

MKR-SAK 09/02: MEDLEMSSKAP I EURODIACONIA

Saksbehandler: Kristin Fæhn

Dokumenter: Statuttene for European Federation for Diaconia – Eurodiaconia
Bratislava-deklarasjonen 1994

Saksorientering

"**European federation for diaconia**" (tidl. "European Federation for Inner Mission and Christian Social Work") ble grunnlagt i Uppsala i 1922 av erkebiskop Nathan Söderblom.

Organisasjonens formålsparagraf beskriver utveksling av gjensidig informasjon om kristent sosialt arbeid i Europa som et sentralt element; som del av dette også å arrangere internasjonale konferanser og selv å være representert i økumeniske og internasjonale organisasjoner.

Organisasjonen hadde i 1996 28 organisasjoner som medlemmer.

"**Eurodiaconia**" ble grunnlagt i 1992 og skulle ha som sitt særlige ansvarsområde å påvirke de politiske beslutninger innad i EU-systemet. Organisasjonen har derfor sete i Brussel.

Medlemskap var kun for EU-land; den hadde før fusjonen 13 medlemmer.

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Kun få år etter at Eurodiaconia var blitt etablert erkjente man at de to organisasjonene hadde flere felles anliggender, og det ble satt i gang et arbeid henimot å forene kreftene.

En viktig spore til dette ble bl.a. Bratislava-deklarasjonen av 1994.

I 1996 ble de to organisasjonene slått sammen og statutter vedtatt (i desember 1996 i Salzburg). Organisasjonen har fått navnet "**European Federation for Diaconia - Eurodiaconia**". Den har i dag 44 kirker/organisasjoner fra 25 europeiske land som medlemmer.

Organisasjonens formål er (artikkel 4):

"å fremme diakonal årvåkenhet over hele Europa og bidra til at kirkens arbeid utvikler seg i samsvar med diakonale behov.

å skape en basis som tillater en gjensidig utveksling i felles ansvar mellom kirken og diakonien på europeisk plan for å se de utfordringer som er vist gjennom evangeliet om Jesus Kristus og gjennom den fattige og svake.

Den når disse målene særlig ved å

- a) utarbeide et teologisk, etisk og sosialt fundament for diakoni,
- b) representere diakonale anliggender overfor stat, kirke og samfunn,
- c) representere diakonale anliggender overfor Den europeiske union (EU) og andre europeiske organisasjoner,
- d) styrke båndene mellom kirkene og diakonale organisasjoner,
- e) minne regjeringene om deres sosiale ansvar ved uavhengig gjensidig samarbeid i sosiale saker,
- f) forsvare menneskerettighetene"

Denne organisasjonen er den eneste diakoniorganisasjonen i Europa med et mer *overordnet* perspektiv. I tillegg finnes en rekke organisasjoner og sammenslutninger som arbeider for spesielle saker innenfor det diakonale felt, så som fengselsarbeid, døvearbeid, flyktninger, krisetelefon etc.

Organisasjonen er nå inne i en nyorienteringsfase og har meislet ut følgende områder som det skal arbeides spesielt med:

1. Sosialpolitikk
2. Kurs og utdanning
3. Teologi og etikk
4. PR, kommunikasjon og økonomi

Minimumskontingent er 1000 DM pr. år. Det er opp til det enkelte land hvor mye man vil yte, men det er naturlig at velstående land betaler en høyere kontingent. Den svenske kirke, som det kan være naturlig å sammenligne seg med, betaler 3000 DM.

Medlemmene samles en gang i året til generalforsamling.

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I 1994 ble det arrangert en pan-europeisk diakonikonferanse i Bratislava der Eurodiaconia og Konferansen av Europeiske Kirker (KEK) var innbydere. Konferansen resulterte bl.a. i Bratislava-deklarasjonen (en økumenisk overenskomst om diakoni i Europa). I september 2001 var det et tilsvarende møte i Järvenpää i Finland, der to delegater deltok fra Norge, etter initiativ

fra KEK. Medarrangører denne gang var også European Contact Group on Urban and Industrial Mission og Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe. Disse fire organisasjonene ble i Finland enige om å opprette et "Europeisk diakoniforum", et talerør mot sosial utstøting. Stabsmøter mellom disse fire er allerede etablert.

Forholdet til KEK er meget viktig for Eurodiaconia ettersom også KEK befatter seg med diakonale spørsmål i Europa mer generelt. Disse to organene har jevnlig kontakt, og Eurodiaconia er innstilt på en samarbeidslinje og en arbeidsdeling mellom disse.

Vurdering

Den norske kirke er pr. idag ikke medlem i noen diakonal internasjonal, økumenisk organisasjon av det slag som Eurodiaconia representerer. Den norske kirke har mye både å lære og å tilføre europeisk kirkeliv på det diakonale området. Vi bør derfor være representert i dette organet. Ingen andre norske organer/organisasjoner er heller med i Eurodiaconia.

Andre nordiske folkekirker som er representert i organisasjonen er den finske og den svenske kirke; dessuten Dansk diakoniråd. Disse landenes folkekirker er også medlemmer av KEK, i likhet med Norge.

Dersom Den norske kirke melder seg inn i Eurodiaconia er det naturlig at KR/MKR er den instans som er knutepunktet for kontakten. Dette innebærer at KR/MKR sørger for innbetaling av kontingent og står som mottager av alle henvendelser fra Eurodiaconia.

Med Den norske kirkes inntreden i dette europeiske samarbeidet er det imidlertid meget ønskelig å trekke inn andre diakonale miljøer og organer i denne kontakten. Dette vil gjøre Norge som medlem bedre i stand til å bidra på det brede feltet som Eurodiaconias engasjement dekker, og det vil også gi mulighet for å styrke samarbeidet på diakonifeltet i kirkene her hjemme. Dette kan konkret bety at KR/MKR vil videreformidle informasjon fra Eurodiaconia til det diakonale kontaktnett og samordne initiativ og ønsker overfor Eurodiaconia. Videre kan det innebære at flere parter inviteres til å bidra til deltakeravgiften, men der den sentralkirkelige instans står for minimum halvparten. Et slikt bidrag vil i så fall være naturlig at blir fulgt med mulighet til stemmerett ved Eurodiaconias generalforsamling

Andre utgifter vedr. medlemskap, så som reise- og oppholdsutgifter ved generalforsamling, foreslås å dekkes av den enkelte delegats institusjon.

Denne type utvidet deltakelse i medlemskapet er tatt opp med det uformelle forum "Diakoniledermøtet" som består av lederne for følgende institusjoner/organisasjoner: Det norske Diakonhjem, Diakonissehuset Lovisenberg, Bergen Diakonissehjem, Menighetssøsterhjemmet, Kirkens Sosialtjeneste, Kirkens Bymisjon, Kirkens Nødhjelp, Kirkens Familievern og Modum Bads Nervesanatorium. I Den norske kirke i dag finnes ingen *nasjonale* diakoninettverk som det er naturlig å spille på; det var derfor naturlig å invitere disse til samarbeid, også på grunn av den kompetanse de besitter i forhold til Eurodiaconias mandat og oppgaver.

Diakoniledermøtet drøftet saken på sitt møte 18.09.01, og forstander Kjell Nordstokke melder følgende tilbake:

"Saken ble drøftet på Diakoniledermøtet 18.september i år, og det var enighet om å anbefale at Den norske kirke melder seg inn i "Eurodiaconia". Vi er videre positive til tanken om at våre institusjoner knyttes til "Eurodiaconia" gjennom Den norske kirkes medlemskap, og at vi også kan være med å dele kostnadene ved medlemskapet."

Forslag til vedtak:

Mellomkirkelig Råd anbefaler Kirkerådet å søke om medlemskap for Den norske kirke i "Eurodiaconia".

MKR-sah 09102

EUROPEAN FEDERATION FOR DIACONIA - EURODIACONIA

Statutes

Having regard to the founding document of February 1992 establishing Eurodiaconia, and in particular Article 1 thereof,

Having regard to the March 1993 Position Paper of the European Federation for Diaconia,

Having regard to the Bratislava Declaration of October 1994,

The General Meetings of the European Federation and Eurodiaconia decide to merge their two associations and establish a new Association governed by the following Statutes.

CHAPTER I

Article 1 Establishment and Name

A society is established in Strasbourg in accordance with local law under the name of

EUROPEAN FEDERATION FOR DIACONIA - EURODIACONIA

(hereinafter "the Association"). It applies for registration in the Register of Societies of the District Court of Strasbourg.

It is constituted in accordance with Articles 21 - 79 of the "Code civil local".

Article 2 Registered Office

The Registered Office of the Association is situated in Strasbourg at 1b, Quai St. Thomas.

The transfer of the Registered Office of the Association may be decided by the Board of Management by simple majority.

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Article 3 Duration

Its duration is unlimited.

Article 4 Objects

1. The Association promotes diaconal awareness throughout Europe and fosters the orientation of the work of the Church according to the needs of Diaconia.

It creates a platform to permit a mutual exchange in common responsibility between the Church and Diaconia at European level in order to face the challenges posed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and by the poor and the weak.

2. It achieves these aims in particular by
 - a) working out the theological, ethical and social basis of Diaconia
 - b) representing diaconal issues before the State, the Church and Society
 - c) representing diaconal issues before the European Union (EU) and other European organisations
 - d) strengthening the relations between Churches and diaconal organisations, and promoting ecumenical learning in diaconal activity
 - e) reminding governments of their social responsibility through independent mutual collaboration in social matters
 - f) defending Human Rights.

Article 5 Non-profit status

1. The aims and objectives pursued by the Association are of an exclusively non-profit nature. It does not seek to make a profit, either for itself or for its Members.
2. It uses its financial resources solely to fulfil the objects set out in its Statutes and does not offer disproportionately high remuneration to its constituent bodies, to its staff or to third parties.

Article 6 Collaboration with third parties

The Association maintains such relations as are necessary with the partners and organisations in the Church that operate in the same fields, in particular the Conference of European Churches (CEC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), the European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society (EECCS) and the Church Committee for Migrants in Europe (CCME).

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CHAPTER II

Composition / Organisation

Article 7 Membership

1. In principle membership of the Association is open to any general national diaconal organisation.
2. So that the Membership can reflect a wide range of particular interests, other organisations may apply to join the Association. Such applications give rise to a prior examination between the Board of Management and the Members of the relevant country.
3. Applications for membership may also be received from :
 - a) European, interest-specific organisations with a European vocation
 - b) Churches and church organisations which are concerned by the diaconal dimension of the life of the Church.

Article 8 Terms and conditions of accession

1. Applications for Membership of the Association are examined by the Board of Management and submitted for approval to the General Meeting.
2. Every Application for Membership must be submitted in writing.
3. Each Member undertakes to recognise and accept the Statutes of the Association in their current form as communicated to it upon joining the Association.

Article 9 Voting rights

In the Annual General Meeting, each member has one vote.

Article 10 Loss of Membership

1. Any Member may, after a period of notice of six months, leave the Association at the end of a calendar year.
2. The General Meeting may expel a Member from the Association if that Member
 - a) obviously no longer shares the aims and objectives of the Association
 - b) repeatedly fails to meet its obligations as a Member, in particular to pay its membership fees
 - c) in any other way seriously infringes these Statutes.
3. Pending possible expulsion, the Member concerned shall be requested by registered mail to explain itself in writing to the Board of Management.

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Article 11 Membership fees

1. The Board of Management submits the draft Budget to the General Meeting together with the amounts of the individual membership fees.
2. The membership fees payable by each Member are fixed each year by the General Meeting in line with the Budget.
3. They are composed of two parts :
 - a) the same basic membership fee for all Members
 - b) a solidarity contribution that differs for each Member organisation according to its capacity to contribute and the level of which is fixed by the General Meeting in accordance with an agreement between the Member organisation and the Board of Management.
4. Upon application to the Board of Management, the basic membership fee may be reduced where supporting evidence to warrant such a reduction is provided.

CHAPTER III

Administration and Organisation

Article 12 Constituent bodies

The constituent bodies of the Association are

- a) The General Meeting
- b) The Board of Management
- c) The Management Committee.

The General Meeting

Article 13 The General Meeting : Composition

1. The General Meeting is composed of the Delegates of the Members.
2. One member each of CEC and EECCS shall attend the General Meeting without the right to vote.
3. Members may apply to the Board of Management for other persons to participate with the right to speak.

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Article 14 The General Meeting : Convention

1. The General Meeting convenes at least once a year. Additional meetings take place
 - a) when the Board of Management so decides
 - b) when the General Meeting itself so decides
 - c) at the request of half the Members.
2. The Board of Management convenes the General Meeting. Requests in accordance with paragraph 1(c) must be submitted to the Board of Management.
3. Invitations to the General Meeting are to be sent in writing to the Members six weeks in advance together with the Agenda.

Article 15 The General Meeting : Powers and responsibilities

1. The General Meeting decides the following matters :
 - a) Adoption of the Minutes
 - b) The acceptance of new Members
 - c) The adoption of the Report by the Board of Management and the discharge to be given to the Board of Management
 - d) The adoption of the annual accounts and the discharge to be given to the Board of Management
 - e) The Budget
 - f) Membership fees
 - g) The adoption of Rules of Procedure
 - h) Amendments to the Statutes
 - i) The winding up of the Association.
2. The General Meeting elects
 - a) The President and Vice President of the Association for a period of four years. They may be re-elected once.
 - b) A further 5 - 9 members of the Board of Management for a period of four years.
 - c) The Auditing Office.
3. The General Meeting sees to it that the Board of Management is composed in such a way as to represent the various European regions as well as the diversity of Churches and diaconal organisations.

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4. All discussions and decisions of the General Meeting are recorded in a Minute that is entered in the register of the discussions that take place in the General Meeting and signed by the President and the Secretary.
5. An attendance list is drawn up in which each Delegate present signs his name.

Article 16 Extraordinary General Meeting

1. Changes to the Statutes of the Association are the competence of the Extraordinary General Meeting. The conditions for convening and the rules for conducting such a meeting are the same as those governing ordinary General Meetings.
2. The Extraordinary General Meeting must be attended by at least half the Members plus one further Member of the Association. Where that number is not attained, the meeting must be reconvened not less than fourteen days later. It may then conduct its business regardless of the number of Members present.
3. Changes to the Statutes of the Association must at all events be decided by a two-thirds majority of the Members present.
4. Voting is by show of hands, unless at least a quarter of the Members present demand a secret ballot.
5. The Extraordinary General Meeting is also competent to decide the winding up of the Association, the transfer of assets and the liquidation of the Association in accordance with the rules laid down in Articles 24 and 25 of these Statutes.

The Board of Management

Article 17 The Board of Management : Composition

1. The Board of Management consists of
 - a) The President
 - b) One or two Vice Presidents
 - c) The remaining 5 - 9 Board Members.

The following take part in the meetings of the Board but have no vote :

- a) The Secretaries
 - b) One representative each of the CEC and the EECCS.
2. It is self-constituting subject to the powers of the General Meeting.
3. Where a seat on the Board becomes vacant, the Board may provisionally proceed to fill it. The new appointment takes definitive effect at the next General Meeting.

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4. The Board meets at least twice a year and whenever convened by its President or at the request of a third of its Members.
5. The Agenda is drawn up by the President and enclosed with the invitations to the Members.

Article 18 Board of Management : Powers

1. The Board of Management

- a) publishes in the name of the Association statements on diaconal issues.
- b) represents the Association before third parties
- c) prepares the General Meetings
- d) prepares the annual accounts and the general Budget
- e) presents proposals to the General Meeting concerning the level of the membership fees on the basis of the Budget
- f) presents to the General Meeting an annual report on its activities
- g) instructs and supervises the General Secretariat
- h) elects and instructs the Secretaries. It may instruct or employ other persons for certain tasks
- i) may establish committees and working parties for the examination of particular issues
- k) directs the representation of the Association at the seat of the European Union before the EU and other European organisations.

2. The Board of Management is competent for all other matters that are not reserved by the law or these Statutes to other bodies.
3. It may delegate the execution of its tasks to individual Members.
4. The Association is validly represented before third parties by the President or one of the Vice Presidents and another Member of the Board.
5. The Board shall give itself rules of procedure settling further details.

Article 19 Remuneration

The Members of the Board of Management work in an honorary capacity.

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Article 20 Management Committee

1. The Management Committee consists of

1 President

1 or 2 Vice Presidents

1 Treasurer

The Secretaries attend the meetings in an advisory capacity.

2. It carries out the tasks entrusted to it by the Board of Management.

CHAPTER IV

Finances

Article 21 Resources and Liability

1. The resources of the Association are made up as follows :

a) Members' membership feess

b) Payments by third parties

c) Any income derived from assets.

2. The liability of the Association for its commitments is limited exclusively to its assets.

Article 22 Expenditure

The Board of Management decides what expenditure to make within the framework of the adopted Budget.

Article 23 Auditing Office

1. The Auditing Office consists either of two expert auditors or of a trustee or auditing company.

2. It examines the consistency of the annual accounts with the bookkeeping and verifies the proper management of the accounts.

3. Each year it reports to the General Meeting on the results of its audit and recommends the adoption or rejection of the annual accounts.

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CHAPTER V

Winding up of the Association

Article 24 Winding up

1. The winding up of the Association is pronounced by an Extraordinary General Meeting convened exclusively for that purpose.

The conditions for convening and the rules for conducting such a meeting are set out in Article 16 of these Statutes.

2. The Extraordinary General Meeting must be attended by at least half the Members plus one further Member of the Association.
3. Where that number is not attained, the meeting must be reconvened not less than fourteen days later. It may then conduct its business regardless of the number of Members present.
4. Voting is by show of hands, unless at least a quarter of the Members present demand a secret ballot.

Article 25 Transfer and liquidation of assets

1. Where the Association is wound up, the Extraordinary General Meeting shall be obliged to transfer the remaining net assets to one or more associations specified by name with the same objects.
2. In no case may any part whatsoever of the Association's assets be transferred to the Members of the Association over and above what is required to repay their deposits.
3. In addition that Extraordinary General Meeting appoints one or more liquidators entrusted with the liquidation of the assets of the Association and defines their powers.
4. Decisions within the framework of this Article must be taken by a majority of two thirds of the Members present.
5. Voting is by show of hands, unless at least a quarter of the Members present demand a secret ballot.

CHAPTER VI

Adoption of the Statutes

Article 26 Adoption of the Statutes

These Statutes were adopted by the Constituent General Meeting in Salzburg on 31 May 1996. They shall enter into force upon registration in the Register of Societies of the District Court of Strasbourg.

Name, Christian Name and Signature of at least Seven Members.

The Conference of European Churches is an ecumenical fellowship of some 118 Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant and Old Catholic Churches from all countries of Europe which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It was founded in 1959. Its administrative offices are located in the Ecumenical Centre, Geneva.

The CEC is governed between Assemblies by a Central Committee of 35-persons from whom are elected an eight-person Presidium. The General Secretary is Jean Fischer.

A publication containing stories of diaconal work in many countries of Europe is to be published by the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches, early in 1995.

Watch out for further announcements

Conference of European Churches,
PO Box 2100,
150 route de Fernex,

CH - 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

Telephonic: 41-22 791 6111 * Fax: 41-22 791 6227

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES

Towards a vision of diaconia in Europe

an invitation to take part in the
action and reflection process



THE BRATISLAVA DECLARATION

TOWARDS A VISION OF DIACONIA IN EUROPE "THE BRATISLAVA DECLARATION"

Introduction

This declaration is an invitation to contribute to the process towards an Ecumenical Diaconia Charter for Europe. The Conference of European Churches welcomes comments by diaconal bodies, ecumenical organisations and movements, churches and national councils of churches to further develop the process.

The consultation, which involved Orthodox and Protestant participants coming from 26 countries and representing diaconal commitment from a broad variety of areas and styles of work, met in Bratislava from 13-18 October 1994. The Consultation was called by The Conference of European Churches and planned in collaboration with Unit IV of the World Council of Churches, Eurodiakonia and the European Federation for Diaconia. This All European Diaconia Consultation discussed the aims and strategies of diaconia. A vision for diaconia in Europe was formulated, taking into account the actual situation, with its present priorities and difficulties. The consultation was based on encounters and sharing between members which led to a deeper understanding of different realities and laid the foundation for future cooperation.

Europe Today

As the world moves towards the new millennium, humankind faces enormous turbulence and insecurity as a result of the speed of change and the ending of previous political and economic patterns. This is both a threat and an opportunity. Diaconia is particularly active at the point where these changes impact on people. It sees the human face behind the statistics and it struggles for a Europe which allows a dignified life for all. Recent changes in Europe have made possible the renewal of the diaconal life of the church in all its fullness. The possibility of developing this consultation process is a sign of the new opportunities for the renewal of church and society in Europe today.

However, the rush for free market solutions and the process of deregulation have led to an ever increasing gap between rich and poor, a growing wave of unemployment, and a rapid spread of criminality.

In this insecurity, nationalism and racism emerge whilst violence grows and wars are also waged in Europe. In the new Europe, some doors for mobility are opened, while others are closed, preventing the free movement of people and splitting families. The political situation has also dramatically changed: some walls did fall, frontiers disappeared, but new ones arose. Within this context the European Union is a strong force affecting the whole of Europe. We face tendencies towards the unification of Europe and towards the dividing of countries at the same time. Regionalism within individual countries of Europe has both positive and negative aspects. It can allow people at the local level to have more possibilities to control their life democratically. It can also lead to the richer regions taking advantage of the economically weaker ones.

Also, Europe cannot be seen in isolation from other continents. The presence, in local communities in Europe, of migrants and refugees from all over the world makes visible the oppression, injustice and war affecting many countries and is a major concern for diaconia. Differences between east and west and north and south are visible in every day life.

Solutions for Europe cannot be found either at the expense of other regions of the world or by increasing the threats to the environment. We are called to question therefore, whether the present economic and political paradigm can deliver human rights, democracy and quality of life for all people.

All these changes also have a moral and personal dimension. In the speed of change and with the breakdown of sharing, loneliness is on the increase and a lack of social consciousness becomes more evident. Those traditional values which favour cohesion and human dignity are threatened. Diaconia must be part of a movement to give Europe a sense of purpose beyond economic growth.

Our vision of Diaconia in Europe

Diaconia works towards the renewal of human dignity, according to the likeness of God, in communion with others. This implies that diaconia has a spiritual foundation rooted in God's action and Christ's ministry. It is centred in the whole Church, in worship, in both proclamation and in the sharing of the eucharist. Diaconia puts into action commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ, towards the Kingdom of God, empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is rooted in the local church,

monastic communities and diaconal sister and brotherhoods. It can find its expression through means such as so-called institutional and political diaconia. These various aspects of diaconia need to learn from and link with each other.

Keywords which are essential to diaconal action are: *agape, faith, hope, caring, healing, reconciliation, reconstruction, partnership, ecumenical solidarity, koinonia, justice, sharing, sacrifice and resistance.*

Diaconia, which is an essential aspect of Christianity:

- serves people in their daily life as they face, for instance, sickness, hunger, old age, and mourning, addressing material and spiritual needs
- is grounded in the liturgy which makes diaconia visible by embodying diaconal values and methods. Diaconia is an extension of worship into everyday life, involving the whole people of God
- intervenes actively and imaginatively to build human community, in respect for the image of God in every person and therefore acknowledges human dignity

It works in favour of justice and for the liberation of the oppressed.

- acts with people in situations of economic and personal distress
- acts in the belief that poverty, unemployment and isolation are not inevitable

However, we confess that we, along with the churches of Europe, have often failed in our diaconal responsibility and service, and that we need to renew our service in response to the challenge of suffering and oppression.

Our future vision of Europe is marked by openness to the rest of the world and by the disappearance of deep economic divisions, racism and discrimination and by the creation of equality of opportunity and treatment for groups currently facing exclusion. It is a vision of sustainable communities marked by neighbourliness, sharing, care for people and for the environment. It is the vocation of diaconia, in cooperation with others, to contribute to the realisation of this vision.

Diaconia in Europe should therefore face the changing context of society, aiming to achieve with others, a transformation of economic and political power systems to create active democracy, respecting human rights. In doing this, new links will be made between church and society, in particular with those who are marginalised and excluded. This makes possible a renewal of culture based on sharing, participation and respect for diversity. Diaconia contributes to the awakening and activation of the God given gift humans have to love and live in solidarity.

How should we realise our vision for Europe and Diaconia?

To achieve a society with equal opportunities, disappearance of social prejudices, close neighbourliness, solidarity and caring for one another, Diaconia should be present in the name of Jesus Christ, serving, sacrificing, creating awareness, analysing, advocating, lobbying, and dialoguing.

In the diversity of the new Europe, Diaconia takes its form around the variety of human needs. In view of the multi-cultural situation Diaconia should seek the maximum possible partnership with other movements and organisations, on the basis of its core values. Central to Diaconia is the intention to work with *rather than for people*, aiming for empowerment and transformation. There is a need for the opening up of spaces for dialogue, encounter and exchange in order to promote learning and common action and to break down barriers. The development of informal networks is important in this process of local to local exchange and solidarity action. It should be built up locally, regionally and internationally.

The process of awareness building and conscientisation is essential to reaching our vision. There are two aspects to this. In the life of the church, diaconia has to work to promote a culture of solidarity and sacrificial sharing of people and resources. It also seeks to promote a learning process about the reality and causes of human suffering and oppression in various contexts. This educational task should also be carried into the wider society.

It is important that the structures of diaconia be developed in accordance with its aims and methods. They should be capable, flexible and light, able to adapt to new realities. The different possibilities of local church based diaconia, diaconal communities, institutional

Secondly, it is necessary to develop training strategies for diaconial workers. The methods of training should be consistent with the methods of diaconia itself. Training should be appropriate to the needs of volunteers, paid workers and others in the church related to diaconia. In service training opportunities should be developed to update on new issues, knowledge and skills. Opportunities for international training should be encouraged, to share skills from one context to another.

Thirdly, a process of political action should be developed using as a basis the promotion of basic human rights in every country. Some of these rights are already embodied in such documents as the Council of Europe Social Charter and the Helsinki Final Document as well as I.L.O. conventions. Diaconia should support the establishment of an observatory on these rights and take common urgent action in support of national groups or with international organisations where they are violated.

Fourthly, it is important to co-ordinate diaconal action in Europe with those working on related issues such as trade, to ensure that fair trade includes the question of living and working conditions. This also applies to the relationship between Europe and other regions.

The consultation invites diaconal bodies, churches, ecumenical organisations and networks to respond to this declaration, feeding back their responses to CEC and taking up its implications in their work. The consultation also asks the European Regional Group (CEC/WCC) to consider its implications at its next meeting.

diaconia and diaconia on the frontier should be related to each other for mutual benefit.

A key element of diaconia is the mutual sharing of resources - including people, skills, insights and finance. Resource sharing should develop methods appropriate to the core values of diaconia and not simply replicate existing secular project systems. Ways should be found to create a culture of diaconia which finds expression in caring and sacrificial giving in all local churches. This also implies multinational action through equal structures. It is important not to create dependency or create unsustainable institutions due to the imposition of inappropriate models of work.

Diaconia also has to strengthen its political impact, developing new methods based on vigilance to those realities which damage human dignity and block human flourishing and community. This political work needs to develop methods which support actions with and on behalf of those affected, building from the local level.

Strategic Implications for Diaconia in Europe

A strategy for diaconia in Europe will emphasise ecumenical co-operation between the different participants, from the local level to the international level. We do not want to create a uniform structure, rather to respect diversity within a common effort. Central to the strategy is the building of links between the different participants. This includes, among others:

- * strategic efforts to build a European platform or 'round table' which could promote reflection, spiritual dialogue, the sharing of experience deepen analysis, co-ordinate resources and action and concentrate efforts on points of urgent need
- * specific initiatives to support learning and exchange between the so called peripheries of Europe, including East-East, South-South and South-East exchanges
- * exchanges between grass roots initiatives, particularly self organisations of marginalised and excluded people, leading to confidence building, learning and political action
- * developing local-local exchanges with groups in other regions of the world on common issues