

CEUC 2009-2010

Report to the general assembly by the chair of the board

As chair of the board, it is my duty and my privilege to present you the report about last year's board activities. My report is focusing on three topics: conferences, networking between European chaplains, and the composition of the board.

Conferences:

With regard to our stable financial situation the board agreed to use actively the financial resources of CEUC in order to support the organizing committee of this year's conference. On the basis of a loan contract determining the conditions of payment and repayment, CEUC transferred 5000 Euro as a start up loan. The idea of giving a start up loan was successful, the board will continue to use it, if a local host committee is applying for this kind of support.

Another form of financial support has been used. For many years a part of the CEUC budget was reserved for financing the conference participation of chaplains from Eastern Europe. Due to the absence of eastern European colleagues, we never used these resources. This year we were in the lucky situation to sponsor the participation of three participants from Hungary by covering their conference fee.

This sponsorship can also be seen as an investment. We received a bid from Hungarian chaplains to host next year's conference in Debrecen/Hungary. The board supported and welcomed gladly this excellent bid. Board member Daniel Püsky will officially inform and invite you later at this general assembly.

Network between European chaplains:

At various occasions our members asked us, whether and how the membership fee could be paid if one was not present at the annual conference. Finally we found an uncomplicated solution. Our treasurer and webmaster Lise Lotz implemented a pay-pal based tool. Since last September Members can pay their membership fee through our website in case they missed a conference. We have to say that the online payment was not overwhelmingly used yet – but also Rome was not built in one day. And we will continuously encourage our member to use it.

A second project that the board started last year is focused on the situation of chaplaincies in Europe. We observed a paradox and threatening process: the number of students at European universities is still growing, combined with an increasing number of counseling cases for the chaplains. At the same time chaplaincies in many regions are under pressure with cutbacks of budgets and staff. Our idea was to carry out a survey about the situation of the European chaplaincies first. And in a second step we plan to generate a statement addressed to regional church and university administrations, in order to support the chaplaincies. We will hear about the project later at this General Assembly from vice-chair Esther Diederer.

The solidarity among the European chaplains is not only based on organizational or financial instruments, but mainly on friendship, on sharing bad news and good news. Thus it was a pleasure for me to hear from our Dutch colleague Ton Meijknecht and about his appointment as knight in the order of Oranje-Nassau. I spread this message in the CEUC newsletter. If you have messages about chaplaincies and chaplains in your region that you would like to share with your European colleagues, let us know.

Composition of the board:

After last year's conference the board welcomed three new members: Jussi Murtovuori, representing the region Finland/Sweden/Baltic countries; Jens Munk, representing the region Denmark/Norway, and Daniel Püsky, our first board member from the region Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Poland.

In its first meeting in November last year, the board elected Nils J. Riedl as secretary of CEUC. The board came together for two board meetings this year and – in addition to that – we held two phone conferences.

The board of CEUC is not complete: We are still looking for a colleague representing the region Germany/Austria. And the board is in a permanent regeneration process: Jennifer Croft will leave the board after having represented the region UK/Ireland for two years. It is important that the head of an international and ecumenical organization like ours is representing as many regions and as many confessions as possible. So next year, it is time for me to step down and to make place for a new chair of the board and for a new board member.

Looking back on the past year I would like to express my gratitude to the colleagues of the board, and to the secretary and the treasurer, for their cooperation and their creativity. And I am grateful for the organizing committee of this year's conference for being excellent host and hostesses. Last but not least, on behalf of the board of CEUC I would like to thank you, the members, for your support, for your loyalty and for sharing ideas and experiences with us.

*Coventry, June 17 2010,
Markus Anker, chair of the board*