



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

NORTHERN EUROPE AND EURASIA CENTRAL CONFERENCE

Minutes – Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Council

Friday March 5th 10:00 (Copenhagen)/11:00 (Baltic), 12:00 (Moscow) to 17:00/18:00/19:00

Saturday March 6th 09:00/10:00/11:00 – 16:00/17:00/18:00

Online meeting

Present: Ingull Grefslie (NO), Hilde Marie Ørgried Movafagh (NO), Per-Endre Bjørnevik (NO), Johanna Lundereng (NO), Ole Birch (DK) Edgars Snieders (LV), Jori Brander (FF), Meeli Tankler (EE), Robert Tserenkov (EE) Remigijus Matulaitis (LT), Dimitry Lysin (EA), Elena Kitaeva (EA), Sergei Pugachev (EA), Vasylyna Kohutka (EA) Svetlana Tsoy (EA).

Christian Alsted, Edward Khegay, Kirsten Hastrup.

Absent: Bettina Pedersen (DK), Sarah Tiainen (FS). Sarah Tiainen joined us from item 11.

Minutes by Ole Birch.

Item	Minutes
1	<p>Joint Opening</p> <p>Edward Khegay led us in prayer and read from Proverbs 16.</p> <p>He reflected on the wisdom that the Lords plans are more important than our plans. We can rebel and be frustrated, but the years will prove that the Lords knew better. He challenged us to seek God in times where our plans are changing rapidly. Seek the God factor.</p>
2	<p>Approval of the minutes & agenda</p> <p>The minutes of our meeting of March 28. 2020 was approved.</p> <p>The agenda was approved.</p>
3	<p>Present Situation & Questions</p> <p>Edward Khegay gave a short introduction to the present situation after the postponement of the General Conference.</p>
4	<p>General Conference/Central Conference</p> <p>4. a Press release General Conference.</p> <p>The General Conference of 2020 postponed due to the COVID 19 pandemic to August/September 2021 has been postponed again. It will now be held in 29. August to 6. /September 2022 in Minneapolis.</p> <p>No new petitions can be sent to the General Conference 2022. Paragraphs that are opened can be amended at the General Conference.</p> <p>The quadrennium is now extended by two years. The terms of board members are extended by two years.</p> <p>4. b. Press release special session.</p> <p>The Council of Bishops has called a special online session of the General Conference on May 8. 2021 with a limited agenda to suspend the rules to allow for paper balloting on 12</p>



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	<p>amendments to the Book of Discipline.</p> <p>One of the 12 amendments to the Book of Discipline on this limited agenda will, if approved, make it possible to call the Central Conference, and to elect bishops.</p> <p>None of the structural proposals will be on the agenda of the special online session of the General Conference. It would take a two thirds majority to change the agenda that is set by the Council of Bishops in the call of the special session of the General Conference.</p> <p>Christian Alsted is working with the General Conference delegates to ensure that they are prepared.</p>
5	<p>The European Situation</p> <p>The Council was presented with three documents composed by the bishops Patrick Streiff, Harald Rückert and Christian Alsted. Note: The documents were written before the latest postponement of the General Conference.</p> <p>“Towards the Future”</p> <p>Abstract: Outlining a timeline for changes and consequences if the <i>Protocol on Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation and Restructuring</i> and <i>The Christmas Covenant</i> is approved by The General Conference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The timeline must be adjusted to the new dates for the General Conference and to whether the next GC is 2024 or not.• Members of the council expressed the desire to be involved in this work and not just having the bishops work on it. Can the whole Central Conference be involved?• Other questions from the conversation:• What is happening in Eurasia around leaving? Edvard Kehgay: If the protocol is approved, I think Eurasia leaves the UMC. If not, I am not sure.• Is this the time to change the rhythm of the GC to get it away from US presidential elections? <p>“Central Conferences in Europe after 2022 – A task Force Mandate for a post-separation UMC”</p> <p>Abstract: Proposal for a Task Force and its mandate to study the effects of General Conference decisions enabling clergy and Annual Conferences to decide whether they depart or remain in the UMC, and to draft a petition concerning the future of the Central Conferences in Europe to the General Conference. The draft shall be presented to a joint meeting of the Central Conferences Executives in July 2023.</p> <p>“Central Conferences in Europe after 2022 – On Separation from the UMC”</p> <p>A review of the provisions of the “Protocol” for Annual Conferences, clergy and local churches that wish to leave the UMC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The European bishops wish to be helpful to all groups in this process.



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	Christian Alsted presented the <i>Statement on commitment to the future of the United Methodist Church</i> issued by bishop Steiff, bishop Rückert and himself.
	Area Groups – please see separate agendas. General Conference/Central Conference-called and regular.
6	<p>Report of The Eurasia Area Group:</p> <p>The report was presented be Vasylyna Kohutka.</p> <p>We move that CCC creates a working group to write a letter to Commission on GC and COB to clarify the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Would the Protocol be on the agenda in the beginning or the end of the GC?2. If GC decides on the <i>Protocol</i> on the first day, would it make sense to stay together and vote on the matters of the post separation UMC for the people of traditional views on human sexuality?3. Would it make sense to separate on the second day of the GC into two bodies according to the best of delegates knowledge? <p>Christian Alsted shared his information on the General Conference agenda and the challenges of splitting at General Conference.</p> <p>Proposal was not approved.</p> <p>We move that Central Conference Council decide whether we need an extra Central Conference or not? And decide on how the terms of the Bishops calculated in this time of postponement?</p> <p>We do not see a need for an extra CC and propose to affirm a CCC prolongation of the terms of the Bishop till 2023. Information needs to be sent out to all conferences.</p> <p>Two proposals were formulated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Even if the May 8th, 2021 called special session of the General Conference may make provisions for it, no extraordinary Central Conference will be called in The Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference. <p>The proposal was approved.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. The term of each bishop in the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference is prolonged until elections can be held at the next ordinary Central Conference after the 2020 postponed General Conference, and until a new bishop can take office. <p>The Proposal was approved.</p> <p>The Nordic & Baltic Area Group:</p> <p>Questions we will bring to the conversation with that European bishops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why a task force of the ACs? Why not the members of the councils/executives?



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why not reaching out to non-UMC Methodists in Europe? • When should it start? • What if the protocol and/or the Christmas Covenant does not get the support of GC? Is that the end of the task force? • Regionality in Europe, as a part of the mandate? <p>Action Items</p> <p>We will propose to the Eurasia Area group to join us to organise an online seminar for CC-delegates on the European Situation and the many future challenges for us. Time: Saturday when we meet in November 2021.</p> <p>Organisers: Christian Alsted, Hilde Marie Øgreid, Ole Birch and one from Eurasia if they join in.</p> <p>Edward Khegay accepted the invitation on behalf of the Eurasia Area Group and would come back with a name for the organising group.</p>
7	<p>Christian Alsted led us in prayer.</p>
	<p>Meeting resumed Saturday at 9 AM.</p> <p>Svetlana Troy was absent for some of this part of the meeting.</p> <p>Morning Prayer</p> <p>Vasylyna Kohutka read Matt. 6 “Seek first his kingdom”. She reflected on the Kingdom of God as the one thing we must seek this morning.</p>
8	<p>Identifying questions to discuss with the European Bishops.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why a task force of the ACs? Why not the members of the councils/executives? • Why not reaching out to non-UMC Methodists in Europe? • When should it start? • What if the protocol and/or the Christmas Covenant does not get the support of GC? Is that the end of the task force? Do we not need the task force in any case? There are important issues that we must work on as European United Methodists whether the protocol is approved by the General Conference or not. That is, the sustainability of the Central Conferences and the upcoming review of the UMC in Europe by The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters. • Regionality in Europe, as part of the mandate? • When can the ACs be expected to know what they want to do? • What if a Central Conference decided to leave? • What is going on with the “Bund” in the German Central Conference?



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9	<p>Meeting with European Bishops</p> <p>Christian Alsted opened this part of the meeting with reflections on Reinhold Niebuhrs prayer.</p> <p><i>God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.</i></p> <p>Bishops Rückert and Streiff presented the situation in their areas and responded to questions.</p> <p>The CCC shared its questions and concerns (se item 8 in the minutes) in response to the documents on the future of Europe, Bishops Rückert and Streiff gave their immediate responses. The Executives of the other two Central Conferences will also react to the three documents and the bishops will then finalize the proposal for a Task Force.</p>
10	<p>Reactions to conversation with Euro bishops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interesting to hear about the situations in the different European Countries.• There are important differences between the three CC in Europe.• We are looking forward to hearing what comes back from the three bishops.• The task force work must be organized around the nature of the work. Online work cannot be done be 50, 60 og 70 people.• A pre-task force would be a good idea.
11	<p>The next Central Conference</p> <p>Time and place The invitation to meet in Tallinn is still valid.</p> <p>We confirmed to have the Central Conference in Tallinn</p> <p>We need a new date for the Central Conference. New dates for Central Conference March 15. - 19. 2023.</p> <p>Budget.</p>



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	<p>Kirsten Hastrup presented the proposal for a budget for the Central Conference. More work must be done on it now that the dates are changing.</p> <p>Process for Episcopal elections Proposal to table this until our next meeting. The proposal was approved.</p> <p>Review evaluation from Central Conference 2016 Proposal to table this until our next meeting. The proposal was approved.</p> <p>Program Proposal that a team will work with the office to prepare the agenda and program. Preliminary report in November. Members: Ole Birch, Per-Endre Bjørnevik, Sarah Tiainen and Robert Tserenkov. The proposal was approved.</p> <p>Adaptations to the Book of Discipline. Preliminary list of items to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Committee on investigation and administrative review para 636 og 2703.2 put together fewer members - cooperation with other annual conferences.○ Paragraphs on Judicial Court have been forgotten since 2005.○ Paragraphs on complaints – can be simplified.○ Simplified annual conference organization.○ Course of Study program. <p>Proposal by Hilde Marie Ørgreid Movafagh The CCC of the NEECC call upon the Commission to propose to change the quadrennium's of the ordinary General Conferences, the first to be in 2025 and then every fourth year after that. The proposal was approved.</p> <p>Arguments: To avoid that the General Conference collides with the American presidential election and includes the tension that comes with this. To make a better timeline this time.</p> <p>Action: We will put it in a press release and in a letter to the Commission on The General Conference. We will inform our General Conference delegates.</p>
12	<p>Ukraine Moldova Provisional Annual Conference</p> <p>Christian Alsted gave a report. We have received documents from the secretary of Ukraine Moldova Provisional Annual Conference Vasylyna Kohutka about their decision to withdraw from the Eurasian Episcopal Area.</p> <p>The presidium and Christian Alsted have provided information on the rules concerning moving an Annual Conference to leaders in the Ukraine Moldova Provisional Annual Conference. This has included the following two points.</p>



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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A wish to move between episcopal areas within our Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference may be brought to the Central Conference if the Provisional Annual Conference of Ukraine Moldova makes a formal decision on it. 2. A wish to join the Central- and Southern Europe Central Conference may be brought to the General Conference through <i>The Standing Committee on Central Conference Matters</i> if the Provisional Annual Conference of Ukraine Moldova makes a formal decision on it. <p>Proposal: That Robert Tserenkov assists the Ukraine Moldova Provisional Annual Conference in understanding the rules and their options.</p> <p>The Proposal was approved.</p> <p>NB: After our meeting Christian Alsted provided the council with 7 documents concerning the communication between him and the leaders in Ukraine.</p>
13	<p>Financial Report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Presentation of the financial report for the Central Conference Fund. Kirsten Hastrup and Christian Alsted presented the report. The allocations in the report were approved. The report was approved. b. Presentation of the budget of the Central Conference Fund 2021 – 2024. Kirsten Hastrup and Christian Alsted presented the report. The budget was approved.
14	<p>Other Reports Nothing concerning this item.</p>
15	<p>Orientation from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. European Methodist Council – Selection of members We will ask for nominations from the Annual Conference. The present terms of members will run until the Central Conference. b. World Methodist Council Will the World Methodist Conference be postponed? We return to this at our fall meeting. c. Conference of European Churches Nothing to report.
16	<p>Other Matters Nothing under this item.</p>
	<p>Adjournment Christian Alsted led us in prayer.</p>