the 'founding fathers' played, however, a strong role in the motivation and shaping of the whole process.

It was an effort that went beyond reconciling states and aimed at reconciling the peoples of Europe. This can also be seen in the preamble of the Treaty of Rome (1957) that established the European Economic Community (successor of the ECSC): its first objective was "an ever closer union among the European peoples". This phrase has remained in all new treaties since. The human dimension of European integration was even made more explicit in statements by Jean Monnet, another founding father of European integration and architect of

[3] It is obvious that there were other motives in play as well. Still, the force of the ideals and of the individual statesmen believing in them should not be underestimated.

the Schuman plan. He emphasised in 1952: "We are uniting *people*".[4]

However, Monnet's human dimension was not widely followed. Fairly soon after the initial period, the debates started to focus on military, political and economic instruments of integration. The idea of a 'Europe of the people', whereby people meet and feel at home and have a sense of belonging to a 'community', was pushed aside; it regained more emphasis only in recent years. Growing 'euroscepticism' in recent years has become a strong impulse to recall the original vision and ideals. They also represent a significant challenge for the churches in Europe.

The emphasis on the human dimension of renewal in post-war Europe has deep roots in another European endeavour that is even older than the integration project that evolved into today's EU: the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe was established in 1949 (Treaty of London), with 10 Member States from Western Europe. Just like the EU it aimed at 'a greater unity among its members' and its statutes explicitly referred to "the ideals and principles, which are their common heritage". These values were clearly stated in the treaty of 1949. Membership was to be open to all European states that were committed to *the rule of law, democracy* and *fundamental rights and freedoms*.

However, the Council of Europe is quite different from the European Union. It cannot make and enforce decisions that used to be the prerogative of national governments. Still, it rises above national competences in the field of human rights. Already, in 1950, the European Convention on Human Rights was adopted, setting European standards for human rights (inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the UN). The European Court of Human Rights was set up to monitor compliance. Decisions of the court are binding on the Member States. Today both Member States and individuals can file complaints and thus this represents a form of the international rule of law[5].

Although values of peace, reconciliation and solidarity were at the core of European integration, the way of shaping joint European policies took a very specific direction. In the early 1950s the priority was with political union and common defence. Only after the so-called European Defence Community was voted down by the French Assembly in 1954 did the road became clearly economic. In 1957, the Treaties of Rome established the European Economic Community and Euratom. There have been many efforts since to revive the ideas of political union and military cooperation, but not until the Treaty of Maastricht (agreed in December 1991) did they find a place in the legal framework that, at the same time, changed the European Community into the European Union (EU) - a new name that expressed the wider ambitions.

In the meantime, NATO (established in 1949) had become the cornerstone of Western European defence.[6] Despite its

[4] "Nous ne coalisons pas des Etats, nous unissons des hommes", Washington, 30 April 1952.

[5] The fact that the Court is open to individual complaints brings the human rights' dimension of Europe closer to the citizens, but it also creates its own problems. By November 2008, more than 10,000 cases were pending, creating a waiting list of 6Weise, sowohl Kirchen, ½ years.

formal commitment to the values of *freedom, democracy and the rule of law,* it often gave priority to too narrowly looking at security interests and military solutions. Its parallel organisation during the Cold War was the Warsaw Pact established in 1955 and dissolved in 1991 as a result of the end of the Cold War.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has its origins in the negotiation forum ('Conference') that was created during the Cold War between East and West to discuss political/military and economic/environmental cooperation as well as 'the human dimension', with strong emphasis (on the part of the West) on human rights. The Helsinki Final Act (1975) inspired dissident groups in communist countries, like Charta 77 in Czechoslovakia. In 1990, shortly after the end of the Cold War, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe was signed. The name was changed from 'Conference' into 'Organisation' (1994). *Human rights,*

democracy and the rule of law are the core values of the Charter. Economic liberty, social justice and responsibility for the environment are included as well. The OSCE now has 54 Member States in Europe, Central Asia and North America. It is not a supranational organisation like the EU (its decisions are not binding), but it has an important task in monitoring human rights, conflict prevention and crisis management.

Circumstances on the continent after World War II did not give all countries a free choice. For decades the Eastern half of the continent was cut off from the integration processes occurring in the Western half of Europe. It was subject to quite a different political experiment in integration under the guidance of the Warsaw Pact and COMECON (Council for Mutual Economical Assistance, set up in 1949 as a response to OECD[7] and dissolved in 1991, and in a sense the communist economic parallel to the European Community).[8] The fall of the

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[6] Another factor in European integration was the Western European Union (WEU). This was established as a result of the failure of the European Defence Community in 1954, an undertaking by the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, West Germany and Italy. The WEU basically aimed at mutual defence against aggression, but it also wanted to strengthen economic recovery in Western Europe and promote West European unity and integration. In the structure of the EU, under the Amsterdam Treaty, the WEU was given an integral role in giving the EU an independent defence capability. In 2000 it was agreed to begin transferring the WEU functions to the

European Union, under its developing Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

[7] The origins of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) are in 1948 when an organisation was needed for the recovery of Europe and the supervision of the Marshall Plan aid. The Soviet Union rejected the Marshall Plan as an American attempt to control Europe and set up its own organisation for the part of Europe under its control.

[8] The Warsaw Pact, as well as COMECON, professed similar values to the Western European

integration process. The text of The Warsaw Security Pact adopted on 14 May 1955 speaks about *peace, security and cooperation* on safeguarding international peace and security. COMECON was developed as an instrument of *economic cooperation.* Since 1971, with the development and adoption of the Comprehensive Programme for the Further Extension and Improvement of Cooperation and the Further Development of Socialist Economic Integration by COMECON Member Countries, COMECON activities were officially termed *integration*. These words had, however, a different meaning from what they meant in the West.

Berlin Wall in 1989 was the clearest sign of the end of this communist attempt. Countries of Central and Eastern Europe were able to join Western organisations; this was a step which made the Western European integration project more European, although important parts of Europe still remain outside.

Three factors are important for any debate in the churches about the values underpinning European integration today. One is that, after 1945, the lessons of two World Wars had been learned. Unlike what happened after 1918, Europe was not reorganised on the basis of revenge or punishment. Enemies were reconciled by setting up a community that was both a community of values and a community of shared interests. This continues to be a unique effort that deserves to be cherished and defended against apathy or efforts to turn back the clock. However, a 'community' is never complete and certain values may need more emphasis than they have had in earlier phases.

Secondly, for most of the second half of the 20th Century, the success of this endeavour applied to the western half of Europe only. The reality in the eastern half was quite different. To a large extent the same words were used to express the underlying values of the communist world but, for most people, words like *peace* and *solidarity* became loaded with negative connotations because of their simplification and instrumentalisation by the communist regimes. Negative associations or simply indifference towards them may still hold today. It is necessary to recover these values from cynicism and meaninglessness as well as to rediscover their content in full complexity, avoiding narrow superficiality.

Thirdly, in a different way also in Western Europe, the reality of the values was and is not always what the words profess. As said above, NATO too often betrayed its own values, in particular when faced with colonialism and dictatorship among its own Member States. From the very beginning of the European integration project, churches have advocated a more social Europe, more solidarity with other parts of the world, more efforts for peace, more responsibility for the environment and future generations etc. Human dignity will always be threatened in new ways.

In conclusion, the values that are again emphasised in recent years in presenting the European Union as a community of values – cf. the Charter on Fundamental Rights (2000) and the Treaty of Lisbon (2007, not yet ratified) - are the same values that were at the root of the project in its beginning, shortly after the Second World War. We need to keep reminding ourselves of them and looking for their new relevance (and sometimes new meaning) in changing circumstances. But equally important is the challenge to guard them against new attacks and current indifference as a result of xenophobia and other forms of disrespect for human dignity in Europe, and from populist simplifications. A new challenge is to rethink the balance between fundamental rights such as religious freedom, freedom of expression, and non-discrimination. And, of course, the task remains of closely monitoring how all European institutions actually translate these values into policy and legislation.

1.2. Different motives and expectations

In the process leading from a 'Community' of 6 Member States to a 'Union' of 27, we can see quite different interests, motives and expectations. These differences also help to explain differences in current attitudes towards the EU.[9]

1951 and 1957:
A peace and reconciliation project

For the original six nations the integration project was undoubtedly a peace and reconciliation project. It included establishing a system of rule of law at a supranational level. After the courageous establishment of the ECSC in 1951, the core element of the Treaties of Rome of 1957, establishing Euratom and the European Economic Community (EEC), came the creation of a common market between the same 6 Member States: France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. Although the focus was on economic integration, the overall framework reached out beyond the economy: the preamble of 'Rome' called it the process of establishing 'an ever closer union.' The

transfer of sovereignty – perhaps better: pooling sovereignty – was seen most clearly in the decisive role of the Court of Justice in Luxembourg[10]. 'Rome 1957' has been rightfully celebrated 50 years later (in 2007) both by the Member States and by the churches in Europe, as the clearest signal after the Second World War that former enemies in Europe were determined to live in peace, not for their own benefit only but for the benefit of the world as well.

1973: Joining a market

When, in 1973, the UK, Ireland and Denmark joined the EEC[11], their motives were different. They joined a market. The UK had not been willing to transfer sovereignty in the early phase of European integration; it did not want to move beyond a free trade area. In 1959 it had created the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), together with a number of other states. However, recognising the success of the EEC, the UK applied for membership.[12] The interest of the UK in joining the EEC was more economic than political. The motives of the other two joining countries were most probably similar.[13]

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[9] For instance, in the early years, many in the UK saw joining the EEC as again giving up sovereignty after the loss of the UK's empire. On the other hand, for occupied West Germany joining the EEC was one the keys to regaining its statehood (the other key was joining NATO).

[10] This is the European institution that most embodies how, from the very beginning, the

process of European integration was the process of replacing the law of force by the force of law.

[11] Norway applied together with the UK, Ireland and Denmark but did not join the EEC, as a result of a "no" in a referendum in 1973, later followed by a second "no" in 1995.

[12] UK membership was opposed by French President Charles de

Gaulle. De Gaulle feared that through the UK, 'Europe' would become more 'Atlantic' and that the USA would get a greater say in Europe's policies.

[13] It should also be added today that 'London' may still regard the EU as essentially a 'common market', but in Scotland the political ideals of European integration have gained much more support.

1981 and 1986: Stabilising democracy in former dictatorships

In 1981, Greece joined, followed in 1986, by Portugal and Spain. This round of enlargement again had a very different background. At its core was the intention to stabilise democracies after three black pages in European history: Franco, Salazar, and the Greek colonels. There is no doubt that the membership of these three former dictatorships, including the economic resources that were invested, has contributed significantly to the stabilisation of their young democracies. And this was also intended.

1995: The end of neutralism

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was an unexpected moment in European history. The breakdown of communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe radically changed the course of history worldwide and also required radical rethinking of the goals and possibilities of European integration. An immediate result was the accession of the three countries in Europe that, during the Cold War, had been formally 'neutral': Sweden, Finland and Austria.[14] Although, for these countries, economic arguments may have been dominant (in terms of their standard of living and democratic institutions they already fully belonged to 'Western Europe'), their EU membership was a clear signal to the 'outside' world that the divisions of the Cold War were over.

[14] The neutrality of Switzerland was less related to the Cold War. Switzerland has not joined the EU as a result of referenda in 1992 and 2001.

[15] Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia (2004), and Bulgaria and Romania (2007). The former GDR had already become part of the EU through the unification of Germany in 1990 and the process of integration was of a more different character.

2004 and 2007: Overcoming the division of Europe

The largest challenge after 1989 was, without any doubt, overcoming the division of Europe after the Second World War. It was both a moral and a political challenge, requiring efforts at all levels of the societies involved. Moreover, it implied a challenge not only for the former communist countries to join a development that they were not able to participate in from the beginning, but also for the EU itself to become more European, rather than Western European. In 2004 and 2007 twelve new Member States joined the EU, ten of them from the former communist block.[15] The so-called Copenhagen criteria that were established 10 years earlier (in 1993) by the EU to have equal conditions for accession, referred not only to a competitive market economy and the ability and obligation to take on the *'acquis communitaire'*, but also to put more emphasis on democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for minorities.

Political, economic but also social transformation in former communist countries was a major component contributing to the integration process of the whole continent. An additional challenge in this new accession round is that after Greece three other predominantly Orthodox countries have joined the EU: Cyprus in 2004 and Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. On the part of the EU it requires a stronger acknowledgment of

cultural diversity as part of a common European heritage.

In this regard it has to be mentioned that, while countries and churches in the Eastern part of Europe could not participate directly in the process of European integration as it was developed in its Western part, there were some possibilities through which it was possible to develop a kind of a dialogue between European East and West. The Conference of European Churches (CEC) was founded in 1959, in the middle of the Cold War, as a bridge-building organisation between two parts of the politically divided continent and as an organisation through which at least some elements of pan-European solidarity could be exercised. The churches of the Central/Eastern European countries were able to enjoy, via CEC, some affinity with the work of the Council of Europe and could be involved in the monitoring activity of the Helsinki Process and, later, the work of OSCE. For many of these churches this was a highly appreciated and a sensibly used possibility.

1.3. EU enlargement: further challenges ahead

The EU sees its enlargement process as a success story. In its own words: "It has helped to overcome the division of Europe and contributed to peace and stability throughout the European continent. It has inspired reforms and has

16 European Council Conclusion, December 2006. See also a policy paper by the European Commission: 'Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2007-2008.' Italics added.

17 Council Conclusions on Enlargement, 8 and 9 December 2008, Brussels (External Relations Council meeting).

18 Id. Italics added.

19 The scope of the Customs Union covers trade in some specific areas, while some others like agriculture and steel products are regulated by separate preferential agreements.

consolidated common principles of *liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law* as well as the market economy".[16] Also, for the churches, there can be no doubt that the values discussed above have been served by the enlargement process.

The EU especially emphasises the importance of issues relating to the rule of law and good governance.[17] And its ambition to enlarge goes further. In future the enlargement process will continue to promote *peace, democracy and stability* on the continent[18]. The focus is on Turkey and the Western Balkans, where negotiations are underway. However, relations with non-candidate neighbouring countries, particularly in the East of Europe and in North Africa, require special attention as well.

Turkey

The relationship of the EU with Turkey is one of the greatest challenges for future EU development. The process started in 1959 with the Turkish application for associate membership in the European Economic Community (EEC). In 1963 the Association Agreement was signed. In 1987 Turkey applied for full membership. The customs union was established in 1995.[19] Turkey became a candidate country for EU membership in 1999. Accession negotiations then started in October 2005. Due to the Turkish

failure to apply the EU rules for the recognition of Cyprus, the European Council decided, in December 2006, that eight relevant chapters will not be opened and no chapter will be provisionally closed until Turkey has fulfilled its commitment to follow the outlined procedure. The accession negotiations with Turkey are expected to be a long and complicated process. Attention needs to be given to several crucial elements in it.

On the one hand there is, as a significant EU ambition, expansion of the area of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. At the current stage it is possible to observe serious efforts by the Turkish government to make substantial changes in the legal system of the country, adapting it in such a way that it could fulfil all required criteria. On the other hand, churches have raised questions about the adequacy of the adopted rules and the effectiveness of their implementation. The problem has been recognised, as well, in the progress reports prepared each year by the European Commission in monitoring the progress of the accession procedure. The question of full legal recognition of Christian (and other) minorities in Turkey and observance of human rights for all religious communities continue to be unresolved problems.[20]

The other side of the problem is with the EU itself. In the event of successful accession to the Union, Turkey would be the largest Union Member State in terms of population and, according to the birth rate prediction, in 2040 Turkey will exceed 100 million citizens. This will create a particular challenge for mastering the different histories, mentalities and traditions, as well as some of the crucial European policies aimed at achieving greater social cohesion in the Union.

The relationship between the EU and Turkey is often presented as a religious question. For most of the churches in Europe the problem does not lie in the idea of two different religions living together, as Christians and Muslims are able to live next to each other in peace and respect. The churches, however, raise the question of the present status of churches' minorities in Turkey, that of human rights, and also that of the effects of past history.[21] A declaration of shared political principles expressed at the verbal level is not sufficient.

In the accession process, it has become increasingly evident that secularism is not as strongly rooted in Turkish society as many believed and that religious motifs play a significant role in Turkish society and politics, undeniably a stronger role than was assumed at the beginning of the process.

Western Balkans
After the Balkan wars in the 1990s, the key challenge for the EU was to work on the values that shaped its own histo-

[20] The problem of human rights and religious freedom in Turkey is well documented. See e.g. European Commission, 'Turkey 2007 Progress Report', COM(2007) 663 final, as well as reports from previous years, the CEC/CSC public statement 'The Relationship of the EU to Turkey,' October 2004, *http://www.cec-kek.org/content/pr-cq0441e.shtml*, letters of the Ecumenical Patriarch addressed to the European Commission, as well as numerous other reports and documents dealing with the topic.

[21] See the CSC/CEC statement: 'Accession of Turkey to the EU is a matter of values, not religion', October 2004, *http://www.cec-kek. org/content/pr-cq0441e.shtml*.

ry: peace and reconciliation. This was and is even more difficult, because the EU itself was divided during these wars and failed to stop the atrocities.

Still, many positive things have happened. The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, which has fostered good relationships among neighbours and the security and stability of the region since 1999, encouraged countries in the region to cooperate in a number of areas. In 2008 the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) started to operate as the successor to the Stability Pact. Slovenia became an EU Member State in 2004. Accession negotiations with Croatia are well underway.[22] The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has been officially recognised as an EU candidate country, although the accession negotiations have not yet started. All other Balkan countries have already signed their partnership agreements with the EU. As the last progress reports of the European Commission indicated, the major problem for them is the weakness of their democratic structures and economies, as well as their capacity to negotiate.[23] The accession ambitions of Serbia are faced with the EU insistence on compliance with the requests of the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague. The other problem is the disunity of the EU in its attitude towards Kosovo.

Alongside the need to strengthen regional cooperation, improve the economic situation of individual countries,

[22] According to the latest evaluation report of the European Commission, the accession negotiations can be finished in 2009 and there are good perspectives that Croatia could join the Union soon afterwards: Commission of the European Communities, Croatia Progress Report 2008, COM(2008) 674.

[23] 2008 Progress reports: *http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008_en.htm*

and strengthen the structure of the internal governance in the region, there is the question of further improvement in relations with the EU. This has to go hand in hand with the elimination of travel restrictions for citizens of Balkan countries and the simplification of visa procedures. EU Balkan policy needs effectively to combine the 'hard measures' of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy with the aim of transforming the region into stable and peaceful democracies, with the 'soft measures' of bringing the region closer to the EU. The EU's ability to bring about change in the Balkans needs to be reassessed and the Europeanisation process reinvigorated. Developments in the Balkans will certainly test the EU's credibility and its capacity to fulfil expectations created in the region, and the promises which were given.

The possibility of further enlargement of the EU is subject to further changes in the EU legal framework. The Nice Treaty, the currently valid EU legal framework, does not allow expansion of the EU beyond 27 states. Given the non-ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and the continual wish of the EU to welcome into its midst new members, other legal mechanisms will need to be found to enable this to happen. However, problems with the Lisbon Treaty and the EU internal difficulties must not stop the EU in fulfilling its leadership position in the Balkans. The EU perspective for the Balkan region has to be upheld.

1.4. Different models of integration

In the early 1950s, when the European integration project was started, the basic values were held in common but the models of integration were highly contested. Tensions between market-directed and *dirigist* approaches, between the priority of economics and that of achieving political unity, and between federalist ideals and intergovernmental thinking, have become a permanent mark of the integration process. In December 1991, in the Treaty of Maastricht, there was a shift from an emphasis on economic integration, which was dominant for quite a significant period of time, towards the use of more political instruments. In a sense the single market, including a single currency (the Euro), concluded the phase of the dominance of economic integration. In Maastricht the decision was made to add more political dimensions to the integration project, especially in the fields of political and military cooperation and of justice and home affairs. However, it is not possible to organise these new tasks according to the same supranational ('communitarian') principles as the market. Moreover, other forms of cooperation have emerged in which not all Member States participate.

As a result, many different models of integration and cooperation have emerged, and the idea that there will ever be a single European integration model inside the Union has become an illusion. In addition, integration in Europe means much more than EU expansion. The EU policies encompass different spheres of cooperation, allowing EU member states to operate at various levels. There are different levels of interaction, cooperation and sharing. Integration in Europe is a process that, in different ways, covers the whole continent. There is a role for the EU in supporting these policies, not only in terms of EU internal matters but also in playing a proactive role in external policies directed to their closest neighbours.

Customs and trade

The harmonising of external tariffs was the first success of the European Economic Community. Agreement on a Customs Union represents a substantial achievement in the European integration process.[24] The Customs Union is a foundation of the European Union and an essential element in the functioning of the single market. It served as a step towards the creation of an internal market. The EU economy is the largest trading space, and a major trading partner, in the globe, constituting 19 % of global trade. The EU is the largest global exporter and second largest importer. Economic integration serves as a significant, although not an exclusive, component of the integration process in Europe.

Euro

Another significant factor contributing to integration is the creation of the Euro-zone. A common currency is now used in 16 EU Member States. All EU Member States joining the Union after 2004 have an obligation to introduce the Euro as soon as it is possible for them to

[24] See e.g. Resolution of the European Parliament of 19 June 2008 on the fortieth anniversary of the Customs Union.

do so.[25] The common currency is not only an integrating factor but is also a stabilising factor. After the recent global financial crisis it has become evident that it is an important factor for internal as well as international monetary stability. Shifts in public opinion in favour of the Euro following the crises in Denmark and Iceland were remarkable.

Schengen cooperation

A further important aspect that of police cooperation and border control can be found under the terms of the Schengen Agreement.[26] The main purpose of the Schengen rules is the abolition of physical borders between European countries, policy on the temporary entry of persons (including the Schengen Visa), the harmonisation of external border controls and cross-border police and judicial co-operation. The Schengen rules apply to a total of 25 states, 22 from the European Union, and 3 non-EU members (Iceland, Norway, and since December 2008, Switzerland).

The external borders of the Schengen zone, on the one hand, make travel within the EU substantially easier. On the other hand, the strengthening of the EU external border control and increased security concerns at the external EU borders, have an unjust impact on travellers coming to the EU for tourist, business, or personal reasons. The situation at the

[25] Out of 15 EU Member States who were Members before 2004, the UK, Denmark and Sweden are outside of the Euro-zone. Out of those joining the Union after 2004, Slovenia (2007), Cyprus and Malta (2008) and Slovakia (2009) are members of the Euro-zone.

[26] The term Schengen Agreement is used for two agreements concluded among European states in 1985 and 1990 which deal with the abolition of systematic border controls among the participating countries. By the Treaty of Amsterdam, the two agreements themselves and all decisions that have been enacted on their basis have been incorporated into the law of the European Union.

[27] The Treaty of Amsterdam was agreed in June 1997 and entered into force in May 1999.

EU- Ukraine border, as well as at other external borders of the EU, still needs to receive proper attention. In many respects the EU external borders become the new dividing lines in Europe. The dramatic fall in the number of travellers from Eastern Europe into the EU, after the extension of the Schengen zone into the new EU Member States, is a statistic that leads to a negative perception of the EU in those countries, as well as disrupting existing personal relationships across these new borders. There is an urgent need for an easing of the travel restrictions and improvement of visa facilities for the citizens of the EU's neighbouring countries. Churches have much to say in this area. New borders have introduced new divisions and new lines of separation for the work of ethnic and national churches in the region. New border regulations negatively influence both the neighbourhood policy and regional cooperation. The churches take much interest in both.

Freedom, Security and Justice

The Treaty of Amsterdam made Justice and Home Affairs a fundamental Treaty objective – "EU must be maintained and developed as an area of freedom, security and justice".[27] In concrete terms this has meant increased cooperation, for instance, on the free movement of people, customs arrangements, visa policy, immigration and asylum is-

sues, as well as crime prevention. As a consequence of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, the EU policy on Justice and Home Affairs became defensive: the fight against terrorism, against illegal migration and the management of external borders took priority on the agenda. During the last couple of years though, a slight move to a more positive approach could be seen.

Already today, many decisions in this field are made by qualified-majority and in cooperation between the Member States and the European Parliament (codecision). The Treaty of Lisbon would further strengthen these principles.

Common Foreign and Security Policy

In comparison to the areas mentioned above, EU Member States have allocated little military sovereignty to the EU. Decisions on military security remain in the hands of the national governments.[28] The definition of the EU's purpose for its military capabilities remained a sensitive issue until 11 September 2001, and the US response to it, triggered the debate. Terrorism made a common threat assessment necessary. The first European Security Strategy adopted in December 2003 identified, as the key threats to the EU, terrorism, state failure, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), regional conflicts and organised crime[29]. Terrorism also boosted European security

integration in another way. In the aftermath of the Madrid terror attacks of 11 March 2004, the EU Member States made a political commitment in the form of 'the solidarity clause', which affirmed that if a Member State was the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster, the others would come to their assistance. When the Treaty of Lisbon enters into force this article will become legally binding.

Despite the many examples of more integration in security, the process is far from being a *fait accompli*. There is clear resistance among the EU Member States to thinking 'European' when it comes to security. Even if the Treaty of Lisbon introduces a number of changes which further the creation of a common area of security, it is still regarded as an issue of national decision-making.

Concerns have been raised among the churches about the 'militarisation' of the EU and there has been a strong appeal for the Union to give priority to non-violent forms of conflict resolution and crisis management. In recent years EU has undertaken some twenty ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy) missions on three continents (Europe, Africa and Asia). The vast majority of the missions have been, or are, of a civilian nature (police, border, rule of law). While the EU does operate in a variety of ways (European Neighbourhood Pol-

[28] The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) gained its legal basis in the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 but the security and defence integration moved only slowly until the Franco-German Summit of St. Malo in 1998. Since then the EU has gradually developed its military and civilian capabilities, currently under Headline Goal 2010 and Civilian Headline Goal 2010. In practice, improvement of capabilities has meant work on equipment compatibility, command arrangements, coordination of procurement, research and training etc.

[29] The revision of the ESS in December 2008 remained along the same lines but added energy security and climate change as new threats.

icy, Development Aid, political dialogue with Third World countries etc.) to prevent conflicts, Member States are clearly more interested in defence co-operation. This does not necessarily mean more military activity by EU Member States overall, but rather increased co-ordination and joint action.

Relating to the developments in this policy area, the CSC/CEC consistently supports non-violent means for the resolution of conflicts. The CSC calls on the EU and its Member States to give non-violent forms of conflict resolution and crisis management a far higher priority - both financially and in terms of political commitment.[30]

Good neighbourhood policy

In the aftermath of the EU expansion in 2004, there was an emphasis put on the EU's relationship with its neighbours. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was established to avoid a new division of Europe, to improve relations with neighbours, and to strengthen cooperation and the support of democratic reform in these countries.[31] The scope of the ENP covers a wide range of areas, including cooperation on overcoming discrimination, en-

ergy and environmental policies, refugees, cultural exchange etc. It is an unavoidable task of the EU to revisit the neighbourhood policy in order to make it more flexible according to the situation of individual countries and to bring it up to the level of present needs. Churches and church-related organisations urge the EU to consult and involve civil society in the development of the ENP, as well as in its implementation and evaluation. Civil society should be a fully-fledged partner of the ENP. There are certain 'Common Values' which are declared to be at the heart of the ENP. These are the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights and democratisation, as well as core elements of EU external policies, such as sustainable development, poverty eradication and gender equality. These need to be highlighted as key requirements of a strengthened ENP in order to promote peace, stability and prosperity much more than in its early implementation.

In July 2008, at the Summit in Paris, the EU re-launched its Barcelona Process in the form of the Union for the Mediterranean.[32] The aim is to help build open societies and opportunities for further cooperation in the region. For the chur-

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[30] CSC/CEC calls for greater resources for civilian alternatives to military crisis intervention work, public statement, April 2008, *http://www.cec-kek.org/content/pr-cq0821e.shtml*.

[31] The European Neighbourhood Policy, as a specific policy area, covers a relationship with 16 neighbour countries in Europe, Middle East and North Africa. Not all EU neighbours are co-

vered by the scope of this policy. The most typical examples are Russia, with whom a special relationship is developing under the heading of 'strategic partnership', and the countries of the Western Balkans with another set of special partnership agreements. For further information, see: European Neighbourhood Policy, Strategy Paper, com(2004) 373 final.

[32] Barcelona Process is the name for the EU partnership programme with Southern Mediterranean states. It was launched in 1995 as a partnership programme with the main objectives of building together an area of peace, of promoting common security and shared prosperity.

ches in Europe the Mediterranean region has two major areas of concern: migration and the Middle East peace process. The CEC, together with its partner, the Middle East Council of Churches, contributes to the efforts in the region through the support of the peace and reconciliation process in the Middle East.[33]

The relationship with Russia, although not formally part of ENP, is one of strategic importance for the EU. This has been recognised in the special status which was given to the EU-Russia relationship at the political level. There are many areas that need to be addressed in this discussion. Along with political, economic, security and overall global concerns, attention needs to be given also to questions covering a range of issues which are often called 'soft': social, cultural and religious. Although we are different political entities, we live together on one continent and all of us bear responsibility for its future.

A specific example of this kind of cooperation is the EU relationship with Switzerland. Although not officially a member of the EU, the country is firmly linked to the Union by a number of bilateral agreements, constructed under the motto 'integration without accession'.

There are differing ways of cooperating at different levels and in different areas. All of them are contributing in their own way to the process of integration and growing together in Europe. Cooperation among European churches has a vital part to play. Christian ecumenical organisations transcend the geo-

[33] CEC Presidium calls for prayer and action for peace and reconciliation in Lebanon, public statement, May 2008, *http://www.cec-kek.org/content/pr-cq0829e.shtml*.

[34] 'Communication on a European agenda for culture in a globalising world', COM(2007) 242 final.

graphical and political borders. On many occasions the warmth of Christian solidarity has helped to overcome existing difficulties.

1.5. Culture as a factor of the integration process

Originally conceived as a Union of states, the EU is also increasingly becoming a Union of citizens, who form a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious society. Given this fact, the duty of the EU is to help Europe's various cultural, ethnic and religious communities to live in harmony and with mutual respect, and to behave within society in a constructive and productive way.

Intercultural dialogue has recently become one of the dynamically developing policy areas at the European political level. Although culture is one of those policy areas in which the EU Member States enjoy exclusive competencies, there is a growing expectation that the EU will take a lead in a number of processes relating to it. Increasingly there are questions about European identity and the management of cultural diversity, to give just two examples, coming from very different places on a broad spectrum, that fall under this agenda.

In May 2007 the European Commission adopted the Communication on European Culture.[34] The document states explicitly that culture is central to the European project and is a vital part of our vision for the future. It outlines strategic objectives to be pursued e.g.

promotion of cultural diversity, culture as the source of creativity and culture as an element of international policy.

In this paper there is an increasing recognition from the side of the EU institutions that: "Europe should be a synonym of openness, combining open mind and open heart. The former is about a rational approach, competence, and competitiveness. The latter is about empathy, sympathy and solidarity with others. ...We should never lose sight of these ultimate goals, because they give a sense of direction to our action, which is necessarily constrained by the pressing issues of the day. Unity needs a spiritual, value base".**35** The key element of the EU strategy is support for intercultural dialogue. In order to do that it needs, according to the European Commission, to be developed by means of a double strategy: firstly to understand diversity not as a threat but as an enrichment of society; and secondly, to promote strategies for living peacefully together.

The importance of intercultural dialogue was also upheld by the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue – 'Living Together as Equals in Dignity'.**36** The White Paper responds to an increasing demand to clarify how intercultural dialogue may help appreciate diversity while sustaining social cohesion. It seeks to provide a conceptual framework and a guide for policy-makers and practitioners. The paper underlines the way in which old approaches to the management of cultural diversity are no longer adequate and aims to come up with new approaches. In this respect, following the previous consultations, the paper goes beyond the concept of multiculturalism, describing it as a policy "having fostered communal segregation and mutual incomprehension". It pleads instead for a new 'interculturalist paradigm' which will focus on the individual, will put value on cultural diversity and, at the same time, add a new element, critical to integration and social cohesion, that of dialogue on the basis of equal dignity and shared values. The document recognises the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue and affirms that faith communities could promote and enhance that dialogue. A number of churches and church-related organisations, including CSC/CEC, contributed to the process leading to the adoption of the document.**37**

This was done on the basis of the Christian conviction that religion is an inseparable part of culture. Paul Tillich (1886-1965), one of the great protestant theologians of the 20th Century, went on to define culture as 'a function of life'. Religion, then, is a quality of culture, as well as a quality of human morality. It is obvious that, between culture and religion, there is a close causal and reciprocal relationship. From this perspective it is no surprise to see the close relationship between culture and religion as an inseparable element of any intercultural dialogue. Interfaith and intercultural

35 Jan Figel, the EU Commissioner for Education and Culture, speech at the 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly, Sibiu, September 2007.

36 Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers, COM(2008)30 final, 2 May 2008, *http://www.coe.int/t/cm/.*

37 CSC – CCME contribution to the Council of Europe process related to the White Paper on intercultural dialogue, January 2007.

dialogues are closely related. Religions, in their social dimensions, are considered as a part of civil society. It means they are part of public space and the public life of European society. Religion cannot be pushed out of the public arena. Intercultural dialogue has been recognised as an element in European integration; interfaith and interreligious dialogue need to be considered as well in this process.

It is encouraging that European institutions are increasingly open to accepting culture and religion as constructive components, contributing to the integration process in Europe. One danger to this process would be to see culture, from the European political perspective, only in its economic dimension, as a factor contributing to increasing the economic performance of the Union. It is important to recognise the various understandings of culture, not purely from an economic aspect but also from its symbolic, spiritual and social aspects.

Churches are among those who observe, with great suspicion, the process in which the formation of culture is increasingly transformed into the production of a commodity. Culture, identity and, indeed, religion are as much a part of European social fabric as economic components. On the other hand, they are of a different character and cannot simply be made subservient to the logic of the market. Although culture is, from the perspective of the EU institutions, increasingly considered an important element, contributing to the GDP growth of the EU, it operates, by its very nature, outside the realm of market mechanisms.

Another aspect of the approach to in-

tercultural dialogue, which has raised critical attention, is the claim it makes on the universality of values underpinning such a dialogue as is suggested by the Council of Europe approach. This may not be as widely held as the Council of Europe intended. A secular worldview must be one of the parties in intercultural dialogue rather than being viewed as a neutral platform for dialogue. Wider discussion in these areas is needed.

Recent initiatives of the EU and the Council of Europe underline that there is a place for European institutions in the conceptualisation and promotion of intercultural dialogue. On the other hand, activities in this policy area do not need to be centrally governed and organised e.g. social inclusion. Proper attention needs to be given to them at all levels of European formation. This corresponds with the conviction that integration in Europe needs to have its human dimension i.e. a human face. People, who, at the end of the day, are the final and only real subjects of integration, cannot be reduced merely to the level of producers of goods. Proactive policy by European institutions in these areas is needed.

The area of culture is one in which intensified cooperation between the EU and the Council of Europe may take place. Churches in Europe have to be active contributors to the discussion process organised by both the Council of Europe and the EU institutions. There is a positive role for churches in strengthening their own initiatives in actively seeking partners for interfaith and intercultural dialogue. In this respect,

what is needed from the side of churches, as well as other partners, are qualitatively new interfaith exchanges which go beyond mere declarations. These would be able effectively to address the difficult questions of the commonalities and differences in the understanding of values held by different religious communities.

1.6. Challenges of integration

For the Christian faith, human dignity does not derive from certain characteristics of a person or of human achievement but is understood, rather, to be bestowed on every human being by God. This is important to emphasise over and again. In times of rapid development and when events have, sometimes, unexpected long-term consequences, there is a need continually to check what has been achieved against the original expectations and, if necessary, to work on corrections. The original vision has to be submitted to a process of permanent re-creation in order to ensure its own vitality and avoid disintegration and degeneration. To this end there is a need to mention some developments in the current state of affairs in Europe that require special attention. The recent global financial crisis, and the need to counter increasingly frequent terrorist threats, have implications beyond the level of formulating practical policies of immediate response. They contribute equally to the identification of several challenges to Europe's future at a deeper spiritual level. The most significant challenges relating to the integration process in Europe

also challenge our understanding of freedom.

The value of freedom is one of the fundamental cornerstones of Western culture and the value structure of the European Union. The value of freedom in its four specific dimensions: free movement of goods, services, work force and capital, creates the Union's basic spiritual and legal frame of reference. In addition, freedom is the basic presupposition of the way in which individuals and communities act in their everyday lives. Changing the character of this value would have far reaching consequences.

Trust in unlimited freedom in the sphere of economy and finance has been dramatically shattered by the global financial crisis and, in addition, the terrorist attack in September 2001 had a lasting impact on attitudes to personal freedom. Together these highlight two areas in which the idea of freedom suffers the most critical pressure: firstly, the limitation of freedom in its economic aspects, characterised by an overstated emphasis on free trade and free economy as universal remedies for all the present problems of humankind and, secondly, the increasing tendency to allow security concerns to have precedence over fundamental personal freedoms.

Limits and extensions of freedom

Free movement of finance and capital was - until the recent global financial crisis, which was the deepest since the great depression in the 1930s - almost an unquestioned mantra of the global economy. The latest shocks in the glob-

al financial markets teach many lessons which will need to be learned as a new set of rules is adopted significantly to modify the current global economic structure. One of them is an acknowledgment of the profound vulnerability and fragility of any economy based on unlimited freedom. Enormous efficiency goes hand in hand with disturbing instability.

The challenge of the recent financial crisis lies only partly in the sudden discovery of a need for restrictions, a requirement to obey the rules and the need for a regulatory framework. That has already been recognised and, hopefully, will be followed by appropriate political decisions. The economic and financial crisis demonstrates in addition that our understanding of freedom requires the investment of deeper reflection and of significant modification.

These examples lead to the conclusion that unlimited freedom - freedom from constraints and all limitations - does not lead to the expected results. On the other hand, externally imposed limits and restrictions are not helpful either. A deeper challenge, therefore, to our understanding of freedom lies, probably, in the realisation that it needs not only to be restricted but also to be extended.

Freedom must not only be freedom from constraints, but proper freedom needs also to be freedom *for something*. The famous distinction between negative and positive freedom has to be fully taken into account in the further process of the Union's construction. Freedom needs to be more than free-

38 It was the English philosopher and historian, Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997), who recalled not only that freedom has its positive and negative form, but also a possibility of changing and transforming freedom.

dom of trade and economy; it also needs to take into account all the other complexities of society. Otherwise, even freedom can be transformed into its own opposites.[38] Governance needs to be based on a freedom that goes beyond its negative connotation and simplistic economic ideals of human existence. Only then can freedom be taken as a universal idea. Only then can the pursuit of freedom contribute to overcoming the existing, and increasingly deepening, gap between politics and ordinary citizens.

It has to be remembered, even within the Union, that there is the need for a freedom that is not based on pure economic interests. What is needed is a freedom combined with certain rules but, even more importantly, an intensified call for freedom that has a positive connotation.

Freedom and security
Difficulties with the complexities of the notion of freedom are also coming from another side. In the changing character of modern society and the latest developments after 11 September 2001, and the terror attacks in Madrid and London in particular, the protection of basic freedoms is more in question than at any time previously. The protection of these fundamental rights is not fully implemented. The danger of limiting freedom to its economic dimension, e.g. support of free trade, without its other necessary counterparts, became evident through the increasing restrictions placed on individual freedoms under

the banner of protecting national security. Limiting personal freedom, as the price for increased security, is part and parcel of the political response as the threat of terror attack becomes commonplace.

The European Union considers itself a place of freedom as well as of security. According to the Charter of Fundamental Rights: "Every person has a right to freedom and security". However, the terror attacks demonstrated clearly that the free and democratic order in Europe is vulnerable. The Union and its Member States are required to take measures to safeguard the collective need for protection as well as individual rights to security. This, however, must not be at the expense of guarantees of freedom. A secure, but not free, society would no longer comply with the principles of the European Union.

A state-like structure founded on the rule of law has various means to guarantee security. Police, prosecuting attorneys and – in certain fields – the secret services have to be provided with the means to prevent terrorist attacks and serious crime before they are carried out and, if necessary, to prosecute crime after the event. In order to achieve this goal it might – in exceptional circumstances – be necessary to curtail certain civil rights. Exceptions, however, must not become the rule and protection against terrorism must not become a pretext for limiting basic freedoms on a permanent basis.

The basis of an efficient defence against terrorism in Europe must be the principles of democracy and the rule of law in accordance with the universal standards of human rights, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the European Human Rights Convention. Certain rights are inviolable. Firstly, stands human dignity and, equally, the prohibition of torture. Furthermore, the principles of a state founded on the rule of law – in which is enshrined the state's monopoly of force, a clear separation of powers, with appropriate checks and balances, and the legitimacy of executive and judicative power – must not be questioned. Interference with individual rights such as the freedom of the press and of opinion, or the right of assembly, must not become routine but can be exercised only as an exception.[39]

Further elements safeguarding civil rights also need to be implemented in the field of security laws, such as the requirement to seek judicial permission for the secret procurement of information or the suspension of bills. These must include the requirement for parliamentary review. This is necessary because interference with civil rights can only be accepted as a last resort and then only when it is necessary to protect the security of the EU and its citizens.

The Christian churches acknowledge and support the particular importance given to the protection of freedom and security and their mutual dependence. Measures taken in this field, however, must never become a means to an end but must always keep their goal clearly

[39] Such inroads into fundamental rights can be justified in individual cases only when, in all Member States of the Union, the legitimacy of justice, of the prosecuting authorities and of the police, as well as the principles of fair trial and the independence of the courts, is fully guaranteed.

in view, i.e. to safeguard a free society in which its citizens may enjoy a self-determinant life forming a democratic society in solidarity. This goes hand in hand with the creation of a positive vision of freedom that takes human existence into account to its full extent and does not limit it to a producer/consumer pattern.

2. Experiences of the integration process in Europe

Accession to the European Union was, for each of its Member States, a decision of considerable importance. Different reasons for the decision, and different experiences with the integration process, are a part of European history of the last 50 years. Churches have accompanied this process since its beginning and it is important to recognise the journey many of the countries have made in order to arrive at the present situation, and the impact EU policies have had along the way, some of which still affect countries today.

Even now, when the European Union is a community of 27 Member States, covering, geographically, most of the continent, and close to 500 million citizens with different cultures, traditions and histories, it is vital to remember the original ethos of the European project. Churches are represented in most European societies and represent the grassroots communities. It is therefore obvious that people's differing experiences of the integration process in Europe have been reflected in respective statements of the individual churches and their leading representatives. The follow-

ing examples may not be taken as exhaustive. They do, however, offer an opportunity to see different experiences and different perceptions of the integration process in different parts of the continent. Although not exhaustive, these examples may be sufficiently representative for three very different groups of perceptions.

2.1. What is the meaning of the European integration process?

Western Europe has the longest experience of integration. The spiritual roots and value setting of the process touching on peace and reconciliation are deeply rooted here. These are linked with the mission of the church. For churches this aspect is of fundamental importance. This is underlined in a characteristic way in a statement of **Bishop Wolfgang Huber**:[40] "The history of the European Union is a history of reconciliation. The beginnings of an economic cooperation – first in the field of the coal and steel industry – were combined with the idea of creating a Europe of reconciliation and peace.

[40] Bishop Dr. Wolfgang Huber, Presiding Bishop of the Council, Protestant Church of Germany (EKD), a contribution to the conference Values – Religion – Identity, Brussels, 2006.

"This idea owes decisive impulses to the Christian faith and thereby to the Jewish Tradition. Christian engagement for peace derives from the craving for a time in which peace and justice kiss each other, as the Psalm says. This engagement helped break down the rule of revenge and overcame the so-called 'arch animosity' with the spirit of reconciliation. Thus a new start was made possible. My generation experienced this first hand. My classmates and I for example, who grew up in Southwest Germany after the war, were decidedly shaped by a school exchange with France. That is how the process of learning began. Thereby we learnt why a just peace was the common goal of Europe; we learnt why the just peace should replace the return to the doctrine of the just war.

"Within this European framework we recognised anew that Christian churches have to serve the theology of peace. Like my personal life story the biography of many European Christians has been shaped by this experience. It found its expression in the common championing of Justice, Peace and Creation".

Christian faith was a major factor in the period when the European community was being established. The founding fathers of the Union were committed Christians and their political activity was an expression of their faith. Christian tradition played a major role, not only in the last 2,000 years of Europe's history, but was also specifically reflected in the political construction of modern Europe.

One of the signs of the religious roots and the Christian imprint on the formation of the EU is the EU motto: *unity in diversity*. Originally used as a principal characteristic and driving force of the ecumenical movement, established in 1948 by the founding of the WCC, it was adopted as a motto for the political reconstruction of the continent. Bishop Huber continues: "In Europe community means union in diversity. Cultural and religious plurality determined Europe from the very beginning. By no means, however, has it always been recognised as an element of the European culture. Christianity has contributed essentially to the European plurality; the Christian churches know themselves to be further obliged to invest their share into the political culture of Europe. Therefore Europe's Christian dowry is an important pledge for the present and the future. Christian characteristics are essential foundations of political culture in the European Union as well. To bring this clearly to mind is one of our duties".

2.1. EU enlargement in Central and Eastern Europe

The accession of Central and Eastern European countries to the EU has been a milestone in EU history and in the unification of the continent. It has also been a significant occasion in the history of accessing countries. After decades of political dictatorship and economic mismanagement, accession to the EU was perceived as essential to put right historical injustices. EU membership has been welcomed and approved by the vast majority of the population in these countries. People in the new EU Member States had high expectations. In many

cases they expected that the situation in their country would improve with the accession negotiations, i.e. that this integration process would generate significant impetus to develop a democratic political culture, new infrastructure adapted to EU standards, with corruption curbed or abolished, health and education systems improved, environmental protection regulated and growing prosperity.

Many of these expectations were fulfilled. The standard of living of most citizens in these countries has been raised. They appreciate the ability to travel, the improving economic performance of their countries, the rising standard of living and the experience of newly gained freedom. At the same time they had the experience of second-class membership. The integration process is not just a one-way journey, with a simple accession of the East to the West, although it has involved accepting the political and economic model of Western Europe. It should have been a two-way process, recognising and respecting different ways of life, different traditions and cultures, but this was not as much the case as the new Member States would have wished. The Western fear of the East is the result of prejudices and false images that are still ongoing in many cases until today; N.B. the special arrangements for workers from the new EU countries.

Migrant labour, which started long before the accession of any Eastern European country into the EU, is a phenomenon of poverty. People from the new EU countries use their new freedom to travel to Western EU countries to find work and earn money, leaving behind gaps in the country they have left. Such a phenomenon of massive labour migration is not just a problem of the poor countries as it manifests itself in the anxiety of people in the receiving countries about their jobs and wage levels. Furthermore, poverty is not only the problem of the countries recently accessing the EU, as is demonstrated by the use of force and violence against women, compelled into prostitution and human trafficking. This affects Eastern European migrants and is happening daily in Western European cities.

EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007 was not only a substantial step to overcoming divisions in Europe. This enlargement revealed some of the hidden structural problems caused by the coexistence of nations with differing cultures, histories and traditions. **Bishop Gusztav Bölcskei,** from the Reformed Church in Hungary, expressed an opinion shared by many churches and by many individuals, when he said: "The European model has not become obsolete, although more and more people question the sustainability of its particular social and economic model in recent years amidst increasing competition... It has been clearly proven in recent times that citizens expect stronger social commitment from the European Union. The implementation of social tasks, however, is clearly the duty of Member States, and due to the subsidiarity principle, that of regions and settlements too. The EU has no competence in this area. The European Union may commit itself in the future to social issues, and the CEC should support this too. However, it is Member States that

have to elaborate and implement such issues. Through their role in education and social care, churches may improve Europe's role in social matters and may contribute to people considering the European Union as a community that deems social care an important issue".[41]

Uneasiness is not restricted to the level of questioning concrete and existing EU policies. What is felt is that something is missing. Bishop Bölcskei added: "There is mounting demand for the creation and strengthening of different forms of life as a community. For people, communities are places where they find security amidst uncertainty. People should construe the European Union as a particular type of community. In addition to the family, congregation, place of residence, nation and country, one should be able to view the European Union as an entity providing a particular community experience".

For the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the EU accession was a long expected and joyful moment. The joy and satisfaction gained from being members and citizens of the EU have not diminished since then. Statistical data confirm that it has retained popularity among the population of the new EU Member States. There is, however, also the other side of the coin. **Metropolitan Krystof** of the Orthodox Church in the Czech lands and Slovakia reminds us of the regrettable increasing selfishness, lack of solidarity and lack of understanding among people at the community level, and even within families.

[41] Bishop Dr. Gusztav Bölcskei, Presiding Bishop, the Reformed Church in Hungary, a contribution to the conference Values – Religion – Identity, Brussels, 2006.

[42] Metropolitan Krystof, Primate of the Orthodox Church in the Czech lands and Slovakia, a contribution to the conference Values – Religion – Identity, Brussels, 2006.

There is, furthermore, a growing misunderstanding and mistrust among people of their leaders and political institutions. "In some cases in Eastern and Central Europe, these developments can be described as an unwanted and paradoxical result of the newly-attained freedom which was, on the other hand, wanted, needed and necessary - if the life of people and their communities in all their aspects and on all levels, including the religious one, was to continue".[42]

The trend, though, is general and not restricted to the Central and Eastern European region. We may say, as does Metropolitan Krystof, "that in Europe we have accepted a happy economic paradigm. ...We must speak about the inner value of a man, created in God's image, which everybody receives from his Creator, instead of the value of a man as an economical unit. We should speak with people about spiritual wealth which can make them happy and which they can accumulate, instead of material wealth, which often leads them into emptiness and despair. We should be able to speak also about the value of sufficiency, instead of endless competition for more material goods and higher consumption. Last but not least, we should speak about the value of asceticism and the giving up of some material things, since this approach can save God's creation and the entire world from environmental suffering and destruction. We certainly should be able to offer the value of family, friendship and sharing, which are the va-

lues that can give a deeper meaning to people's lives and transcend them.

"In contemporary Europe - and not only in Europe - we can observe a serious crisis concerning the values which people follow in their life. People cannot find meaning in their life – they miss values, which would give meaning to their efforts and transcend them, even if their material status is improving. Many Europeans today miss values for which they would struggle and possibly even sacrifice their life for. ...The liberal approach can be sometimes problematic for those who try to represent revealed truth and values which are of Divine origin and which also have serious implications for the moral and ethical life of many individuals".

2.3. Europe is wider than the European Union

For churches in Europe the process of integration is much more than EU enlargement. In the understanding of the churches integration is, rather, a process of bridge-building between and among the peoples and nations of the continent. Although the EU has a certain responsibility for the whole continent, the EU is not identical with Europe. Relationships between the EU and non-EU countries are one of the successes of the European project. For the churches, the cultural and spiritual dimensions of this relationship are of crucial importance. The relationship to the EU's neighbours has not to be aimed solely at supporting the democratic framework in the countries of transition neighbouring the Union. Neither must it be restricted to supporting its own economic interest, as

is the case when we think of the EU's dependence on the supply of energy and commodities. The EU has a responsibility to avoid rebuilding a new 'iron curtain' on its eastern border and to foster a peaceful dialogue between peoples and nations, as well as between cultures inside and outside its own borders.

The relationship of the EU to the East of Europe is of crucial importance for the future of the continent. Overcoming past hostility by the demolition of the iron curtain, which happened in the case of those countries joining the EU, does not represent the whole story. It is one of the significant tasks of the EU to look for new relationships with its neighbours on its eastern border. Some of these have continuing ambitions to join the EU one day. One of the Union's priorities must be to encourage transparent and friendly policies towards its neighbours.

The theme of 'Europe' outside of the EU border must not be limited to political and economic considerations. Political frontiers are no longer a strict line of separation between 'here' and 'there.' The EU bears a great deal of responsibility for the life of people living outside its borders. At the same time, millions of citizens from other European countries are residing in the EU territory. They are part of their respective ethnic communities, follow specific cultural patterns and are committed to their own churches and religions. Their concerns need to be part of the European debate.

Bishop Hilarion of Vienna and Austria, the representative of the Russian Orthodox Church to the European institutions, clearly expressed some of the ex-

isting concerns when he said: "Liberal humanistic ideology insists upon the right of each individual to his or her own way of life, which extends insofar as it does not cause harm to others. From the viewpoint of humanistic morality the only limitation on human freedom is the freedom of other people. … Humanists acknowledge in word the right of the person to belong to any religion or belong to none at all, since it would not be politically correct to totally deny religion the right to exist. However, in practice humanism is inspired first and foremost by an anti-religious pathos and thus strives to weaken religion as much as possible, drive it into a ghetto, force it out of society and minimise its influence on people, especially on the youth. The secular, worldly, anti-church and anti-clerical orientation of modern humanism is obvious. It is precisely because the humanist ideology is acquiring increasingly clearer characteristics of militant secularism that the conflict between it and religion becomes ever more similar to a battle for survival – a battle not unto life, but unto death".

In spite of cultural and religious differences there is a need for dialogue. Bishop Hilarion notes that the "increasing recognition of the necessity of dialogue with churches and religious communities" is also spreading among liberal politicians who are coming to realise that conflict can arise when religious communities are deprived of their right to public self-expression. More and more politicians are seeking contact with religious leaders because they understand

[43] Bishop Hilarion of Vienna and Austria, the representative of the Russian Orthodox Church to the European institutions, a contribution to the conference Values – Religion – Identity, Brussels, 2006.

that the opinion of churches and religious communities should not be ignored during the process of elaborating those values which will serve as the foundation of the 'new world order'.[43]

As far as the dialogue of the churches with the European political institutions is concerned, Bishop Hilarion's observation that "the recognition of the fact that the 'universal values', on which the EU is founded, are inspired by the 'cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe' can open new possibilities for a dialogue between religion and secular liberal humanism. Today the world needs a serious and thoughtful dialogue, and not the continuation and deepening of the conflict between the religious and humanistic world views".

In the same way, there is a need for dialogue between churches and political institutions, and an increasing need for dialogue between European East and European West. Different cultures, traditions and histories, as well as different models of society in different parts of the continent, call for a thorough exchange of views through dialogue between East and West, and not only at the level of politicians. There needs to be a more structured dialogue at all levels, including the level of church relationships. This should go beyond the kind exchange of formalities. The dialogue needs to be a place for expressing mutual respect and needs to be able to address points of commonalities and differences whilst, at the same time, outlining a way to work together with a common responsibility for the whole continent.

3. Churches' vision of Europe's future

3.1. Value of integration and values determining integration

While different models of integration used by politics and economics serve as crucial instruments for achieving prosperity and well being, the churches are focusing on the quality of the relationships among the people of Europe within the integration process. Increasing interaction among people based on mutual recognition and respect, while at the same time strengthening and preserving their individual identities, is how the churches see the European integration process. In this sense, the whole project is highly relevant, not only for politics and economics, but also for society as a whole, including the churches. Integration in Europe, therefore, coincides with the churches' mission in the world – strengthening links between and among the peoples, nations and different levels of society, thereby building up a real community.

This focus makes clear that the social and human dimension needs to be an intrinsic part of the integration process in Europe. Something more than economic and political integration is needed. The social, cultural and spiritual di-

mensions, as well, are necessary for the success of the European project. This 'social' dimension is not restricted to the normal term 'social policies' and does not mean the transfer of national competencies in 'social issues' to the European political level. At stake is the question, 'What kind of economy and political structure do we need and want in Europe and how is the whole of society involved in generating the economic and political processes of the continent?'. It includes the question of whether competition, the basic principle of a successful economy, or power, influence and dominance, which govern political life, can be guiding principles in interpersonal relationships as well.

Following that aim, the churches' promotion of community life is not a 'private' activity of individual church members: the Gospel is for the world and to preach it is a public activity. This means that the service of the church is service to the world, to human beings. The involvement of the churches in society always focuses on the personal level, since this is the key to shaping society. The macro level, with its organised structures and institutions, is important, but at its core it depends on the individ-

uals who take responsibility in structures and institutions, and on those whom these structures and institutions should serve. Society, therefore, has structural and anti-structural elements, which are interwoven and mutually dependent. Recognition of this fact is why, for the churches, the question of values as guiding forces of integration in Europe is so fundamental.

Values offer normative principles of human behaviour. They offer a framework for a wide-ranging discussion whereby different streams and groups of society can search for a consensus. Since we live in a pluralistic society these values are not exclusively Christian. Nevertheless, the discussion about values, their meaning, role and function, is an important and unavoidable element of social formation This is one of the reasons why the churches put such strong emphasis on the discussion of values in the context of the European integration process and why they want to contribute actively to the debate about the fundamental documents and Treaties of the European Union. And we are convinced that the values deriving from our faith can provide guidelines to form a just and free society.

There may be some different nuances between various Church traditions and perspectives. However, the Christian value structure has three preconditions. They are the foundation of the whole value construction:

- ☀ life – the basic precondition of all human activity
- ☀ dignity – as an expression of human

beings as the bearer of life created in God's image and likeness (e.g. Genesis 1:27)
- ☀ love – as a precondition and aim of inter-relationship between human individuals.[44]

From these preconditions derive all other values that offer ethical direction for individuals and society.

The recognition of a values-based European Community was incorporated from the inception of the European integration process. Already, in 1948, Winston Churchill, while outlining the future perspectives of Europe, emphasised this: "The movement for European unity must be a positive force deriving its strength from our sense of common spiritual values. It is a dynamic expression of democratic faith based upon moral conceptions and inspired by a sense of mission".[45] These convictions found their expression in the Union's founding documents and were intensively discussed also in the process leading to the recent efforts to secure an EU Reform Treaty. This Treaty, signed in Lisbon in December 2007, clearly states that the European Union is based on shared values. The most fundamental – also for the churches – are respect for human dignity, liberty, peace, equality, justice, solidarity and respect for human rights. This emphasising of values was one of the reasons why the CSC/CEC and a number of individual churches in Europe supported the conception of the Treaty. Shared vision, objectives and values, which go beyond

[44] Schweizer Evangelischer Kirchenbund, Grundwerte aus evangelischer Sicht, Bern, 2007.

[45] Winston Churchill, at the first public debate of the Congress of Europe, the Hague, May 1948.

the sphere of economics, are of substantial importance.

A search for common European values is indeed the road which leads to goals that cannot be reached merely by economic growth, increased competitiveness and institutional reforms. Values bring enthusiasm, spirit and vision to the European project and at the same time bring the Union closer to its citizens. Common values are equally important in the enlarged Union today and will be so even with regard to future enlargements. As the Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn has stated, fundamentally, *values* make the borders of Europe.

3.2. Christian contribution to the European integration process

The formation of Europe as an integrated geographic and cultural area is inseparable from the development of the Christian church in Europe. From the Middle Ages onwards, Christianity contributed substantially to the integration of Europe. Through mission and 'Christianisation' it gave the various tribes of Western Europe, which hitherto interacted only to a limited extent, a religious and cultural common ground. Monasteries and church communities contributed in many respects by aiding the development of a spiritual ethos of Europe, as well as playing a pioneering role in shaping areas of daily life. Through the foundation of universities, originally theological institutions, in many European cities, an important platform for scholarly exchange between different areas of Europe was created. The use of Latin as the language of church and scholarship enabled an interaction that broke through the confines of political borders and fostered the development of a class of academics in Europe. They travelled to universities all over Europe and met at the great Councils of the Church. While political borders frequently changed, and land and people were time and again allocated to different rulers, their religious affairs were hardly affected. Hence, through all the ups and downs of medieval history, Christianity remained the firm foundation of the lives of the people.

The integrating effect of Christianity went beyond Western and Central Europe. Eastern and Western Christianity, in spite of their theological differences, created a space for mutual exchange at the theological level and also, thereby, a platform for a broader interaction between European East and West. On many occasions, therefore, the Christian faith united Europe and also welded it together against common enemies. On the darker side, we also look with horror at some events, such as the Crusades of the 11th to the 13th Century, or the Ottoman Wars from the 15th to the 17th Century, and European mainline churches have long abandoned the idea of war in the name of God. Nonetheless, they show the effect Christian faith and the Christian church have had on Europe.

Christianity, however, did not always provide a guarantee for a homogenous, harmonious and prosperous continent. There is no doubt that, in the course of history, European empires, often under the banner of Christendom, used Christian values as pretexts for military actions, sometimes with the most devastating effects on the people of Europe,

as the example of the Thirty Years' War clearly shows. The religious wars and the inquisition are black pages in European history.

In modern times the individual faith of European Christians became an increasingly important factor, and this often led Christians to act in ways that the churches as institutions did only later. During the Holocaust, the greatest catastrophe in modern European history and a time when the institutionalised churches lacked the courage to object to the dehumanising policies and killings taking place under the occupation of National Socialist Germany, individuals in Germany, as well as other countries, bore witness to their Christian faith and engaged in the resistance against fascism. The Barmen Confession has been, and will remain, the way to be followed by Christians in all dictatorships.

When, after the end of the Second World War, communism, another totalitarian ideology, spread over all of Europe, although many churches and their representatives were not in a position to draw attention to its dehumanising character, a number of Christians again severely opposed it and, at the end of the 20th Century, contributed to its collapse. Communism, like fascism, was an ideology that fundamentally disregarded human values and human rights. Both ideologies aimed at overcoming Europe through the use of physical force. For that reason they attacked Christian values in general, and people and institutions representing these values, in particular. While fascism lasted for over a decade, communism ruled half of Europe for 45 years and, in the case of Rus-sia, for 70 years. During that time it was not possible to develop a common vision of Europe. Instead, an artificial image of animosity dominated Europe for long decades. In the atmosphere of hatred, suspicion and hostility, churches and their related organisations provided the means for crossing over many artificial divisions and for redrawing the picture of society.

In the Western part of Europe after the end of the Second World War, individual Christians, together with a number of churches acting as institutions, conceded their failure during the time of fascism and actively supported the process of European integration in many respects. This was done on the principle that integration was based on the concept of the value of every human being and the human rights inherent in every person. These are the essence of Christian beliefs. Therefore the process of integration, which affirms these values and rights, merits the involvement and participation of the Christian churches. This does not mean, however, that churches support all the policies and political decisions attached to the process. Their support is qualified and measured by their own criteria. The integration of Europe which, in its Western parts took place after the Second World War and was extended to its Central and Eastern parts after the end of the Cold War, proved to be a successful project. Churches have continuously, though critically, accompanied the integration process. This has helped to fulfil the vision of a Europe where basic human values are respected and where people can live in lasting peace.

3.3. Why do we need a vision for the EU?

In November 1990, in a meeting between church leaders and the European Commission, Jacques Delors, then President of the European Commission, called upon the churches to contribute to "the heart and soul of Europe". In another meeting, shortly afterwards, he repeated his appeal: "Believe me; we will not succeed with Europe solely on the basis of legal expertise or economic ability. If we do not succeed in giving Europe a soul in the next ten years, give it a spirit and a meaning, then we failed".[46] European integration has moved ahead considerably since then. But if we today consider his words honestly, we must recognise that - even though more than a decade lies between us and the date of this statement – it is still not easy to speak of the soul of the European process. The challenges of the European integration process are no less now than at the beginning of the decade in which it gained major momentum.

Christianity profoundly influenced the spiritual, cultural and social identity of Europe. And it is also a fact that the Christian faith was the main source of inspiration for the pioneers of the European Union, such as Alcide de Gasperi (1881-1954), Robert Schuman (1886-1963) and Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967) in the early 1950s. Yet, in the intensive discussions relating to the latest EU enlargement, and afterwards about the overall theme of the future of the Union, the main emphases have been almost exclusively on economic and political factors. Very little has been said about future social cohesion, about the organic unity of the human race and the importance of this unity for developments across the continent.

Values, aims and objectives of the Union are themes of utmost importance for the churches in Europe. **Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont**, President of the CEC, underlined precisely this self-understanding and the task of the community of churches in Europe: "As CEC and Church and Society Commission, we have already stressed that Europe must be a community of values much more than an economic space. We insisted on respect for human rights and the social dimension being an integral part of any European policy. We also insisted, as CEC and Church and Society Commission, on the fact that Europe is much wider than only the countries, which constitute the European Union. That is why we have never accepted that the process of European integration should only be identified with the enlargement of the European Union. Many countries will not become members of the European Union in the near future. But this raises the question of fair participation for relations beyond the borders of the European Union, the issue of respect for other cultures and traditions in Europe. We cannot limit ourselves to a narrow view on only the European Union countries. CEC and Church and Society Commis-

[46] Delors' appeal has been the start of a long process of dialogue including meetings of different sorts between the churches and European institutions, especially the EU. The overview of various forms of dialogue between churches and European institutions is presented in: Laurens Hogebrink, 'Eighteen Years of Dialogue between Churches and the EU, Survey 1990-2008', which is going to be published in 2009.

sion have always stressed that Europe today must be a Europe of people".[47]

The task of the churches is obviously not limited to the proclamation of values. Values are effective only if they are translated into policies and into the everyday fabric of life. The values dimension is not, and must not be, a mere addendum to core European policies, but rather the foundation and background of these policies. This is the only way for creating a trust between policies and everyday life, between political institutions and the people. In the words of **Archbishop Jukka Paarma** of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland: "The European Union is not only an economic union focusing on growth and competitiveness, but indeed a community based on shared values. These common values should be promoted within and translated into all different policies and guide the actions of the EU, for example by working on sustainable economic growth and social justice, offering equal opportunities to everyone; by working on a peaceful, secure society; by working on a world in which freedom, peace and prosperity are within the reach of as many people as possible. Values are the road, which leads to what cannot be reached by way of the economy and institutions alone. Values bring enthusiasm, spirit and visions to the European project... By enhancing the value dimension of the Union, European citizens would also probably feel closer to the Union".[48]

[47] Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont, President of the CEC, a contribution to the conference Values – Religion – Identity, Brussels, 2006.

[48] Archbishop Jukka Paarma, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, a contribution to the conference Values – Religion – Identity, Brussels, 2006.

3.4. European values and the role of the churches in the Europe of the 21st Century

The contribution of Christianity to the history, culture and identity of Europe is undeniable. But it is not unique. There are several other influences that have left an imprint on the development of the continent as well. To speak about Christian values in Europe requires us to recognise different emphases and different formulations. In spite of diversity, there is an underlying unity in basic values that are characteristic of Christianity and its impact on the shaping of Europe.

The Christian contribution to the shaping of today's Europe has to be seen in relation to two other major influences on the European way of life: ancient Greek and Roman legacies. Ancient Greek thought propounded the idea of democracy, freedom and beauty; the Roman tradition bequeathed to us the principles of organisation, administration and justice; and Judeo-Christian tradition brought spirituality, by emphasising the power of faith, justice, forgiveness and love. Non-Christian religions have played an important role in Europe for centuries. From among all religious influences, though, it was Christianity that provided those vital elements which gave European culture a distinctive character and which are still relevant today.

The Christian contribution to value setting in Europe, as expressed hereun-

der, is a varied mix of different contributions, given by leading representatives of different Church traditions, backgrounds and collective experiences. They, together, outline a harmony of Christian values which then feeds into the joint vision and to common action.

Archbishop Anastasios, Primate of the Orthodox Church of Albania, emphasises that "the historic duty of the churches of Europe is to continue to make an essential contribution to the support of the basic European values. These are:

* *The dignity of each human person* founded on the belief that a man or woman is a sacred person, a creation of the personal God.
* *The respect for every human person*, irrespective of origin, race, education or religious convictions, as well as the guaranteeing of their liberty. Dignity, liberty and responsibility are in a relationship of mutual interaction.
* *The right to refer to the sacred, the holy, the personal God*, and to express their faith in public.
* The Biblical belief about *marriage and the family* shaped the principles concerning monogamy, which was the cell of European society… it stressed and inspired fidelity and personal restraint as a fundamental element in its resilience. If that basic structure is shaken, society will go into decline.
* All Europeans should be *responsible citizens* of their countries and of Europe in general.
* Of particular topical importance is the *ascetic life*, which has been pre-

served most purely in Eastern Christendom".

According to Archbishop Anastasios, "the most monumental contribution of the Christian faith has been the *principle of love* – in all the breadth, depth and height, which has been given to its meaning – and the stress on the value of forgiveness. And, at the same time, the inspiration and strength, which the Church has provided for millions of the faithful in their experience of life. Without love, European culture loses its vitality, its power and beauty.

"In the new cultural tensions and conflicts, it is time for Europe to rediscover its spiritual foundation, its Christian roots. And to allow its sap to flow freely to revitalise its dormant spiritual life. Revitalisation not marginalisation of the Christian faith, experiencing on a daily basis its essentials, its power and its beauty, will assist European societies to retain their identity and to develop the values which make up the core of European culture, as well as its creative dynamism".[49]

For the human predicament there is no human resolution. The human predicament needs divine resolution. This resolution is called *the good news*, *the Gospel.* This ultimate good news came to the world in Jesus Christ and was brought to Europe by Apostle Paul. It gave new impetus to Europe through the 16th Century Reformation and this radical good news in words and deeds should continue to be proclaimed and manifested by the churches in Europe.

[49] Archbishop Dr. Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania, a contribution to the conference Values – Religion – Identity, Brussels, 2006.

Rev. Thomas Wipf, President of the Council of the Swiss Protestant Federation and of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, underlines another component of the European values setting and its Christian ingredient: "Values are no static entities but need to respond to problems that we are facing today as for example the ecological crisis. They also need to be seen in their unity: Freedom does not degenerate into extreme individualism, when it is combined with responsibility and geared towards community life. Peace and unity cannot simply be imposed from above, but require empowerment and participation of citizens in decision making processes. Finally, such fundamental values are valid for Europe as a whole. In this sense the churches of Europe can be reliable partners of all European societies and their political institutions, within and beyond the European Union.

"Our societies are divided into rich and poor, immigrants and native citizens, into different ethnic groups and into believers of various confessions and religions. Therefore the value of reconciliation is a corner stone of the contemporary European Union. Here, churches are concerned at their essence since the church herself owes her very existence to the act of reconciliation. This reconciliation is primarily not reconciliation between human beings but reconciliation with God. The church is rooted in the word of reconciliation of the triune God addressed by God in Jesus Christ to all human beings. Her specific mission/mandate is to address - in spite of her imperfection - the appeal to human beings in the name of Christ: 'Be reconciled to God' (2 Cor. 5:20)".**50**

Referring to the European Union's vision of 'unity in diversity', Thomas Wipf emphasises that "the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) calls its understanding of unity as *the unity in reconciled diversity*. It is in respecting the diverse cultures, religions and histories that strong, living and fully responsible unity can be achieved. It is important that unity does not exclude the other. The construction, the enlargement, the deepening of the EU, the whole project must be in the service of humankind, within and beyond the borders of Europe".

Rev. Anna Maffei, President of the Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy, speaking about the integration process in Europe, points to the values of human dignity, freedom of conscience, justice and peace, following the vocation and tradition of her Church. In particular, the needs to be recognized are those of "the weakest and the most deprived".**51**

"An ideal of unity becomes [often] a powerful instrument of division. But if the principle of dialogue and cooperation lies at the foundation of an organism or an institution, this principle should apply and be a priority always and for all. Unity cannot become itself the cause of new divisions just as the communion among some churches should never limit the communion among oth-

50 Rev. Thomas Wipf, President of the Council of the Swiss Protestant Federation and President of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, a contribution to the conference Values – Religion – Identity, Brussels, 2006.

51 Rev. Anna Maffei, President of the Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy, a contribution to the conference Values – Religion – Identity, Brussels, 2006.

ers at any level. The European Union cannot strengthen its unity without working also at the same time for new forms of cooperation with those who do not belong to the European Union, those who by the way are *the weakest and the most deprived* here in this continent.

"All Europeans should be primarily united to fight poverty and work so that human dignity be affirmed and respected worldwide. Particularly European Christians should promote peace and reconciliation through non-violent means. Europe should grow in the awareness of the historical calling to be peacemaker in the world through peaceful means. Borrowing Zechariah's prophetic language we should be '*prisoners of hope*'".

Churches in Europe are in the forefront of working with migrant communities. In the words of **Rev. Arlington Trotman**:[52] "Living equal but different demands just action and attitudes, and justice is rooted in our ability *to respect one another*. At local, national and European levels, respect should not be used as a political weapon or a fragmentary system of economic value. Respect for the dignity and equality of the 'other' is a transforming and redeeming deed, which brings new cultural, economic, political and social benefits to all. This would only be realised and bind all Europe's peoples in a way that expunges all forms of destructive physical and mental violence and bloodshed. Respect is not a gimmick, but it entails responsibility.

[52] Rev. Arlington Trotman, Moderator of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), contribution to the conference Values – Religion – Identity, Brussels, 2006.

[53] Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, 'Redeeming the Time', CTBI, London, 2003, p. 4ff.

[54] Rt.Rev. and Rt.Hon. Dr. Richard Chartres, Bishop of London, Church of England, a contribution to the conference Values – Religion – Identity, Brussels, 2006.

"We must not regard visible minorities in Europe as merely 'deserving' respect and inclusion, but re-educate ourselves in order morally and socially to embrace our common humanity whilst rejecting racism and discrimination as the sin[53] of exclusion, disrespect and 'segregation'.

"Our purpose is *to uphold justice*. It seems, however, that when injustice gains priority in human affairs, the human spirit manifests its intrinsic good. This applies to all ethnic and religious groups in Europe. The trigger for responsible action is often only as a result of great human tragedies. We therefore take responsibility for the other, regardless of visible or other difference. When we take responsibility for brothers and sisters, we transcend the narrow confines of our selfish interests, and ensure a high degree of freedom. It is illustrated by vicarious action, taking responsibility for the voiceless, which is consistent with biblical truth:

> *When I needed clothes,*
> *you clothed me.*
> *When I was sick you looked*
> *after me.*
> *When I was in prison you*
> *came to visit me.*
> *(Matthew 25:35-36)*".

Churches and faith communities are not organisations fulfilling just the 'private' interests of their members. **Bishop Richard Chartres**[54] states: "Conquest by any religion of the civic space is not a viable or desirable option for our plural-

istic world built on justice and the rule of law. But at the same time to exclude faith from the universe of rational enquiry, to drive it from the public square as if it were some mere lifestyle choice like vegetarianism is also no longer a viable option.

"It is true that faith without a dialogue with reason degenerates into fanaticism. But rationalism that does not understand its grounding and its limits and limitations is also inadequate. As Chesterton remarked 'the madman is the man who has lost everything except his reason'. This *dialogue between faith and reason* and the re-alignment which needs to take place in the relations between church and state in Europe is a project which has hardly begun but it is an urgent one.

"At the same time, there must be available, in the public arena and open to the challenge of rational debate forms of healthful religion practiced with the vividness and seriousness, which can eclipse the allure of lethal religion. We need to practice a faith so confident that it is not paranoid or strident but is strong and attractive".

In promoting values as basic guidelines for Europe's future, attention needs to be given to educational systems. The contribution of churches and faith groups should not be overlooked: "The public education systems of Europe should not be used for proselytising or in the confessional interests of particular religious groups but there is a need to re-educate the public in the grammar of healthful religion and values. A modern curriculum for places of genuine education should embrace at least three things.

* The next generation has to have the opportunity to acquire a greater degree of religious literacy, to provide the clue to so many of the master symbols of our culture and literature.
* There is certainly a need to enunciate a clear ethical system, which of course Christians will share with other people of goodwill.
* There should also be attention [not as a divertissement but as a central part of the educational project at present dominated by economic considerations] to developing a spiritual awareness of the reality which lies beyond our own bodies and which is disclosed in music, in the arts, in sport, in the spiritual practices.

"This is the modern curriculum for all, but the Christian community is composed of those who have chosen to go further".

In order to take forward the process of European integration successfully, it is of crucial importance to seek a vision of Europe which will inspire people. Churches and faith communities can play a significant role in this process. In this regard, **Metropolitan Michael** of Austria underlines that:[55] "In a time of rapid and diversified development in Europe today, churches should project their values and exhort the responsible politicians to respect the human person created in the image and likeness of God. In order to do so, the churches should demonstrate an ecumenical responsibility, *a*

[55] Metropolitan Dr. Michael of Austria, Ecumenical Patriarchate, a contribution to the conference Values – Religion – Identity, Brussels, 2006.

common Christian testimony and a cross-confessional witness within Europe. To solve the current pressing problems and to respond to all the practical challenges, we need the cooperation of all Christian churches and of all available forces. Cooperation and dialogue are regarded here as essential principles in addressing the existing current challenges".

4. European integration
An expression of institutional solidarity

Churches and church-related organisations in Europe are an integral part of the development of the continent. They are involved in many different ways in dialogue with EU institutions about various aspects of EU policies. Churches and church-related organisations offer, in this way, their experience and their contacts with partners in order to make these policies more focused, more efficient and, most importantly, deliverable.

4.1. Fiscal instruments of integration

European integration is a project based on values. To what extent are the various policies and financial instruments of the EU – including the priorities in the budget – contributing to the realisation of these values? The total budget of the EU amounts to 1 % of Europe's Gross National Product. The budget for 2008 is about €120 billion. The main sources of income are a small percentage (0.73 %) of the GNP of the Member States and a part of their added value tax. The largest expenditure of the EU

budget is (and has traditionally been) on agriculture, structural and cohesion funds, and research.[56]

Common Agricultural Policy

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has made a significant contribution, particularly in the first decades of its existence, to fulfilling its own aim of guaranteeing food security i.e. food availability and price stability, within the Union. It was a policy that was recognised, at the same time, as a core mechanism of cooperation: mutual support offered to the member countries of the EEC. The CAP played an important role in the successful progress of integration in Europe. The benefits of the CAP have been seen in the recent financial crisis and the accompanying volatility in markets and increasing food prices. In all the quarrels about the future shape of the CAP these elements must not be overlooked.

The CAP is an example of a specific financial instrument. In 2008, through this mechanism, some €53 billion were distributed. Although this is quite a large

[56] There is a widespread perception that the EU costs too much money and is too bureaucratic. The facts are that the annual budget of the EU is 1 % of total European GNP and amounts to € 275 per citizen and that the total staff of the EU is 40,000 (comparable to a ministry or the administration of a large city).

amount, it is decreasing year after year. Agricultural expenditure, as part of the total expenditure of the EU, has decreased from about 80 % of the budget (1990) to 44 % (2008).[57]

The CAP mechanism is very complex. It can be seen that it has taken on added dimensions alongside its original function. It is acknowledged that the function of farmers goes beyond food production, even though food supply and food security are of immense importance. It has been increasingly recognised that farmers do more than 'just' produce food. In parallel with their primary function they also maintain the landscape, preserve biodiversity and help support community life in the countryside. Furthermore, the environmental aspects of animal welfare and rural development are, more and more, seen as essential functions despite those many situations where they have been neglected in the past.

The critical aspect of the CAP is the mutual interdependence of its internal and external effects. The CAP has an immense impact on developing countries. The aim of price stability in the EU has been linked with unjust protectionism and disadvantaging of producers from outside the Union. The CAP subsidises EU farmers in a way that leads to overproduction and the dumping of food on Third World markets, thereby damaging agriculture in poor countries. In order to correct this imbalance the EU has, following pressure from some of its Member States, the international community and by civil society, undertaken a revision of the CAP. It is evident, and the churches and church-related partners support this, that internal stability must not be bought at the price of external disorder. In particular, the EU has to stop the export of European agricultural products at 'dumping' prices. This has not only to be a stated policy but also an implemented reality.[58]

Structural and Cohesion Funds

Instruments of institutionalised solidarity are key elements of the success story of the integration process. Structural and Cohesion Funds are the second largest item on the budget: some €40 billion in 2008.[59] It may truly be an exemplary mechanism of institutional solidarity because the richer regions are supporting the poorer. Through these funds the EU enables the less developed regions to get additional funding to facilitate economic development. Solidarity and financial redistribution between states and regions of the Union are practical expressions of the Structural and Cohesion Funds.

[57] In the case that all expenses from the European governments would be placed in one budget, the CAP would cost about 2 %. Another comparison: this budget line is almost on the same level as what the VAT (Value Added Tax) brings for the Dutch Government only (Source: Miljoenennota 2006). A third one: it is equal to the estimated damage of the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the UK in 2002.

[58] For full CSC/CEC position see the report: 'Food is precious – European Churches and agricultural questions', to be published in 2009; cf. also the work of Aprodev: 'Proposals for new anti-dumping rules and effective protective mechanism' *http://www.aprodev.net/trade/JAP-events.htm*

[59] In the 2008 budget agriculture (€53.1b.) is still larger than structural policy (€40b.), but in the new financial framework 2007-2013 the Structural and Cohesion Funds have bypassed agriculture.

Research, an often-neglected benevolent giant

Though in a quite different proportion from the two items mentioned above, research has, for many years, been the third largest item on the budget and it is still growing: from €3.5 billion in 2000 to €5.3 billion in 2006 and €6.1 billion in 2008. In the period 2007-2013 it will grow further. For the current 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technology Development (FP7), the total amount, for 2007-2013, of €53.2 billion[60] represents a 40 % budget increase compared with the FP6. Key areas of research are: ICT, health, transport, nanoproduction, energy, and the environment (including climate change). It is a programme with a world-wide impact as there is close collaboration with a number of countries across the world.[61]

4.2. Solidarity and social cohesion in the EU

Solidarity is a hallmark of the European Union. It is listed among the basic values to which the Union subscribes and so encourages the EU to formulate policies in a very specific direction. The tension between 'being more competitive' and 'more inclusive' is permanently a part of the EU economic and social policies.

The social policies do not belong to EU competence, but to the competence of its individual Member States. It means that social policies, at the EU level, form a part of those policies, e.g. economic and employment policies, forma-

tion of internal market etc., for which the EU has the power to act. In 2000 the EU leaders established the Social Inclusion Process. Since then the European Union has provided a framework for national strategy development, as well as for policy coordination between the Member States on issues relating to poverty and social exclusion. The participation of various NGOs, social partners and local and regional authorities has become an important part of this process. The concern of churches and church-related organisations relates to the lack of progress in the fields of social protection and social inclusion within the framework of the EU policies: a gap between stated aims and achieved results, and the lack of committed action.[62] They are concerned about the growing gap between the rich and the poor in European societies, the segmentation of labour markets with more and more precarious employment situations, together with the growing marginalisation of specific groups, like less skilled people or people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and people who come from a migrant worker background.

Churches and diaconal organisations have, on many occasions, supported and reiterated the stated commitment of EU Member States to strengthen the social dimension of EU policies. The key aim is to achieve a better balance between economic, social and environmental policies, in which social and environmental policies are an integral part of overall policy, not

[60] This includes €2.7 billion for Euratom.

[61] Also some non-EU Member States are full members of the programme, like Turkey, Serbia, Israel.

[62] See e.g. 'Response of the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches and of Eurodiaconia to the Questionnaire on the Commission's proposal to designate 2010 as the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion', June 2007.

simply an addendum to economic policy.[63]

The integration of migrants has become one of the top policy themes in recent times. Successful integration requires several preconditions: adequate housing, skills to access the labour market and, in particular, the identification of ways in which migrants may participate in civic life and become actively involved in all parts of society.

Intercultural exchanges and interreligious dialogue are important factors for integration. These require further development. In these dialogues newcomers and citizens can exchange views on values in community and society, learn from each other, and discover commonalities and differences. The development of diversity in society will require a means of mediation to prevent or resolve conflicts between communities or between sectors of communities.[64]

4.3. The EU in relation to the partners in the developing world

The role of the EU in the world is an integral aspect of the European integration process. EU external action is the obverse of integration. The goals of European integration and its values present some problems that will need to be addressed. These include the transfer or sharing of sovereignty in all concrete policy areas e.g. Common Agricultural Policy, monetary policies and creation of

[63] See e.g. Joint statement from the Church and Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches and Eurodiaconia, June 2007.

[64] The joint comments of Christian organisations: 'Integrating migrants – integrating societies; Essential elements for EU migration policy,' and CCME´s work on 'Uniting in diversity - being Church together', *http://www.ccme.be/secretary/activities.html.*

the Euro, environmental policies etc. as these have always been fully part of the broader question of Europe's place in the world. European integration was never about Europe alone.

This was true from the very beginning. How could it have been otherwise, for in 1950 the starting point was the Schuman plan? Two World Wars had started on European soil. Two World Wars, in which the rivalry between France and Germany had played a major role and had brought tremendous suffering and destruction, not only in Europe but to other continents as well. This rivalry had been overcome; it would not lead to war again. The world was confronted by an emerging Cold War that brought new divisions and new threats. Europe's colonial empires had disappeared or were crumbling. After 1945, 'Europe' could not possibly be about Europe alone.

International solidarity

The Maastricht Treaty mentions 3 objectives for EU relationships with the developing world:

* promoting social and sustainable development
* the campaign against poverty
* the integration of developing countries into the world economy.

The Treaty also defines 3 principles on which EU development policy should be based:

* complementarity between develop-

ment policies of the Member States and the EU, in order to avoid duplication and to maintain the relevance of individual programmes of the Member States;

* co-ordination between the Member States and the EU administration at headquarters and in recipient countries to ensure effective operational implementation and to avoid contradictions between different policies;
* coherence of all Community policies so that they take account of development objectives.

The Amsterdam Treaty (1997) added a fourth principle:

* consistency of all external activities of the European Union.

The EU's relationship with the developing world has a long history. It is a record filled with ambivalence. A coordinated development aid policy was established first in 1975 in Lomé (capital of Togo). It was the first treaty signed between the EC and a large number of countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) (former colonies of several European states). A follow-up Treaty was signed at Cotonou (Benin) in 2000. Under the Conventions, the ACP countries enjoyed privileged trade relations with the EU. There should be free trade within those regions and between those regions and the EU. These trade deals should have

[65] CEC Central Committee statement: 'The EU Economic Partnership Agreements must become instruments of partnership and poverty alleviation', November 2007 *http://www.cec-kek.org/content/pr-cq0744e.shtml.*

[66] In this regard the work of Aprodev, the Association of WCC-related development organisations in Europe, and the close cooperation between Aprodev and CSC/CEC have to be particularly highlighted.

[67] A meeting of CEC and AACC delegations discussing perspectives of intensified cooperation and exchange between churches from Europe and Africa took place in Paris in June 2008.

been concluded by the end of 2007.

Churches and church-related partner organisations in this matter emphasise that, if new trade agreements between EU and ACP countries are to be development tools, they must go beyond trade liberalisation agreements to include concrete measures and benchmarks to ensure that poverty is combated, food security is ensured, equity is established, and the environment is protected. To achieve this a trade deal between unequal partners, such as the EU and the ACP countries, needs to be asymmetrical and allow for a maximum level of flexibility so that the ACP countries can implement nationally and regionally owned models and policies aimed at sustainable development on their continents.[65,66]

It is in this context that the European Commission worked out a strategy of partnership with Africa. The joint EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007 was an occasion for reinvigorating the partnership and commitment from the EU side. The joint EU-Africa Strategy offers a framework for contributions by civil society organisations to bring about the implementation of the Strategy. It is an opportunity for churches and church-related organisations to step up their activities in development aid as well as in actively promoting partnerships between European and African counterparts.[67]

In this regard, churches and partner organisations remind the EU of the inconsistencies which very often exist in development policies between stated intentions and reality.[68] Inconsistency between intentions and reality, with regard to the geographical distribution of EU aid, illustrates the larger problem of incoherence between stated development cooperation policies on the one hand and EU policies with regard to trade, agriculture, fisheries, foreign policy and conflict prevention, on the other hand.[69]

At the same time, churches remind the EU that the key concept guiding development policies needs to be the value of justice. This includes not only justice in distribution, but also many other areas of the multifaceted and complex ideas of justice. Social balance and social justice cannot be achieved only *ex post* through the system of redistribution. Efforts to create *ex-ante* justice (e.g. access to the means of production, equality of opportunities for everyone, etc.) are at least as important and probably more effective.[70]

The churches are aware that full coherence will never be achieved. Trade-offs between conflicting objectives are inevitable and a certain level of incoherence is unavoidable. In real life compromises have to be made on a case-by-case basis. In this matter policy coherence is, by its nature, a highly political matter that ultimately needs to be dealt with in the political arena.

[68] CSC/CEC document: 'Churches living their faith in the context of globalisation', Brussels 2006, p.42.

[69] 'Between intentions and reality: the problem of incoherence', Aprodev, June 2001.

[70] CSC/CEC document: 'Churches living their faith in the context of globalisation', Brussels 2006, p.23.

[71] 'Between intentions and reality: the problem of incoherence', Aprodev, June 2001.

One of the fundamental problems is that no clear benchmarks have been established against which to ascertain if another priority (economic or political) is to override development considerations when there is a conflict of interests. If the 'hierarchy of values' is not clearly spelled out in the current system then commercial interests are bound to win.

In parallel to that, more attention needs to be given to the impact assessment of development policies. The process of evaluation will need to be detailed enough to address the specific issues that face particular social groups. NGOs, including churches and religious communities, are bound to play a useful role in supporting these participatory processes. The scope for collaboration in this regard should be exploited as fully as possible. *Ex ante* prevention of damage to poor people is better by far than efforts for *ex post* corrections.[71]

In their dialogue with the EU, churches and their special ministries are concerned to develop policies that are guided by the conviction that the economy should be at the service of people, and not the other way around. By the same token, trade policies should be instruments for promoting human well-being, human flourishing and enhancing livelihoods, especially of those who are most in need. The EU bears a heavy responsibility to ensure that the relationship with partners from the developing world is commensurate with its own values of

poverty eradication, equal ownership and real partnership as stated in many official documents of the EU, values which are shared by the churches. [72]

Human rights and injustice in the world

The most significant negative sign is inconsistency and the sight of the EU speaking with two voices. Although, over the years, human rights have become more prominent in official EU policy, in reality economic interests are far more important. Recent examples are the profitable agreements with China and the warm welcome for the leaders of Libya[73] and Zimbabwe attending the EU-Africa summit in Lisbon (December 2007) despite international sanctions. The voice of the European Parliament is often taken more seriously outside than inside the EU. It is striking that resolutions and statements by the EP about injustices in other parts of the world often get more attention in the countries involved than in the EU itself. Often they provide moral support for groups struggling against injustice.

One important area where human rights abuse is concerned is the complex area of migration. From the EU's side there are a lot of efforts made to identify priorities in the fight against illegal immigration and to develop a comprehensive EU asylum policy in order to address the trafficking of human beings,

the question of remittances, to limit the impact of the brain drain from developing countries etc. Migration has two sides. It is not just a negative phenomenon needing to be addressed from the limited perspective of security and legality; it has a human dimension. Migrants' rights need to be guaranteed. There is a need, at European and national levels, to intensify debate on striking a better balance between security and the basic rights of individuals, the protection of the dignity of every human being, and to promote inclusive policies, for migrants and refugees.[74]

The EU vis-à-vis new powers

China and India are the clearest examples of new powers with whom the EU has to develop a new relationship. Their presence in Europe is increasingly visible through the dramatic increase in the supply of imported goods, the increase of travel by their citizens and their influence on the global scene. China and India and, increasingly, some other developing countries such as Brazil, South Africa etc., are seen as competitors in many technological fields. The rise of new powers on the global scene means, for the EU, new challenges in their internal and external policies. The challenge of climate change and identifying ways in which further industrialisation of these countries is developed with due regard for environmental objectives, is just one of many aspects

[72] 'The EU Economic Partnership Agreements must become instruments of partnership and poverty alleviation', Public Statement of the Central Committee of the CEC, November 2007, *www.cec-kek.org/content/prcq0744e.shtml.*

[73] France and Spain won multi-billion Euro contracts, although in France it caused a split within the Sarkozy government: the Foreign Minister and the State Secretary for human rights were openly critical.

[74] See work of Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), *http://www.ccme.be.*

which need to be addressed at the table. One thing is clear: general observations about the 'Third World' belong to the past and need to be replaced by a new paradigm.

4.4. Global impact: climate change

Climate change is already happening and represents one of the greatest environmental, social and economic threats facing the planet. It is clear that none of the individual countries can address it sufficiently without coordinating with others. Cooperation within the EU offers an example of action on a wider level. Taking into consideration the different possibilities and capabilities of its members, and applying quotas, targets and allowances related to equitable greenhouse gas distribution, and an energy production/consumption model based on justice and solidarity, is an example for a community of states beyond the EU.

The EU has been taking steps to address greenhouse gas emissions since the early 1990s. In 2000 the Commission launched the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP). In January 2007, as part of an integrated climate change and energy policy, the European Commission set out proposals and options for an ambitious global agreement.[75] EU leaders endorsed this vision in March 2007, which puts the EU in the global leadership position in combating greenhouse gas emissions. The EU has committed itself

to a unilateral reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 20% – and possibly 30% – below 1990 levels by 2020 provided that, as part of a global and comprehensive post-2012 agreement, other developed countries commit themselves to comparable reductions and advanced developing countries also contribute adequately to the global effort according to their respective capabilities. The EU is further committed to increasing energy efficiency by 20% and to increasing the share of renewable energies in the energy mix to reach 20%. The Kyoto Protocol regime is strongly supported by the EU and the Union is at the forefront of the negotiation within the UN framework for follow-up arrangements after 2012, when the Kyoto Protocol expires. The integration process in Europe enabled the EU to launch a successful Emission Trading Scheme which is one of the effective contributions made by the Union to the global effort to tackle climate change.

There are a number of questions which need to be raised in terms of further shaping EU policies in this area. The impact on other EU policies and the coherence of these policies needs to be addressed, alongside coordination with other global partners under the UN heading, and the involvement of civil society including churches and faith groups. Climate change is increasingly present as an agenda topic in the programmes of a number of churches and ecumenical organisations in Europe. They have stepped up their

[75] Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 'Limiting global climate change to 2 degrees Celsius the way ahead for 2020 and beyond', Com (2007) 2 final.

initiatives in response to the challenges linked to this policy area.[76]

The contribution of the churches to the climate change debate is significant. They can effectively address climate change by concrete actions in their own communities and by translating the question of climate change into a challenge to the lifestyle of individuals and communities.

Churches can also address some critical issues within EU policies in the direct dialogue with political institutions.[77] The most important of them is the question of the level of commitment by individual EU Member States to the reduction of greenhouse gases. A significant number of them have, until now, not fulfilled their commitments sufficiently.

Therefore the question of environmental justice needs to be put into the centre of the arena. Industrialised countries have to reduce their own ecological footprint much more and, at the same time, to assist developing countries in their mitigation and adaptation programmes. The overarching priority of the economy, over and above other policy areas, is the matter of environmental protection. This also needs to be more visible in many other policy areas.

[76] e.g. The letter of the Archbishop of Canterbury of the Church of England, the Archbishop of the Church of Sweden and the Presiding Bishop of the EKD Council to the President of the European Commission in November 2007, 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu, 7th Assembly of the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN): 'The real challenge of climate change' and others

[77] e.g. Dialogue of the church and religious leaders with the Presidents of the European Council, European Parliament and European Commission, 5 May 2008.

5. Churches – An active and distinctive part of society

Churches throughout Europe represent the vast majority of the citizens of Europe. Churches are deeply rooted in all segments of society and have a multitude of networks, from the grass-roots level and local congregations, to a number of bilateral, multilateral and ecumenical networks and contacts with decision-makers, both on national and European levels.

In their everyday work, churches interact with people with different needs and expectations and from different social backgrounds. The true mission of the churches impels them to offer help and assistance to all those in need, including the most vulnerable. In their social and diaconal work, churches are advocates, addressing a number of issues in European society, such as poverty, ageing, childcare, family counselling, domestic violence, trafficking in human beings, asylum and refugee policy, integration etc. In all these issues the main aim of the work of the churches is to help those in need and to speak for those who often do not have a voice of their own.

The social structure of churches is, in fact, one of the very few 'trans- and multi-national' organisations, having a number of networks from the grass-roots level right up to connections with decision-makers on national, European and global levels. They are not 'single issue' organisations, but truly advocate the rights and well-being of all citizens throughout Europe. Churches have a message and also, throughout their everyday work, make a specific contribution to the development of the European Union.

In many places churches demonstrate their social relevance through their social activities by running schools, hospitals, libraries, day care centres, elderly persons' homes, sports programmes, youth clubs, social action etc. All these activities are social manifestations of the primary function of the church - proclamation of the 'good news' about the grace and love of God that are expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without this witness – both in words and deeds - churches could not have been as effective in their practical work as they are or were.

The core of the Christian message to the world is not based on a developed legal system but on relationships, firstly between God and humanity and then among humans in community. This is

expressed in the Christian commitment to the dignity of human beings, peace, justice and solidarity, which are the fruits of the very simple good news about God's love. The unity of the Christian 'good news' and the everyday work carried out in obedience to the commandment of mission is expressed through the Christian ministry of *diaconia*.

5.1. Churches' contribution to a changing Europe through the ministry of diaconia

The word *diaconia*[78] is used to indicate the churches' social action. It is a mark and attribute of the Church, a guiding motif for its mission. *Diaconia* is grounded in liturgy (it accords with the churches' understanding of the 'liturgy after the liturgy'). It is, then, based on communication and participation. In every aspect of *diaconia*, interpersonal, institutional and social, the element of communication is fundamental. *Diaconia* is a task directed towards the wider society, towards the fundamental economic, political and cultural structures that shape life.

Churches in Europe understand their role in society as creating a space for dialogue, networking, analysing and reflecting on the new challenges, which have emerged from the churches' social action within the rapid changes experienced in Europe. Their contribution should be seen as an expression of pastoral action, which involves working with people to build up their capacity and to take their own initiatives. This kind of work is also a form of civil society building.

[78] Origin of the word is Greek and means 'service'.

An important function of *diaconia* is working both with, and on behalf of, those whom it seeks to serve. This role encompasses identifying and challenging injustices on every level - locally, nationally and internationally. It means addressing the huge disparities of income and wealth which mark the globalised economy, but it also means advocating the cause of those who are excluded because of race, gender, ability or age. It points to the need for all to change in order that all may live in dignity. *Diaconia* has also a ministry and a duty to address all injustices covering the vast territory from unjust use of force to injustices against nature and God's Creation. Such activity goes to the foundational values of modern culture and rests on our fundamental belief in the equality of people before God, and of people as made in the image of God.

5.1.1. Diaconal cooperation as an instrument for strengthening the fellowship among churches

In church history, Christian *diaconia* (service) has always been understood as a contribution to the creation of a fellowship (*koinonia*) of solidarity, in the sense of transforming "natural" orders into a "*koinonia* of persons". It is an expression of the fullness of the body of Christ. Through her diaconal work, the church becomes more fully the Body of Christ.

From a theological perspective, *koinonia* is inseparably related to *diaconia*. *Diaconia* (service), *martyria* (witness) and *leiturgia* (worship) are con-

nected with *koinonia*, and they complement one another. *Koinonia* is the communal social ground or sphere of orthodoxy (right belief) and orthopraxy (right action), of the service of God and of mankind. A local church realises itself fully when it is a "serving", diaconal church. As the prominent theologian of the 20th Century, Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), pointed out: "The church is only the church when it is there for other people."

Being an expression of our Christian faith, *diaconia* should be holistic. It cannot be separated from witness, neither from obedience to God or from the Eucharist. Any separation leads to alienation and brokenness. *Diaconia*, as gift of God, consists in sharing with the other. According to St. Paul each local church has a share in the whole gift of salvation and each local church must contribute to the mutual upbuilding of the whole gift of salvation. The local community is called to give itself away in love to others. The blessings given to one local community, whether spiritual or physical, are in fact for the good of all the other local communities. Thus, the *koinonia* among individual Christians is continued in *koinonia* among churches. And this *koinonia-communio* among local churches is expressed by common tradition, love, peace, brotherhood and solidarity. We cannot enter into a genuine *koinonia* without taking our fellow human beings into account.

The church as *koinonia* is called to share not only in the sufferings of its own members but also in the suffering of all humanity, by advocating and caring for the poor, the needy and the marginalised, by promoting the responsible stewardship of creation and by keeping alive hope in the hearts of humanity. For churches and their diaconal organisations, mutual cooperation and sharing is of fundamental importance, in particular when there is a need for a common witness in civil society.

5.1.1. Social diaconia

Churches' values and goals involve them in seeking the common good of society. Churches, together with other faith-based organisations, share many of the European Union's policy aims, such as social inclusion, community cohesion, active citizenship and social capital. Churches and faith-based organisations deliver public benefit through their community contribution. Projects run by churches and faith-based organisations are often highly relational in nature, not only meeting people's practical needs but also giving people hope and vision for the future.

Churches and faith-based organisations are already operating in all of the above areas, but their work needs to be recognised and enhanced through working in closer partnership and more support. Churches and faith-based organisations are also involved in a range of direct service provision in areas such as: community development, community leadership, urban regeneration, schools, mentoring and after-school provision, employment preparation and training, hospital and social services, housing provision, counselling for migrants, protection of refugees, drug and alcohol abuse intervention, youth and children's work and, also, health care.

Responding to the challenge of economy - reducing poverty and social exclusion. Churches and faith-based organisations are actively working to respond to the challenge of the modern economy, while tackling poverty and social exclusion in the most disadvantaged urban and rural areas of the EU. Greater partnership with the European Union to deliver services can enhance their role.

Social exclusion is defined as a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown. In the short- and medium-term, addressing social exclusion requires the meeting of locally identified needs of immediate importance with practical services. These services need to be community-owned and community-led. In the medium- and long-term, churches and faith-based organisations can develop resources and an infrastructure indigenous to the community that will enable its development and long-term sustainability.

Churches and faith-based organisations have had an important role in tackling social exclusion for many years. Very often churches and faith-based organisations are able to facilitate participation by communities that might otherwise not find a voice. There is a challenge to strengthen the link between these (often already existing) activities and the intention the political institu-

[79] In the Spring and Summer of 2001, serious incidents in the North of England raised an awareness of the need for social cohesion. The Cantle Report acknowledged the positive approach of faith leaders who work together to resolve community issues to prevent community disintegration from arising.[Cantle, Ted (Chair). 2002. 'Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team', London: Home Office. p. 15]. The report also recommended the development of programmes to promote contact and understanding between and within black, ethnic minorities and the white community, and [religious] faiths. Churches and faith-based organisations have an essential role to play in leading these processes of integration and understanding. [ibid. p. 29]

tions have to address the problems in this field.

Promoting community cohesion and enhancing community life. Churches and faith-based organisations act as partners in promoting social cohesion by fostering the values of understanding, tolerance, diversity, inclusiveness and integration. Indeed many churches and faith-based organisations have a long history of promoting these values and of opposing racism and xenophobia.[79]

Religious organisations, as key community stakeholders, can act as mediating structures, promoting cross-cultural contact. It is, however, dangerous to seek to homogenise churches and faith-based organisations; rather their distinctive identities must be respected and fostered in an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. It is unhelpful to force partnerships between diverse churches and faith-based organisations. Instead, such partnerships should be encouraged to develop in their own time.

Churches and faith-based organisations foster relationships, provide space for people to meet and enable the development of informal networks of mutual support and self-help. These address the individual isolation that many people experience, particularly if they are elderly, unemployed or single parents. In the long term, churches and faith-based organisations aim to ensure the self-per-

petuation of a vibrant cultural and community life.

Renewing civil society through fostering social capital, fostering equality and diversity and supporting active citizenship. Churches and faith-based organisations act as partners in renewing civil society by creating social capital, developing citizenship skills, enhancing civic engagement, developing social enterprise and increasing democratic participation. Churches and faith-based organisations also provide a context in which people are given a voice and opportunity to make decisions. Civic skills are developed through informal processes that increase community capacity. These skills can then be applied to neighbourhood renewal projects and democratic participation.

Churches and faith-based organisations place extremely high value on their diverse and distinctive identities. They often emphasise the need for all organisations to have an equal opportunity to take an active part in their local community and, within most world religions, the intrinsic equality of each person is a highly valued principle. Churches and faith-based organisations themselves contribute to the richness and diversity of their communities and seek to develop those communities into places where equality and diversity are nurtured and celebrated.

5.1.3. Social integration and the work with migrant communities

Humanity comprises a multitude of different peoples, each inhabiting their own symbolic and cultural worlds, containing values, social embeddedness and cultural traditions. The churches therefore stress the need for Europe to have an open mind to face the challenges, and embrace the opportunities that come with an increasing freedom in Europe, to meet people of different cultures, experiences and backgrounds. This relates to the continual process of enlarging the Union and gives the possibility of interaction between people from within and outside the Union, as well as with the fact of immigration from outside the continent. Interaction between different communities and the process of integration becomes one of the great challenges in Europe. This challenge is not just a problem; the interaction brings benefits both to people who are migrants and the entire host communities.

Through the work of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, churches in Europe remind others that basic human rights and respect for the dignity of a person should serve as guiding principles for overall attitudes to the challenge of migration at all levels in the European Union.

In promoting an active approach to integration policies, protection of refugees, anti-racism and anti-discrimination in Europe, churches support:

❋ Rights-based policy approaches to labour migration, addressing rights both during the migration process and after arrival.
❋ Policies to maintain and strengthen an accessible and fair system of asylum and to open up additional forms of protection for refugees and displaced persons.
❋ Policies to combat new forms of slav-

ery, in particular trafficking in human beings and to facilitate safe migration.

* Policies facilitating integration: with respect for diversity and a focus on the fair treatment of migrant residents, including anti-discrimination policy.

5.1.4. Interreligious and interfaith dialogue

For churches a true dialogue is more than just listening to one another; it is also about being willing to share with, and learn from, one another whilst showing tolerance and respect. In this knowledge of one's own identity, background and conviction are of major importance.

Churches have been inseparably linked with culture for centuries. In accord with that relationship, a number of individual churches, as well as the CEC, contributed to the broad exchange on intercultural dialogue initiated by the European political institutions, EU and Council of Europe, and they are committed to do so in the future. Churches not only produce statements, they also contribute, by their everyday work, to culture in Europe at many different levels.

There cannot be intercultural dialogue without interreligious dialogue. Churches in Europe recognised the necessity for an intercultural and interreligious dialogue between believers of living faiths, particularly between the faithful of the three monotheistic religions, namely Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and actively promote it. In this regard it has, from the CSC/CEC perspective, been underlined that:

80 CSC – CCME contribution to the Council of Europe process related to the White Paper on intercultural dialogue, January 2007.

"There *is* a religious dimension also to intercultural dialogue. Religious communities do not believe that they or 'religion' can be exhaustively described with a reference to culture alone. Religious communities, for this reason, will continue their ongoing processes of interreligious dialogue. These dialogue processes can include elements that are not described by the discourse of cultural sociology, such as 'transcendence', 'otherness', 'the divine', or 'sanctity'".[80]

Based on the commonly accepted faith and confidence that God's mercy and love are open to all human beings, regardless of faith, race, gender, culture or ethnic origin, a constructive and instructive dialogue can bring citizens closer to each other, and thus dispel any hostility or fear for a 'clash of civilizations'. Through the opening of hearts and minds in the course of a sincere dialogue, people of different beliefs can accept the 'differences' of others as having a value equal to their own, and thus start building peace in the world. Interreligious and cross-cultural initiatives are, by far, the best ways to eliminate prejudice and to foster peace, tolerance, trust, reconciliation and mutual respect.

5.1.5. Responding to the challenge of climate change

Churches support a conviction that the challenge of climate change can be solved neither at the level of technological improvement nor at the level of a legal framework alone. Climate change

needs to become an issue for every individual, an issue of individual and collective lifestyle. There is a need to separate environmental issues from the performance of the economy. We are also convinced that the bottom-line problem is the structure of our economy, which urges people to consume more and more.

Following this basic conviction the Final Statement of the 7th Assembly of the European Christian Environmental Network,[81] which met under the title, 'The Real Challenge of Climate Change', stated:

"The roots of human destruction of the environment are to be found not just in actions, but in our most deep-seated attitudes. It is not enough for humans to keep alive by consuming the world around them; they need a *relationship* with the world that is not purely utilitarian and market-based.

"It is imperative that churches accept the challenge to come together to overcome the threat of water shortages, decreased harvests, natural disasters, diseases, migration and many other projected effects of climate changes. We encourage church leaders to develop their own comprehensive road map, with timescales and clear goals, to help ameliorate global warming.

"It is vital that education inspires the urgently needed shift in dominant consumer societies to simpler life styles and to macro changes in politics and economics. Ecology and climate change needs to be included in all ministerial training.

"In their congregational life churches must be role models of a new type of mobility in which we move from the paradigm of speed of cars, planes and ships to cleaner and less risky modes of transportation.

"Churches in the EU should address governments and political representatives in the European Parliament in the next few months, as important decisions will be taken. EU commitments must not be achieved through offsetting emissions: significant cuts of greenhouse gas emissions have to be achieved through efforts here and now".

Climate change has to be much more than just a 'green issue.' The polarisation of positions between those adversely affected by climate change and those responsible for causing the changes, reflects the concern that climate change is becoming a major obstacle to continued poverty reduction, with all that implies for human security. Climate change threatens to push many vulnerable communities still further into poverty, and in so doing, frustrate the efforts by the international community to deliver on the millennium development goals. Principles of equality and justice, as well as the right to development, have to be part of the complex approach to seeking effective solutions.

5.1.6. Political diaconia

Churches, being aware of their call to be an active messenger of the 'Good News' in society, cannot stand apart from political development. As a distinctive

[81] European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) is the chief instrument of the Conference of European Churches for addressing our relationship with nature and the environment from the perspective of Christian theology and Christian way of life. See *http://www.ecen.org* for more information.

part of society, churches maintain their right to a dialogue with democratically-elected political powers. They acknowledge their responsibility and duty to contribute to the dialogue between political decision-makers and citizens affected by their decisions. The promotion of justice, care for human dignity, protection of the weak and vulnerable in society, as well as care for the environment - recognised as God's creation - belong to the churches' basic concerns, and are put at the centre of the dialogue with political powers.

The dialogue about values and the value-dimension of politics is a recognition that politics needs to be guided by values, which cannot be created by politics itself. Politics needs a value orientation and an ethical framework in which it can successfully operate in order to fulfil its proper function. For this reason a dialogue between political institutions and various organisations of civil society is of vital importance for a healthy society. This has been recognised also in the EU White paper on governance.[82] The EU, as an ongoing political project, has to face one of its deepest challenges in finding a way to overcome the gap between political leadership and civil society, as well as facing the question of the democratic legitimacy of the EU institutions.

This was one reason why churches and religious communities, together with other segments of organised civil society, have a large role to play in Europe. This is a widely shared view, which found its expression in the Treaty on the

[82] European Commission of the European Communities, 'European Governance – A white paper', Brussels, COM(2001) 428 final.

[83] The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, art. 17.

Functioning of the European Union in the following formulation: "The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States... Recognising their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organisations".[83]

As far as dialogue with the churches and faith communities is concerned, the EU has a long-standing record of commitment to creating a culture of dialogue, tolerance and co-operation on an informal level. This tradition has been developing since the 1980s, whereby successive Presidents of the European Commission have maintained a dialogue on European integration between churches and communities of faith and conviction. This kind of dialogue is a two-way exchange: on the one hand, it is intended to disseminate the significance of European integration among religious communities; on the other, it allows EU institutions to refine their social and political views using the insights of religious communities. The aim of the dialogue, from the perspective of the churches, is to bring into consideration the policies of ethical values and criteria. Dialogues in different forms and at different levels are an expression of trust and cooperation. It is clear that the keyword of any culture of co-operation must be inclusion, not exclusion, and it should embrace all the aspects of our complex identities, in-

cluding our faith and beliefs. There is also recognition that democracy needs ethical values as its backbone. Otherwise it leads to a totalitarianism of the majority.

It has been widely recognised that dialogue is one of the key forms of building an inclusive society. It has been also widely recognised that dialogue between churches and faith groups, and the political institutions, is one of the elements of this process. By participating in this dialogue, churches do not seek political power. In open, regular and transparent dialogue, the churches of the CEC wish to express their contribution to forming an open democratic society. The churches of the CEC are ready for such a dialogue in different forms.

84 This contribution was recognised e.g. by the UK's Policy Action Team on the promotion of community self-help, which described churches and faith-based organisations as: "networks of mutual aid, service provision, community development activities and community organising capacity". See: Active Community Unit, 1999, 'Report of the Policy Action Team on Community Self-Help', London: Home Office.

5.2. Making a significant contribution to local communities

Holistic Solutions

Churches and faith-based organisations, by their very nature, are concerned for individuals and communities in a holistic way. They are deeply concerned about social problems and community breakdown. However, they do not seek to address individual issues in isolation, but rather to adopt the holistic approach of listening to the needs of those in the communities they serve, and addressing them with community-grown solutions specific to the needs of those communities.

Strategic Partners

Holistic solutions to social problems and community breakdown require partnership among all sectors: public, private and voluntary. However, within the wider voluntary sector, churches and faith-based organisations are often overlooked as strategic partners. Nonetheless, they can make significant contributions. Not only are they concerned with holistic, long-term solutions but they are also locally rooted and have resources and capacity to contribute to locally determined solutions.[84]

One of the reasons that churches can offer mutual aid and self-help is that they often have a wide variety of people as members. They include people undertaking a range of professional jobs who can make connections with other resources on behalf of the community they are part of. Much of this is well documented and represents a significant local source of social capital of both the bonding and bridging kinds.

Geographic coverage

Churches and faith-based organisations have a unique geographical coverage of the EU. They are found in all urban and rural areas, as well as in city centre and suburban locations. Churches and faith-based organisations also reflect the diversity of the communities in which they are situated, because their membership comprises people from the local area. Additionally, many religious

denominations seek to ensure that every individual is being served by that denomination through nation-wide parochial coverage.

Local community infrastructure

Churches and faith-based organisations have, for many years, played an active role in the local communities they serve. They are a physical focal point, providing a central space in which a wide variety of groups meet, covering all ages of the population. Churches and faith-based organisations are an important source of support, ensuring that local people are cared for and visited in their homes. They help people mark important events in their lives and the lives of the local community, such as births, funerals, weddings and other types of celebration and remembrance. Churches and faith-based organisations can also create forums for articulating local needs and aspirations. In very practical ways this capacity can contribute to community efforts, such as regeneration initiatives, in which churches and faith-based organisations can play leadership roles. It is also helpful that churches and faith-based organisations are indigenous to the community of which they are a part. Because of this they have a credibility that many service providers and local government institutions do not have. Churches and faith-based organisations are regarded as part of the community, in contrast to public-sector professionals, who are seen as people who 'parachute in' to work in an area of disadvantage before returning home to more affluent areas.

Long-term community commitment

Churches and faith-based organisations are rooted in local communities for the long-term and therefore provide stability. They have a desire to be part of solutions that address the root causes of social problems and not just the symptoms. Similarly, churches and faith-based organisations will be engaged in their local area long after short- and medium-term regeneration initiatives and/or funding cycles have been changed or concluded. Churches and faith-based organisations can therefore add value to shorter-term initiatives.

For this reason, churches and faith-based organisations are well placed to develop values of community commitment and ownership and to develop wider civic engagement, because they are operating as part of civil society. This brings both innovation and freedom in a way that the constraints imposed on public sector agencies do not allow. Churches and faith-based organisations also tend to be forward-looking because they are motivated by a vision of what the future could look like.

In-depth community knowledge

The long-term community commitment of churches and faith-based organisations enables helpful institutional memory to be developed over many years. Similarly, leaders of churches and faith-based organisations have an in-depth knowledge of the issues of the moment, because of their relationship with many members of the local community. They also see the effects of changes, such as shifting employment patterns, over prolonged periods of time, noting their

long-term consequences as well as their short-term effects.

Volunteer capacity

Faith is an incredibly powerful source of motivation that engages individuals in service and volunteering. Churches and faith-based organisations therefore have people with time and motivation to give to projects run by churches and faith-based organisations.

Identifying resources to meet community needs

Churches and faith-based organisations are uniquely placed to match resources, such as funding and people with skills and time, with identified needs, in three key ways:

Firstly, churches and faith-based organisations can utilise resources from national denominations, organisations that they are affiliated to and/or larger organisations within their faith tradition that have specific expertise. Such structures can provide national expertise, best practice knowledge and mentoring that local groups can draw upon.

Secondly, at a more local level, churches and faith-based organisations can draw on the resources of other churches and faith-based organisations in the same geographic area. This is further facilitated by the structure of many denominations that promote collaboration between groups. Within such a system, resources from more affluent congregations are shared with congregations in more deprived communities. Such resources include practical and financial resources and the contributions of volunteers with professional skills.

Thirdly, there are inter-denominational and inter-faith organisations for local areas that exist to foster communication and collaboration among churches and faith-based organisations and can further enhance collective provision of resources.

Highly relational services

An intrinsic quality of churches and faith-based organisations is their relational dimension. Relationships between individuals and groups within local communities reduce isolation and promote social cohesion. Churches and faith-based organisations are well placed to create environments that will facilitate the development of stronger relationships in a way that statutory agencies are unable to do.

Furthermore, community services provided by churches and faith-based organisations are also highly relational in nature. Volunteers develop relationships as a basis for the services provided and understand their role as much more than merely a job that they do from 9am to 5pm. They seek to build real relationships - sharing their lives in a very personal, developmental and empowering way. Statutory services often tend to be less personal because they have to address the needs of a very large number of people through generic service provision. Conversely, churches and faith-based organisations can develop services that are highly specific and personalised and also holistic in nature. Because they are dealing with smaller numbers of recipients, they can deal with each on a case-by-case in-depth basis.

Individual empowerment and transformation

As research by the Shaftesbury Society of the UK concludes, sometimes the boundaries between user, member, volunteer and manager are permeable. As people's confidence and skills develop, they often take part in running projects or they progress into paid employment.[85] Churches and faith-based organisations place great emphasis on helping people move from dependency to living independent lives.

Inclusiveness

Churches and faith-based organisations see the need to serve people outside their own membership as an intrinsic part of their raison d'être. This is often reflected in vision and mission statements.

Hard-to-reach groups

Churches and faith-based organisations are well placed to provide services to under-represented ethnic groups that generic services often fail to engage with. They can develop services that resonate with the cultural and religious sensibilities of distinctive ethnic groups and in the native languages that are spoken by different ethnic groups.

Possible cross border cooperation

Churches, being located at the grass roots of every community throughout the EU, are well placed to build and develop community. Using the relationships and networks of regional, national, European and the local level, affords the church an opportunity to develop community and improve social capital. There are many programmes supported also by the EU of which the churches could avail themselves and so further improve society in their locality. Many churches, however, do not take this opportunity and need to be challenged and resourced to do so. Churches could play a significant partnering role with other NGO's, as well as partnering with each other across the borders, but this has yet to be developed to its fullest potential.

Case Study 1
Championing Neighbourhoods
It's all about you

GROW has been a successful interregional cooperation programme between South East England, Andalucía, Emilia-Romagna, Noord Brabant and Malopolska utilising Interegg II funding. Led by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), the five regions joined forces to share knowledge and ideas to deliver sustainable growth across a broad spectrum of activities, and this would not have been possible without the hard work, passion and commitment of the sub-projects and all 82 participating organisations. Within this project, the United Reformed Church UK (URC) led by Hope in the Community Ltd (a regeneration company established by the URC), partnered with a Spanish Catholic social project and a Polish Catholic academy to share good practice on how to develop community champions. This entailed a research programme

85 Randolph-Horn, Elizabeth, ed. 1997, 'Faith Makes Communities Work: A Report on Faith-Based Community Development', London: DETR.

to discover good practice and training whilst embarking on cross-cultural exchanges. The final report demonstrated that the projects played a significant part in community development.

Case Study 2
Joint work in protecting the environment

Under the leadership of FEST Heidelberg (Germany) a project was developed involving the parish in Sibiu of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Romania and Orthodox Academy in Vilemov (Czech Republic) jointly addressing the challenge of the churches' engagement in protecting the environment. An Eco-management scheme to improve the environmental standards of church buildings by fitting 25 solar panels on the roofs of church buildings of member churches of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic was combined with the exchange of experience and funding from the different countries. The project helped not only to respond to the needs of the churches, but enabled them to demonstrate their contribution to the wider community in their respective settings.

Conclusions

Christianity, which historically became the major religion of Europeans, continues, together with other religious and humanist traditions, to be the source of many values which Europeans embrace as theirs. Despite the variety of expressions of faith and of the differences of tradition and Christian confessions, there is a unity among Christians demonstrated by the manifold cooperation of the churches, their common witness to society and by the existence of ecumenical relations between the churches. The motto of the ecumenical movement, unity in diversity, has been adopted by the European political institutions and remains the best way forward for Europe in the 21st Century.

The involvement of churches in society and their contribution to development in specific areas are part of the churches' self-understanding and commitment. Along with their contribution to European integration by involvement in the various practical projects at the grassroots level, and by maintaining various forms of dialogue with partners in society and in the world of politics, churches contribute to European integration by creating opportunities for people to meet and by fostering the spirit of togetherness. Against this background, the main challenges for the future of European projects are identified as:

- the future of the values debate, including the question of how European society will deal with various sorts of fundamentalism and populism;
- the social and human face of the EU;
- dialogue between religions.

The way in which these challenges are addressed has implications for the expectations and future vision of our continent, both from an individual and from a larger societal perspective. The question of values has, in this regard, the principal place. It has repercussions for the understanding of the role of the individual, the community and for the nature of communication between them.

Churches in Europe have, in Charta Oecumenica, committed themselves to supporting European integration and, on the basis of their Christian faith, working towards a humane and socially conscious Europe. The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, reiterated these thoughts in his speech at the 3rd European Ecumenical

Assembly in Sibiu when he said that "a Union defined by its geographical and economic dimensions only would lack unity. Only a sharing of values can put flesh on the bones of a political entity such as the European Union, which was conceived as a community of values".[86] Churches are not alone in focusing on the link between values and the process of European integration. They are ready to cooperate with other partners engaged in the integration process.

The dialogue between churches and political institutions is one form of public engagement of the churches. The need for such an involvement has been recognised by both the churches and the political authorities. The President of the European Commission stated in his speech in Sibiu that "the role of religion in public life is the subject of a widespread debate at the present time. If one considers that politics are inseparable from ethics, an institutional framework attentive to all the components in society, must listen carefully to the message of the religions".

For Christians, values are not only abstract principles but the guiding standards of everyday life; as such they are the key function of their faith. They know that "where there is no vision, the people perish".[87] This understanding is based not only on God's promise of well-being and

prosperity but also on the conviction that this well-being does not come as a result of human efforts alone. It is linked with God's intervention in the world[88] and His presence, in the Holy Spirit, given to all through the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[89] In this spirit, the European church leaders stated in their Open Letter in December 2006 that "Revitalisation of Christian faith will assist European societies to retain their identity and to develop values which make up the core of European culture ... In this way we seek to make our contribution to the future of Europe and so to make it a continent of hope".[90]

Based on this faith, Christians do have a lot to contribute to the development of Europe. As Commissioner Jan Figel stated in his speech in Sibiu, "Christians - individually and collectively - have a very important role to play for the future of Europe: to foster citizenship, enhance democracy, develop responsibility for the preservation of mankind, nature and heritage, to protect the dignity of the human person, spread peace and the reconciliation of peoples and cultures - including the dialogue with the other large monotheistic religions". We must do it because it is our divine mandate as witnesses of the Triune God. And we can do it, because: "The strength of Christians in his-

86 José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly, Sibiu, September 2007.

87 Proverbs 29:18.

88 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD, Jeremiah 29:11-14.

89 For "In him [Jesus Christ] we live and move and have our being", Acts of the Apostles 17:28.

90 An Open Letter from Church Leaders to Political Leaders in Europe: 'For a Europe Based on Shared Values and a Common Hope', church leaders conference on Values-Religion-Identity, Brussels, December 2006.

91 Jan Figel, member of the European Commission, responsible for the portfolio on Education and Culture, 3rd European Ecumenical Assembly, Sibiu, September 2007.

tory was actually never in their numbers but in their inspiration (faith) and commitment (credibility)".**91**

In this spirit, churches in Europe gathered in the CSC/CEC, express their commitment to the European integration process and their readiness and willingness to contribute to this process based on their Christian faith and to co-operate in order to promote Christian values, participation and human inter-relation.

"May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit".

(Romans 15:13)

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