



# THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

NORTHERN EUROPE AND EURASIA CENTRAL CONFERENCE

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## Minutes of the Northern Europe and Eurasia Central Conference Council Tallinn, Thursday Marts 24. 2022.

Present:

Hilde Marie Ørgried Movafagh (NO) Per-Endre Bjørnevik (NO) Svein Veland (NO) Ole Birch (DK) Edgars Snieders (LV) Jori Brander (FF) Meeli Tankler (EE), Robert Tserenkov (EE) Remigijus Matulaitis (LT). Christian Alsted, Kirsten Hastrup,

Joining via internet: Dmitry Lysin (EA) Elena Kitaeva (EA) Sergei Pugachev (EA) Svetlana Tsoy (EA) Bettina Pedersen (DK) Edward Khegay. Sarah Tiainen (FS) Ingull Grefslie (NO).

Guest: Üllas Tankler (GBGM)

Absent: Vasylyna Kohutka (EA) Leif Göte Bjørklund (SF)

Minutes by Ole Birch.

### Minutes

Item	Agenda
<b>1</b>	<b>Joint Opening – Devotion Bishop Khegay</b> Bishop Khegay shared his personal reflections on reading the biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer considering the war in Ukraine. He shared his thoughts on being a peacemaker. We prayed together. Christian Alsted invited us the reflect on what we heard and how we could be peacemakers. A short conversation followed. We prayed again.
<b>2</b>	<b>Approval of the agenda &amp; minutes</b> <b>The agenda was approved.</b> <b>The minutes from the online Central Conference Council meeting Friday March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021, in Copenhagen were approved.</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Financial Report:</b> Presentation of financial report for the Central Conference Fund (document 3.a) <b>The report and its proposed allocations were approved.</b> Kirsten Hastrup explained the general financial status of the different funds we have.
<b>4</b>	<b>Orientation and election: (Document 4)</b> a. European Methodist Council



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	<p>Proposal: To not change the present representation before the next Central Conference.</p> <p><b>The proposal was approved.</b></p> <p>If vacancies arise the respective annual conferences' administrative boards will be asked to nominate.</p> <p>The annual conferences of 2024 need to nominate names to the ordinary Central Conference.</p> <p><b>b. World Methodist Council</b></p> <p>Proposal: To continue with the current system. We will send Bishop Christian Alsted and make the other 3 seats available to the Annual Conferences.</p> <p><b>The proposal was approved.</b></p> <p><b>c. Conference of European Churches.</b></p> <p><b>We elected Sarah Tiainen, Finland.</b></p>
5	<p><b>The situation in Ukraine</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. The situation of the UMC in Ukraine (document 5.a)</li><li>b. How are ACs raising funds to support the church in Ukraine?</li><li>c. How do churches engage in hospitality towards refugees?</li><li>d. The episcopal supervision of Ukraine</li></ul> <p>We shared stories of the situation in the Ukraine about the raising of funds to support the church in Ukraine and hospitality in European countries that receive refugees.</p> <p>Edward Khegay informed us about the church in Ukraine and the coordination effort by the South and Central Central Conference, the help coming in from many different countries.</p> <p>He also talked about the difficulties of working with the leadership of the church in the Ukraine. No annual conference has been held for two years.</p> <p>The decision made by the Ukraine Moldova Provisional Annual Conference in June 2020 to no longer be part of the Eurasia episcopal Area, has not been addressed further by Bishop Khegay since his letter immediately following the annual conference.</p> <p>Robert Tserenkov, Elina Kitaeva and Üllas Tankler shared their personal perspectives and experiences of doing ministry and living with the consequences of this terrible war in Ukraine.</p>



Item

Agenda

Concerning the episcopal supervision of Ukraine.

Several members of the council asked Bishop Khegay to consider letting the episcopal supervision be handled by Bishop Alsted until the end of the war. He refused this.

Hilde Marie Movafagh moved that the four European bishops should have a conversation on the same evening to try to solve the problem. (Bishops Streif and Rückert were scheduled to meet with the council to share about the development in their episcopal areas).

**The motion was adopted**

Hilde Marie Øgreid Movafagh commented that if the four bishops cannot find a solution, we should have a motion to the council to move the border of the areas of the Central Conference so that Ukraine will become part of the Nordic and Baltic episcopal area temporarily, as long as the war continues.

Per-Endre Bjørnevik moved to have the rest of the meeting in closed session due to the nature of the issue containing personal information.

**The motion was approved.**

The four European bishops met online in the evening.

Bishops Khegay and Alsted came back with the following motion:

The Central Conference Council will write a letter to the Ukraine Moldova Provisional Annual Conference and express our concern and care and assure the church in Ukraine and Moldova of our prayers and support in their struggles to survive and to serve the community. The Letter should also bring up the matter of the church building in Bishkek Kyrgyzstan and explicitly say that the building without further delay must be returned to its rightful owner the Eastern Russia and Central Asia Provisional Annual Conference. We ask rev. Oleg Staurodubets, who currently holds the deed of the building, to carry this out immediately.

**The motion was approved.**

Hilde Marie Øgreid Movafagh proposed that the Central Conference Council decide to temporarily move the Ukraine/Moldova provisional annual conference from the Eurasia Episcopal Area to the Nordic and Baltic Episcopal Area. Bishop Alsted pointed out that it is the Central Conference that has the authority to move an annual conference, and that, even if the war means that we are in a special situation, if Bishop Khegay is not in agreement, he will not support such action by the council.

Ole Birch made the following motion:

To ask the bishops to before May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, call a special online session of the Central Conference with the sole purpose to temporarily, until the next ordinary Central Conference, change the borders of the episcopal areas in the Central Conference so that the Ukraine and Moldova provisional Annual Conference be moved to the Nordic and Baltic Episcopal Area.



Item	Agenda
	<p>This action is deemed necessary considering the war.</p> <p><b>The motion passed with 11 votes in favor and 3 votes against.</b></p> <p>Bishop Alsted quoted BoD § 542.2 “The bishops in a central Conference or a majority of them, with the concurrence of the executive committee or other authorized committee, shall have the authority to call an extra session of the central conference to be held at the time and place designated by them”</p> <p>He then asked Bishop Kehgay, if he was willing to call an extra session of the central conference, which Bishop Kehgay declined. Bishop Alsted said that based on the clear majority of the council in favor of the motion he was willing to call an extra session of the central conference.</p> <p>The extra session will be called for Saturday the 30<sup>th</sup>. April 2022 at 09.00 CET.</p> <p>It was moved to ask Hilde Marie Øgreid Movafagh, Ole Birch, Robert Tserenkov and Vasylyna Kohutka to write the rationale for the motion based on the discussion.</p> <p><b>The motion was approved.</b></p>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>General Conference &amp; Central Conference</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Postponement of GC to 2024 (document 6.a) Bishop Alsted gave an orientation</li><li>b. Time and place for the CC.</li></ul> <p><b>The item was moved to item 9.</b></p>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Reporting from the Area Groups</b></p> <p>A. Continued Education</p> <p>Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- There are no application at this time.</li><li>- At the next meeting in the area group, we suggest having the theological fund on the agenda to discuss again how to interpret the criteria and how to spend the money. When applications are not coming, we must look at ways of initiating projects that benefits theology, education, and the church. Kirsten and Hilde Marie will prepare this point of the agenda.</li></ul> <p>The book project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The UM Publishing house has agreed to cooperate with us on the book project.</li></ul>



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	<p>- The committee asked the seminaries in Oslo and Tallinn to alternate on working on the book. Oslo has agreed, Tallinn is more hesitant. Oslo will take the first two books. The committee is still in charge of the project and can at any time choose to organize it differently.</p> <p>Events of continued education</p> <p>- The committee asked the seminaries to alternate on hosting a seminar for continued education. The first will be held in the spring 2023. It is the suggestion of the committee that participation is not mandatory. An idea for this seminar is peacebuilding, peacebuilding as the work of the church, etc. Costs will be covered from the theological fund except for a symbolic fee.</p> <p>B. Development of the connection in the episcopal area</p> <p>Nothing to report.</p> <p>C. International and ecumenical representation</p> <p>Nothing to report</p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Disaffiliation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Launching of the Global Methodist church May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. (Document 8.a)</li><li>b. Process for Annual Conferences desiring to leave the denomination (document 8.b)</li><li>c. Process for local churches desiring to leave the denomination (document 8.c)</li><li>d. Process for pastors and deacons desiring to leave the denomination (document 8 d)</li></ul> <p>Bishop Alsted walked us through the documents. They are not yet ready for publication.</p>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Possible Called Session of The Central Conference spring 2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Report from the task force (document 9.a)</li></ul> <p>Ole Birch presented the report.</p> <p>We had a long conversation on the purpose, benefits, and viability of having a called session.</p> <p>Motion: To communicate to the Central Conference delegates to reserve the marts 2023 dates for an online meeting.</p> <p><b>The motion was approved.</b></p> <p>We will look again at having a called session at our fall meeting. There we will also determine dates for a regular Central Conference following the postponed 2020 General</p>



Item	Agenda
	Conference.
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Regular Central conference – Time and Place</b></p> <p>The entire item will be on the agenda of our meeting in the fall of 2022. No further discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Budget</li><li>• Episcopal elections<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Extension of terms until election takes place</li></ul></li><li>• Review evaluation from Central Conference 2016</li><li>• Program</li><li>• Agenda – making the conference as engaging as possible<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Focus Groups?</li><li>○ Speed debating – or similar?</li><li>○ Small groups – spiritual life – Christian conferencing</li><li>○ Plan of organization and Rules of Order</li></ul></li><li>• Adaptations to the Book of Discipline<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Committee on investigation and administrative review para 636 og 2703.2 put together fewer members - cooperation with other annual conferences</li><li>○ Paragraphs on Judicial Court have been forgotten since 2005</li><li>○ Paragraphs on complaints – can be simplified</li><li>○ Simplified annual conference organization</li><li>○ Course of Study program</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Other Matters</b></p> <p>Coming meetings</p> <p><b>11-12 October 2022 in Copenhagen.</b></p>
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Meeting with European Bishops</b></p> <p>Due to the conversation about the episcopal oversight of Ukraine, this item was cancelled.</p>
<b>14</b>	<p><b>Reflections – perspectives</b></p>



Item	Agenda
	<b>Closing prayer – bishop Alsted</b>