World Student Christian Federation Europe Region


As approved by the European Regional Assembly 21–28 September 2005, Feketić, Serbia and Montenegro

The following policy document constitutes the basis for the future vision, programmes and activities of WSCF–E. This policy is to be implemented under the mandate of the European Regional Committee (ERC) elected at the European Regional Assembly (ERA) in Feketić 2005.

I. Theology

WSCF–E will work in the next two years on issues of a theological nature through the Theology Interest Group (ThIG).

1. WSCF–E considers the question of the relationship between religion and society in Europe to be important. WSCF–E will hold a conference on this theme in 2006. Its agenda could include:

   A. On a personal level: "my vocation to discover my contribution to wider society;" possible tension between spirituality and engagement in society; individualism and loneliness.
   B. On a social level: different patterns of Church–state relationship; the importance of Christian values to contemporary society.
   C. On an ethical level: questions of bioethics, eg. abortion, IVF (in-vitro fertilisation), embryos and stem cells research; idolatry of or emancipation through electronic technology.

2. In light of the previous conference on Muslim–Christian dialogue in Oslo 2004 and our recent contacts with the network of Faith-Based Organisations, the ERC will try to send delegates to meetings of the network. WSCF–E should give priority to further development of interreligious relations, including matters related to anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and interreligious marriages.

3. With a view to the training of people at the local level for expertise in ecumenical issues, the ERC should explore possible partnerships with, eg. the Bossey Ecumenical Institute, the Irish School of Ecumenics (ISE), and the Tübingen–Bensheim Consortium.

4. Some introduction to ecumenical theology shall be included in the programme of every conference organised by WSCF–E.

II. Culture and Higher Education

The Culture and Higher Education Interest Group (CHEIG) will work in the next two years on the following issues.
1. Culture: For the next two years the CHEIG suggests the following topic: Global Cultural Market: The Import and Export of Culture. This will fit into the WSCF global topic of "Empire." The interest group shall:

   A. organise a film festival entitled Images of Christianity in European Cinema in co-operation with a local SCM;
   B. in cooperation with the links coordinator, facilitate exchange programmes between national SCMs and encourage intercultural dialogue and learning;
   C. encourage publishing reports from these events in local student publications.

2. Higher Education: We will focus on the current problems of students and their solutions via close cooperation between SCMs and other student organisations. Christian Ethics in Higher Education is a possible topic for a conference or workshops. The CHEIG shall:

   A. encourage cooperation between local SCMs and national student representative bodies on higher education policies;
   B. connect WSCF to ongoing dialogue about higher education by establishing cooperation with European student and teacher organisations;
   C. facilitate sharing of knowledge and experience on current issues among SCMs.

III. Solidarity

WSCF–E will work in the next two years on issues concerning solidarity on the global and local level.

1. The ERC will organise a conference on the theme: "I was a Stranger and you Invited me in:" Homelessness and Poverty Housing in Europe (to be held in Romania in May 2006). The event will be held in cooperation with the NGO Habitat for Humanity, which provides assistance for people without proper homes, eg. in Romania. The aims of the event are:

   A. creating awareness of poverty issues and the gap between poor and rich in Europe today;
   B. developing a forum for different organisations engaged in the field;
   C. creating concrete action plans for youth about how to carry responsibility in their societies.

2. When choosing key topics for the next events organised by the ERC, the interest group should give preference to the following four themes:

   A. Migration: particularly between the countries where member movements of WSCF–E exist; but also about the living and working conditions of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons in other regions.
   B. Poverty in Europe and in the World: What causes poverty? Who is poor? What is done on the global, regional, national and local level to eradicate poverty?
   C. Just Trade and Just Life: world trade, as well as our individual decisions that are causing poverty. How can wise consumers change the current situation? How is world trade influencing the distribution of wealth?
   D. War or Peace in the Middle East: What is the role of European states, churches and national and local SCMs in the peace- and nation-building process in the Middle East? What are the interests of the countries which are influencing the region? The
conference should be organised in cooperation with the Middle East (ME) Region of WSCF.

3. Fair trade and local products should be provided whenever possible at every WSCF?E event as a practical first step toward solidarity.

V. Gender

The Gender Interest Group (GIG) shall focus on the following for the next two years.

1. Gender issues shall continue to be integrated into all WSCF?E events. Tasks and responsibilities in the Europe Region should be shared in an equal way between women and men.

2. A conference will take place in 2007 on the theme of Challenging Gender Perspectives in the XXIst Century. The conference will actively seek to attract and include both female and male participants and to view gender from as many perspectives as possible. It will include the issues of:
   
   A. Identity and Self-esteem;
   B. Questioning Stereotypes;
   C. Church and Gender Roles;
   D. Christian Perspectives of Gender;
   E. Family.

3. The ERC should encourage member movements to engage with the issues of trafficking and violence against women. Material and resources from previous conferences (Vilnius 2005 and Manila 2005 especially) should be made available.

V. Links Co-ordinator

In the past, responsibility for movement development and organisational growth was shared among all ERC members. Yet experience has taught us that time and energy for tasks such as recruiting members for conferences, movement building, and networking in general, is very limited.

WSCF–E, however, wants to form an ever-expanding vigorous network which gathers new people from existing member movements and their networks and to which new movements can easily join. Thus, in order to secure and improve the implementation of WSCF?E activities, a new position has been created on the ERC, which would cover the following priorities.

1. Recruiting participants for conferences from countries where we do not have an active member movement.

2. Following up with conference participants to locate new member movements.

3. Acting as resource person for SCMs seeking partners from other countries for exchanges.

4. Helping to co-ordinate one WSCF conference as a member of the prepcom.
5. Soliciting submissions for the e-newsletter from SCMs; preparation of the e-newsletter in cooperation with the Regional Office.

6. Compiling and editing one page of movement reports for each issue of Mozaik.

7. Supporting networking between existing movements.

**VI. Communications and Publications**

The position of communications co-ordinator has been dissolved. In its place we have created the new position of publications intern, which encompasses many of the tasks previously distributed amongst ERC members and which together comprise more work than a volunteer is capable of.

Tasks include editing and copy-editing Mozaik; organising distribution and advertising for the publications; and editing other reports and special publications produced by WSCF-E. We feel this has been a successful change and we recommend that this position be continued in the future.

The ecumenical journal of the European Region, Mozaik, has been published regularly twice a year since 2001. It has seen increased professionalisation, especially in the past year, with the development of a new subscription system and partially paid editorial staff. We are working on increasing our distribution and advertising with partner organisations. As in the past, future issues of Mozaik will be connected with the conference topics; participants will be encouraged to actively contribute to the shape of this outstanding ecumenical journal.

The purpose of the WSCF-E website shall be to inform our members and other interested parties about our events and to provide background information on the organisation. The ERC and the staff should develop a common database on the web, providing information on activities, campaigns, knowledge and contacts of each local SCM and WSCF; as well as volunteer and internship programmes. We encourage the next ERC to consider additional ways the website might be improved to reach more people more effectively.

**VII. Lingua Franca**

The ERA affirms the continuation of the Lingua Franca programme in Eastern and South Eastern Europe. The main focus will remain on language courses, but the means will be explored to extend towards including more leadership trainings. Searching for resources to maintain the continuity of the project in the coming years will be a priority.

**General Recommendations**

1. Different approaches to reading the Bible should be encouraged and respected at WSCF-E events and in her publications.

2. In order to practically apply the knowledge acquired at conferences, on the local, national, subregional and regional level, every conference should propose concrete ideas for action that can be carried out by the local SCMs.
3. The ERC should encourage and moderate discussions at the national and regional levels on the question of allowing single or multiple affiliated movements per country. Ideally this should result in a policy recommendation approved at the next ERA to be presented at the next General Assembly (GA).

4. The ERC should continue to develop a database of senior friends of WSCF–E, inform them about current WSCF events, and invite them as resource persons when appropriate.