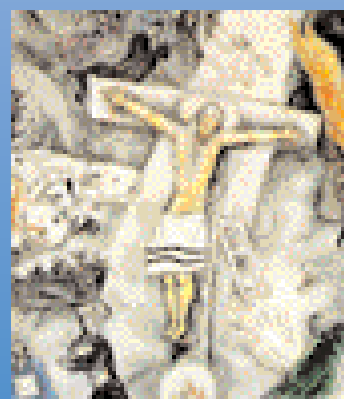


# Churches & Europe

## a Reader



World Council of Churches  
Conference of European Churches

# Churches & Europe a Reader

## CONTENTS

Map of the European Continent	4
Introduction	5
What is Europe? Myths & realities	6
Europe: some facts & figures	7
Political organizations & institutions in Europe	10
Churches & religions in Europe	12
The ecumenical movement & organizations in Europe	14
Churches, conflict, peace & reconciliation in Europe	16
Churches & mission in Europe	20
Churches, diakonia & solidarity in Europe	22
Churches, human rights & religious freedom in Europe	24
A heart & soul for Europe?	26
Sources & resources	28

**Written and compiled by:** Alexander Belopopsky (WCC), Mariette Grange (WCC) and Rüdiger Noll (CEC)

**Editing, design & layout by:** Alexander Belopopsky **Proof reading by:** Dimitri Oikonomou

**Cover design by:** Esther Hookway/Readywriters ([www.readywriters.co.uk](http://www.readywriters.co.uk))

**Photos and images:** WCC staff; Photo Oikumene/WCC Visual Arts

*Originally produced by the WCC Europe Task Force with CEC as a background document for the WCC Central Committee in January 2001. Revised version: May 2002.*

*The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the official positions of the World Council of Churches or of the Conference of European Churches. Copies of this document may be obtained from WCC or on [www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/europe](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/europe).*

# Map of the European continent



# Introduction

Europe, more than ever in its long history, is today a contradictory and complex space: an ‘old’ continent which, during the last century, experienced some of its most dramatic episodes and radical changes. Europe is an evolving entity, still in search of a ‘common European home’. Its history and culture have been forged by the three great Christian traditions: Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant. And it is in Europe that the ecumenical movement was born.

In this rapidly changing continent, the churches are faced with new challenges, which call for a renewal of the ecumenical vision and commitment. The legacy of totalitarian regimes and the confrontations of the Cold War have left profound scars and divided memories within Europe, which require new efforts by the churches to highlight the age-old and contemporary Christian experience of reconciliation, truth and justice in Europe.

The present background document, *Churches & Europe: a Reader*, includes selected overviews of European experience, including political life, war, mission, and solidarity—as well as of the churches and the ecumenical movement in the region. The purpose of this short document is to provide the reader with relevant introductory documents that highlight significant information and references concerning the region. The Reader surveys some of the most important aspects of church and ecumenical experience, particularly during the most recent decades.

The document does not pretend to be complete or exhaustive; rather it seeks to provide a series of snapshots or impressions which may stimulate further reflection and discussion by the general reader and among churches in Europe. The compilers have drawn extensively on existing research, including ecumenical documents and sources. Resources are also suggested for those interested in furthering their knowledge and understanding.

In 1967, the first WCC General Secretary, Dr Visser’t Hooft, spoke at the CEC Assembly about particular challenges and a vision for Europe. Reminding those gathered of the need for churches to show the world ‘the other face of Europe’, he said that, ‘Europe’s true calling is to proclaim among nations that God has chosen to reign from a cross.’ His words remain a powerful appeal in today’s Europe.

# What is Europe?

## Myths & realities



*The myth of Europa*

*According to mythology, Europa was named after Europa, daughter of Agenor, king of Phoenicia. One day, while she was tending her father's flock near Tyre, a splendid, milk-white bull appeared before her. The beautiful Europa decked its horns with flowers and, as she stroked it, mounted its broad back. The bull stood up and plunged with her into the sea, then swam to the island of Crete. The bull, who was none other than Zeus himself, vanished and re-appeared to Europa in his godlike form. From their union was born Minos, the civilizing king of Crete.*

This section makes use of extracts from Zetterberg's lecture of 1996 (see Sources and Resources section)

All the continents are conceptual constructs, but only Europe was not first perceived and then named by outsiders. *Europa* was the name already given to the region by the Ancient Greeks.

Among the continents, Europe is an anomaly. Larger only than Australia, it is a small appendage of the great landmass that it shares with an Asia more than four times its size. Yet the peninsular and insular western extremity of Eurasia, thrusting toward the North Atlantic Ocean, provides—thanks to its latitude and its physical geography—a relatively congenial human habitat, and the long processes of human history came to mark off the region as the home of a distinctive civilization. In spite of its internal diversity, Europe has thus functioned, from the time it first emerged in

human consciousness, as a world apart, concentrating—to borrow a phrase from Christopher Marlowe—‘infinite riches in a little room’.

The geographical divide known as the Strait of Bosphorus separates Europe from Asia and divides Turkey. Turkey today is Muslim, but it also has within its borders the origins of ancient Greek and Byzantine culture and it is a spiritual centre of the Eastern Orthodox tradition of Christianity.

Today, there are 52 recognized states in Europe. Together with Turkey and Russia, Europe had in 1995 a total population of 791 million. Without the Asian parts of Russia and Turkey, it has about 100 million less, that is to say 690 million. Europe today sustains only 13% of the world population.



# Europe

## some facts & figures



It is said that **European civilization** has its historical roots in ideas from Athens about reason, in ideas from Rome about the rule of law, and in ideas from Jerusalem about charity. How does European civilization differ from others? When this question is posed in the Third World, the answer is straightforward and hardly flattering: 'colonialism', 'racism', and 'communism'. How does European civilization differ from others? When asked this question, an ordinary European today normally answers: 'welfare,' 'technology,' and 'democracy'. (Zetterberg 1996)

In 2000 the population of Europe was over 700 million. Europe's proportion of the **world population** was 21% in the year 1800. It rose to 27% in 1900 when Europe was at the peak of its power. In the year 2100, Europe's population will be about 7% of the world total. Europe is the most urbanized of all continents (three out of four people live in cities), and it has very high population concentrations, especially in Western Europe.

As the European population ages, its birth rate falls and people live longer. **Life expectancy** is increasing in the West, and on average is 74 years in Europe, compared with 75 in North America, 69 in South America, 52 in Africa, and 63 in Asia. During the 1990s, the health situation in Eastern Europe worsened dramatically, bringing the average life expectancy of males down to 57 years in Russia in 1994.

Successive migrations and invasions have provided Europe with remarkable **linguistic and ethnic diversity**. There are reportedly 225 living languages in Europe (3% of all living languages in the world) of which some 40 are used as main

national languages. Languages from the Indo-European family are spoken in most of Europe and in much of South and Southwest Asia. In addition, languages from the Finno-Ugric family include Finnish, Hungarian and Estonian. Russian is the most spoken first language, followed by German. In countries such as Belgium, Switzerland and Finland, several languages co-exist officially, whereas in other countries various non-official languages and dialects are common. The Council of Europe and the European Union (EU) declared the year 2001 'European Year of Languages', in order to celebrate Europe's rich linguistic heritage.

It is estimated that from 1900 to 1995 there were **31 million military deaths and 43 million civilian deaths in Europe**, either on the battlefield or war-related. The total of 74 million Europeans compares with a world total of 110 million fatalities. These figures refer only to war. In addition, civilian deaths in the USSR under the communist regime may amount to another 50 million dead between 1917 and 1953, not including the war losses of 1939-1945.

Of the 400 million people living in Central and Eastern Europe, about one fifth are members of **minority groups** within their own country. There are one hundred cases in these areas of Europe where a minority nationality has a population in excess of 100,000 people, or 1% of the state population. The Roma or Gypsy communities of Central and Eastern Europe, believed to total 6 million people, constitute a small but conspicuous minority in many countries. This is a culturally distinct, traditionally nomadic people, whose plight is characterized by poverty,



**Left:** Albanian farmers till the land

**Right:** Commuters on the London Underground. Standards of living and access to technology in Europe vary greatly

**Far Right:** School children in London. Ethnic diversity is a hallmark of many European countries



low educational standards and social exclusion.

The Treaty of Maastricht, which took effect in 1993, set up the **European Union (EU)**, as a successor to the European Economic Community. The EU consists of 15 member states and seeks strengthened political and economic co-operation on a European scale and co-operation in the domains of justice and internal affairs of individual states. EU enlargement in the coming years may include up to ten countries of Central and Eastern Europe which could transform the nature of the Union.

The 15 major military spending countries of the world accounted for 80% of the **international defence spending total** in 1999. The USA accounted for 36%, followed by Japan and France with 7% each, Germany and the UK with 5 and 4%, respectively. The next three spenders—China, Italy and Russia—accounted for 3% each of the world total. The US continues to permanently station 100,000 troops in Europe.

In 1999, **27 major armed conflicts** in 25 countries were reported in the world. Of these, 11 were in Africa, 9 in Asia, 3 in the Middle East, 2 in Europe and 2 in South America. There have been over ten armed conflicts in Europe since 1989, usually of an inter-ethnic and territorial nature. The most serious have been in the former Yugoslavia (200,000 victims), the North Caucasus (Chechnya and Georgia/Abkhazia) and more recently in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia/Kosovo, which resulted in the controversial 'humanitarian intervention' of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces.

European **economic growth** depends increasingly on services rather than on agriculture or manufacturing. The service sector employs more than half of the working population in Western Europe. Europe's **economic and monetary union** was fully operational as of January 2002 forming 'Euroland' (population: 291m; GDP: 5,552bn Euros; unemployment: 10.9%; exports within EU: 950.5bn Euros; exports world-wide: 558.3bn Euros).

A series of recessions and economic changes have created a rise in unemployment over the entire continent. Overall, **the EU unemployment average** is 9.6%, while in Eastern Europe, the rate can exceed 20%.

**Standards of living** vary greatly across the continent. An average Finn is 7.1 times wealthier than his Russian neighbour; an average Swede 10.9 times more than the people across the Baltic. A German is 10.4 times richer than a Pole, and 7.9 times richer than a Czech. An Austrian is 6.5 times richer than a Hungarian, and an Italian is at least 50 times richer than an Albanian.

No region in the world has suffered such **welfare reversals** in the 1990s as have the countries of the former Soviet Union and of Eastern Europe. There, the number of poor has increased by over 150 million (greater than the total combined population of France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Scandinavia). No country in former Soviet Central Asia or the Caucasus has a per capita income greater than US\$ 3,000 (in comparable PPP terms). On average prices rose in excess of 500% per year between 1990-95. National incomes and birth rates have declined drastically, and income inequality has increased, within a context of an un-

precedented health crisis and inflation. The poorest country in Europe is considered to be Moldova, with a GDP of only US\$380 in 1998, in comparison with Luxembourg with an average GDP of over US\$45,000. The phenomenon of **child poverty and street children** in Europe is a significant and growing problem. One child out of six—47 million children—in the 29 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries lives in poverty. Severe child poverty rates are found in Italy (20.5%), the United Kingdom (19.8%) and Turkey (19.7%). In the Nordic countries, low levels of child poverty reflect the high levels of investment in family policies. In Russia, 46% of all children live in poverty.

**Women continue to be in the minority** in all national parliaments, with an average of 13% worldwide in 1999. The Nordic countries maintain a lead in the proportion of women in parliaments, averaging 36.4%. Sweden has the highest share of women in the lower or single house: 40.4%, according to a recent UN report. Turkey ranks lowest among Council of Europe countries, with 2.36%. Reverse processes occurred in Eastern Europe, where the percentage of women in parliament seriously declined with the transformation towards a market economy and free parliamentary elections.

Reports on racism in Europe in 1999 reveal that **racial discrimination and violence** are severe problems with no country of the European Union being immune from it. In 1999 murder and attempted murder on racial, ethnic, religious or cultural grounds were reported in many countries. Xenophobia and anti-minority attitudes also fostered violence in many Central and



Eastern European countries especially Romania, the Czech Republic and in Serbia—Kosovo, where Serb and Roma minorities are obliged to live under armed protection.

Paradoxically, Western European economies will become increasingly dependent on immigrant skilled workers to compensate for their aging populations and declining work forces.

Some 2.5 million people **migrated** to the West from Central and Eastern Europe during the first half of the 1990s. Between 1990 and 1997, around 2.7 million ethnic Russians and other Russian speakers returned to Russia proper from other parts of the CIS and the Baltic States. Most of the 11 million registered **immigrants** living in the EU live in Germany (over 5 million), France (2.25 million), and the United Kingdom (over 1 million). The majority of non-EU nationals in Western Europe come from non-EU Mediterranean countries and the former Yugoslavia.

There were **7.2 million refugees in Europe** (including some internally displaced persons for which the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees-UNHCR has been assigned a protection role) as of 1st January 2000 (Africa: 6.2 million; Asia: 7.3 million; Latin America and Caribbean 90,000; North America: 1.2 million; and Oceania: 80,000). High levels of population displacement and migration have occurred especially in the former USSR. According to the NGO United for Intercultural Action, more than 2,000 refugees and migrants have died in and around Europe since 1993 as a result of EU refugee policy. These deaths are often related to border militarisation, detention policies, deportations, and high levels of illegal trafficking in response to stricter asylum policies in 'Fortress Europe'.

Today, there are over 3 million officially registered **voluntary organizations** and 100,000 charitable foundations in the 41 member countries of the Council of Europe. Since 1952, 400 or so international NGOs have received 'consultative status' with the Council of Europe, and are concerned with many issues of civil society in the new Europe, including human rights, North-South solidarity and dialogue, equality between women and men, social rights, the European Social Charter, and employment and social policies.

The **ecological balance** in Europe remains fragile. In Western, Central and Eastern Europe, sulphur dioxide emissions were halved between 1985 and 1994 but the continent still produces approximately one-third of global greenhouse gases. Acid rain and related pollution are at high levels in Central Europe. However, there has been significant progress, particularly in Western Europe, in implementing cleaner production programmes and in eco-labelling. In the European Union, green taxation and policies that mitigate against the adverse effects of subsidies are important priorities.

In Eastern Europe and the USSR, decades of forced industrialisation, intensive agriculture and military domination contributed to **major ecological disasters**. The drying of the Aral Sea is creating massive desertification; the consequences of atomic testing in Kazakhstan and in the Kara Sea and the dumping of nuclear waste in the Barents Sea are still not fully measured. The explosion at the Chernobyl power station (Ukraine) in 1986 remains the world's worst nuclear accident. It polluted 40,000 sq. km, and has affected tens of thousands of people in Ukraine and Belarus.

### A new language for Europe?

*'De Hoge Europantico Instituto für Gutte Vakanzas, uno rapido curso organize van Europanto konvesazie in plurimos leisure argumentos.*

*Mit esto curso, los europantico vakanzeros zallen in todo el wereld habiles esse eine essenziale konversazie in Europanto te performe und manige novos encounters te make.'*

An example of 'Europanto', a humorous, non-official language invented by Italian EU translator, Diego Marani.



# Political organizations & institutions in Europe



Above: European co-operation focused on economic integration from the outset

The Europe that awoke in the days following the Liberation was in a sorry state, torn apart by five years of war. States were determined to build up their shattered economies, recover their influence and, above all, ensure that such a tragedy could never happen again. Winston Churchill was the first to point to the solution. In his speech of 19 September 1946 in Zurich, he said what was needed was 'a remedy which, as if by miracle, would transform the whole scene and in a few years make all Europe as free and happy as Switzerland is today. We must build a kind of United States of Europe'. Movements of various persuasions, all of them dedicated to European unity, were springing up everywhere at the time.

**The Council of Europe**, the continent's oldest political organization, was founded in 1949 by ten European states. It now assembles 41 countries, including 17 ex-communist countries, and has received applications from 5 more (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Monaco, Armenia and Azerbaijan). It has also granted observer status to 5 others (the Holy See, the United States of America, Canada, Japan and Mexico).

*The Council's objectives include:*

- defending human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law;
- developing continent-wide agreements to standardize member countries' social and legal practices;
- promoting awareness of a European identity based on shared values and across different cultures.

*Since 1989, its main job has become:*

- to act as a political anchor and human rights watchdog for Europe's post-communist democracies;
- to assist the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in carrying out and consolidating political, legal and

constitutional reform in parallel with economic reform;

- to provide know-how in areas such as local democracy, education, culture and the environment.

In October 1997, the Heads of State and Government adopted an action plan to strengthen the Council of Europe's work in four areas: democracy and human rights; social cohesion; the security of citizens and democratic values; and cultural diversity.

*The Council of Europe's main bodies*

The main constituent parts of the Council of Europe include: the Committee of Ministers composed of the 41 foreign ministers or their Strasbourg-based deputies, which is the Organization's decision-making body. The Parliamentary Assembly, which gathers 582 members (291 representatives and 291 substitutes) from the 41 national parliaments and Special Guest delegations from the three parliaments of Eastern European non-member states. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, which is composed of a Chamber of Local Authorities and a Chamber of Regions.

Since its creation, the Council of Europe has adopted 177 legally-binding European treaties or conventions, many of which are open to non-member states, on issues including human rights, the fight against organized crime, the prevention of torture, data protection and cultural co-operation. Of these, the European Convention on Human Rights is probably the most important. Each member country has to sign and ratify it. Citizens of member countries have the right to appeal to the European Human Rights Court if they have no recourse in their national legal system.



**Left:** Since 1986 the flag adopted by the Council of Europe has also been used as the European Union flag. It consists of a circle of twelve gold stars on a blue background (twelve being a number that represents perfection and completeness)

**Right:** The emblem of the Council of Europe

**Below:** The OSCE logo



Many church-related organizations are registered NGOs at the Council of Europe, including CEC's Church and Society Commission which has an office in Strasbourg. This observer status allows churches and NGOs to access and influence decision-making processes.

**The European Union (EU)** is the result of a process of co-operation and integration which began in 1951 among six countries (Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). This co-operation began on issues related to steel and coal, but it also intended to reinforce peace and reconciliation between France and Germany.

Nearly fifty years later, after four waves of accessions (1973: Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom; 1981: Greece; 1986: Spain and Portugal; 1995: Austria, Finland and Sweden), the EU today has fifteen Member States and is preparing for its fifth enlargement, this time towards Eastern and Southern Europe.

**The EU's main objectives are:**

- to promote economic and social progress (a single market was established in 1993; a single currency was established in 2001);
- to assert the identity of the European Union on the international scene (through European humanitarian aid to non-EU countries, common foreign and security policy, action in international crises; and common positions within international organizations);
- to introduce European citizenship (which does not replace national citizenship but complements it and confers a number of civil and political rights on European citizens);
- to develop an area of freedom, security and justice (linked to the operation of the internal market and more particularly the freedom of movement);

- to maintain and build upon established EU law (all legislation adopted by the European institutions, together with the founding treaties).

**The European Institutions**

There are five institutions involved in running the European Union: the European Parliament (elected by the peoples of the Member States), the Council (representing the governments of the Member States), the Commission (the executive and the body having the right to initiate legislation), the Court of Justice (ensuring compliance with the law), the Court of Auditors (responsible for auditing the accounts).

Churches also monitor and seek to influence decision-making processes in the European Union. This is done mainly through ecumenical bodies such as the CEC Church & Society Commission, APRODEV—the Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organizations in Europe; the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, based in Brussels, Belgium; and a range of individual church representation offices.

**The Organization for Security and Co-operation for Europe (OSCE)**

The OSCE was originally founded in 1975 in Helsinki as the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), a multilateral forum for dialogue and negotiation between East and West.

All European States, the United States of America and Canada are members (Participating States). Today the OSCE consists of 55 Participating



States, including all successor states of the Soviet Union.

The OSCE deals with three sets of issues ("baskets"): security; economy and ecology; the human dimension (human rights). Commitments are politically, though not legally, binding for Participating States.

In the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990) the CSCE was called upon to contribute to managing the historic changes in Europe and to respond to the new challenges of the post-Cold War period. In 1994, the CSCE was re-named Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). It established a number of permanent offices: the General Secretariat (Vienna); the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (Warsaw); the High Commissioner for National Minorities (The Hague); the Conflict Prevention Centre (Vienna); a Court of Conciliation and Arbitration; and the Parliamentary Assembly (Copenhagen).

The OSCE has focused in recent years on the Common and Comprehensive Security Model, conflict prevention, peace keeping, and mediation. Human rights, the rule of law and democracy as well as economic justice and social security are seen as preconditions for conflict prevention. Currently, the OSCE is engaged in a number of missions in countries with internal conflicts, in programmes which attempt to assist new democracies and in negotiating common security agreements. Internationally, the churches monitor and lobby the OSCE through the Churches' Human Rights Programme, a joint programme of the Conference of European Churches, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA and the Canadian Council of Churches.

# Churches & religions in Europe



Above: Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow

The vast majority of Europeans identify themselves as Christian, and Europe is a continent marked by **the presence and history of the three great Church traditions**: Roman Catholicism with its centre at the Vatican in Rome; Orthodoxy with its historical heart in the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, Constantinople (Istanbul); Reformation Protestantism, deeply rooted in the countries of Central and Northern Europe. European societies still continue to manifest differences directly related to the great confessional fractures and religious wars: between Eastern and Western Christianity; and between the countries of the Reform and the counter-Reformation.

**Religious affiliation** is diverse and evolving. Today in Europe there are over 500 million Christians in a total population of 720 million, about half of which are members of the Roman Catholic Church. There are around 75 million members of various Protestant Reformed churches, and over 100 million members of the Orthodox churches, mainly in Russia (the majority of Orthodox Christians are in Europe). In addition, there are over 30 million European Muslims, either recent immigrants (such as Asian Muslims in the UK and North Africans in France) or, in Eastern Europe, indigenous converts, from the time of the Tartar-Mongol incursions into Russia, or from the Ottoman period (including Bosnian Slavs and Albanians). Judaism has been an historically important component of the European religious reality. The genocide by the Nazis (Holocaust) during WW II ended between 5 and 6 million lives and virtually extinguished the Jewish presence in many parts of the continent. With about 2.5 million adherents, Judaism continues to be influential in parts of Western Europe.

Some European countries may still claim quasi-homogeneity of religious confession: for example, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg and Ireland are predominantly Catholic; Denmark, Norway and Sweden are mainly Lutheran; and Greece and Romania are mostly Orthodox. By contrast, countries such as the Russian Federation (56% Orthodox, 23% Muslim), Switzerland (47% Catholic, 40% Protestant) and the Czech Republic (40% of the population are declared atheists and 39% are Catholics) remain religiously very pluralistic.

**Religious practice** declined significantly almost everywhere in Europe after the Second World War. However, interest in religion remains a powerful and evolving force in Europe. At the start of the 20th Century, religious affiliation was often related to family or national tradition. At the end of the 20th Century, traditional religious institutions co-exist with a growing diversity of beliefs, especially in large cities. The lower public visibility of traditional institutions has been accompanied by an exodus from established churches to evangelical and charismatic groups, as well as sects and Eastern faiths such as Buddhism.

In many parts of Europe there are signs of **religious renewal**. One example is the widespread revival of pilgrimage, such as to Compostella (Spain). Other religious gatherings continue to attract major public interest and participation: the annual German church *Kirchentag* of German Protestants; the Taizé ecumenical community in France and their annual youth meetings; and the World Youth Days of the Roman Catholic Church. In Romania, the annual pilgrimage to Iasi (Eastern Romania) can gather up to a million faithful.



**Left:** Martin Luther transformed much of Western church thinking in Europe

**Right:** In 1998 statues of those who by their deaths testified to the cost of Christian faith in the 20th Century were set up in Westminster Abbey (London). Drawn from every continent of the world and from many denominations; and they include such well-known names as Martin Luther King, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Grand Duchess Elizabeth of Moscow



**Roman Catholicism** remains the dominant church in most of Western and Southern Europe. The contemporary Catholic Church has been deeply marked by the reforming council of Vatican II. Contemporary Catholicism is characterized by a diversity of practices, including a widespread charismatic revival (from the 1960s), the appearance of immigrant Catholic communities in European countries, and the re-emergence of vigorous Eastern-rite Greek Catholic (Uniate) churches in parts of Eastern Europe after years of communist repression. The collapse of communism, for some observers accelerated by the Polish Pope John Paul II, has been followed by a renewed call for evangelisation of the European continent. At the Special Assemblies for Europe of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in 1991 and again in 1999, the Catholic Church rejoiced in the new-found freedoms, and called for a 'new evangelization' of the continent, rooted in spirituality and holiness.

The majority of **Orthodox Christians** today live in European countries, and are organized in various local autocephalous (independent) or autonomous churches. The Russian Orthodox Church, with over 100 million members, is clearly the largest national church in the world. The Armenian Apostolic Church is the only Oriental Orthodox Church located in Europe, and in 2001 it

celebrated the 1700th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity as the state religion of Armenia. The 20th Century was a period of unprecedented martyrdom for the Orthodox churches. Christians in the Balkans suffered marginalization and waves of persecution during the Ottoman domination into the early 1900s. Most Orthodox churches subsequently experienced the terror and manipulations of the communist regimes: in the Russian Orthodox Church alone over 200,000 members of the clergy were executed between 1917 and 1980. This catastrophe, combined with political or economic migrations from traditionally Orthodox countries such as Cyprus, led to the establishment of important diaspora communities in most countries of Western Europe. Faced with the pressures of rapidly evolving and pluralistic societies, many parts of the Orthodox constituency (as in other churches in Eastern Europe) are tempted by forms of doctrinal defensiveness, anti-ecumenism and isolationism. However, in recent years the Orthodox Church has shown signs of a significant theological and spiritual renewal, with remarkable religious revivals in countries such as Russia and Albania.

**Protestantism** has its roots in Europe, and is characterized by a diversity of traditions and practices. Protestantism dominates most of Northern Europe,

and Lutheranism is the official religion of several Nordic countries. Protestant churches may constitute around half the populations of Germany and Switzerland, and maintain a central social role, especially in the health care and other diaconal work. Despite the decline in regular religious practice in many parts of Protestant-dominated Europe, many will still declare their affiliation to the traditional churches and most children are still baptized. A Protestant revival is observable in the former Soviet countries of Estonia and Latvia, while Baptist churches form a numerically important minority among churches in Russia and Ukraine. Traditional churches in these countries are joined by an array of new missionary groups and evangelists from abroad. Small but influential historical Protestant communities exist throughout Southern Europe. Pentecostal and Evangelical churches are experiencing a significant revival in all parts of Europe. The Anglican Church has a unique place in the Protestant world, containing both Anglo-Catholic and Reformed Calvinist streams. Protestantism has experienced a keen theological and lay revival in the 20th century, marked by figures such as Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. It is also expressed in a forceful social and political witness in many contexts. Leading Protestant figures were the driving force behind the creation of the WCC.

### Christians in Europe: witness and martyrdom in the 20th Century

The 20th Century was a period of unparalleled persecution and martyrdom for Christians in Europe. It has been estimated that there were more Christian martyrs under Stalin than during the great persecutions of the Roman Empire in the first three centuries of the history of the Church. The Christians of the Balkans and Eastern Europe experienced the terror and manipulations of the communist regimes. Churches were either forced underground or were completely destroyed, and tens of thousands of believers were killed or exiled. Leaders of the Confessing Church in Germany paid a heavy price for their condemnation of Nazism. The Roman Catholic Church commemorated a series of modern confessors of diverse origin during its Jubilee Year. The Anglican Church has recently added ten statues of 20th-Century martyrs to Westminster Abbey. And at its Council of Bishops in 2000, the Russian Orthodox Church canonized some of its many 'new martyrs', victims of communist repression.

# The ecumenical movement & organizations in Europe



Above: Logo of the Conference of European Churches, the largest ecumenical organization in Europe

The ecumenical movement has its roots in Europe. Following Christianity's Great Schism (1054), there were many attempts at church reunion and renewal. Efforts to bring the Western (Catholic) and Eastern (Orthodox) churches together (e.g. the Council of Florence) were later followed by post-Reformation initiatives to bring the Lutheran, Reformed and Roman Catholic churches closer. In the 18th and 19th Centuries ecumenical interest was stimulated by the experiences of colonial missions, the formation of Christian fellowships in many Western European countries, Bible societies, and the establishment of worldwide fellowships of churches (the Alliance of Reformed Churches first met in 1875). The early ecumenical conferences, and many of the pioneering leaders, were European. Early Christian women's movements (eg the Anglican Mothers' Union) and, more recently, the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women, have contributed significantly to the promotion of church unity in Europe. Youth movements such as the YMCA and YWCA, the World Student Christian Federation and Syndesmos, the World Fellowship of Orthodox Youth, were formative influences for generations of ecumenical leaders. In 1920, the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate, with jurisdiction throughout much of South-East Europe, became the first church to appeal publicly for a permanent organ of fellowship and co-operation of 'all the churches'. Calling for the same in the 1920s were Archbishop Söderblom (Sweden) and J. Oldham (UK).

The **World Council of Churches (WCC) was formally constituted** at its first Assembly in Amsterdam (1948). 147 churches from 44 countries (many from Europe) were represented at the inaugural gathering. The post-war divisions in Europe mean that Eastern European, and especially Orthodox, membership in the WCC

was delayed (many joined only in 1961) and was strictly controlled by the communist authorities. Although the membership and agenda of the WCC shifted to the South in subsequent years, the WCC was closely involved in the formation of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) (providing part-time staff at the start) and it continues to enjoy close co-operation.

Following the political changes that took place in 1989, the WCC renewed its relational and programmatic commitments in the region, especially with churches in Central and Eastern Europe. The focus has been to enable the churches to respond to the tremendous challenges they face, and special efforts were made by the WCC in the fields of social diakonia (see definition on p.20), humanitarian assistance (through ACT International) and religious education. A WCC Eastern Europe Office was established in 1994, and in 2000 the WCC launched the South-East Europe Ecumenical Partnership as the latest in its efforts to promote peace and reconciliation in the conflict-ridden region.

The role of the WCC in Europe has not been seen without criticism. Many accuse the WCC and other ecumenical organizations of relativizing human rights abuses and of ignoring the plight of political and Christian dissidents in Central and Eastern Europe during the Cold War. The present WCC General Secretary has called for a 'critical assessment' of the role of ecumenical organizations in this period.

The movement for church unity has enjoyed some notable successes in Europe in recent decades. Church unions and agreements have proliferated at the national and regional levels, for example the Leuenberg Agreement (1973) between Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Europe along with the Union Churches which

**Right:** the founding Assembly of the WCC, Amsterdam, 1948



grew out of them, and the related pre-Reformation Waldensian Church and the Church of the Czech Brethren 'affirmed together the common understanding of the Gospel which enables them to declare and to realize church fellowship'.

The **Conference of European Churches** (CEC) is the regional ecumenical body which links in fellowship some 125 churches and 25 associated organizations in all countries of the European continent. Together in CEC, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Orthodox, Reformed, Old Catholics and Pentecostals are committed to live and witness in a spirit of ecumenism, sharing, understanding and mutual respect. Churches strive to promote the unity of the Church and to present a common Christian witness to the people of Europe.

The project of bringing the churches of Europe into conversation with each other developed from the deep divisions and acute tensions in Europe after the second world war. Established in 1959 in the era of the Cold War the CEC emerged into a fragmented continent. As such, the churches in Europe felt one priority of their work to be 'building bridges'. CEC consistently tried to do this over the years, insisting that no Iron Curtain existed among the churches. CEC has also tried to build bridges between minority and majority churches, between the generations, between women and men, and between Christians of different confessions.

While the Roman Catholic Church is not a member of CEC, it sustains close relationships. A number of ecumenical encounters have taken place in Europe jointly arranged by CEC and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE). The most significant of these events were the European Ecumenical Assemblies; 'Peace with Justice' (Basel, Switzerland, 1989), and

'Reconciliation, Gift of God and Source of New Life' (Graz, Austria, 1997).

CEC considers and acts on many concerns in contemporary Europe. Chief among these is ecumenism in Europe. With the opening up of the continent's political barriers after 1989, the issue of common mission has been added to ecclesiology for study and action.

In order to satisfy better the demands of the continent on issues of church and society, and in order to reflect the changing situation with regard to the European institutions, CEC and the European Ecumenical Commission for Church and Society (EECCS) integrated in 1999. The then newly-established Commission for Church and Society with offices in Brussels, Strasbourg and Geneva represents CEC's member churches at the European institutions, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the UN. Among its current priorities are: the legislation of the European Union; bioethics; security issues; economic, environmental and social concerns; human rights and religious freedom; European integration; North-South relations.

Other contemporary concerns include communication and information, the role of women in society (especially violence to and trafficking in women), and youth involvement in the ecumenical movement. Together with CCEE, CEC reflects on the relationships with Islam in Europe. CEC closely co-operates with the Churches' Committee for Migrants in Europe on migration, refugees, racism, xenophobia, and the Roma.

Following the Second European Ecumenical Assembly (Graz 1997) CEC and CCEE are in the process of drafting a *Charta Oecumenica*, a set of guidelines which seek to improve relationships among the churches of Europe.

**Some of the numerous ecumenical organizations in Europe include:**

*APRODEV - Association of WCC-Related Development Organizations in Europe*

*Church and Peace*

*Church Missionary Society*

*Churches' Committee for Migrants in Europe*

*Ecumenical Association of Academies and Laity Centres in Europe*

*Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women*

*Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe*

*Europäischer Verband für Diakonie*

*European Forum of Christian Men*

*European Christian Environmental Network*

*European Conference of Deacons*

*European Contact Group on Urban Industrial Mission*

*European University Chaplains Association*

*Evangelische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Erwachsenenbildung in Europa*

*Fédération Internationale de l'Action des Chrétiens Pour l'Abolition de la Torture*

*International Prison Chaplains Association (Europe Section)*

*Kairos Europe*

*Konferenz der Europäischen Pfarrvereine*

*Leuenberg Church Fellowship*

*Society for Ecumenical Studies and Inter-Orthodox Relations*

*Work & Economy Network in the European Churches*

*World Student Christian Federation (Europe region)*

# Churches, conflict, peace & reconciliation in Europe



**Above:** Churchill, Truman and Stalin negotiate the administration of defeated Germany (Potsdam, July/August 1945)

**Below:** Europe in 1946 divided by the 'Iron Curtain'

## The Cold War in Europe: some key dates

- 1943 Teheran Conference
- 1945 Conferences of Yalta and Potsdam
- Sovietisation of Satellite States
- 1947 Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan
- 1948/49 Berlin Blockade
- 1949 Foundation of the Warsaw Pact and of NATO
- Foundation of the two German States
- 1955 Establishment of the Comecon
- 1961 The Berlin Wall is erected
- 1962 Cuban Crisis
- 1970 Treaty between West-Germany and the Soviet Union and Poland
- 1969 Start of the SALT I negotiations
- 1973 Treaty between the two German States
- 1975 Helsinki Final Act
- 1975-80 MBFR talks reach no agreement
- 1980 US Congress blocks the ratification of SALT II
- 1982 START talks reach no agreement
- 1983 Positioning of Pershing II/Cruise Missiles as part of the NATO 'twin-track' policy
- 1985 Gorbachev elected General Secretary of the Communist Party
- 1988 Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR adopts Gorbachev's reform
- 1989/90 'Non-violent revolutions' in Eastern Europe and collapse of Communist regimes
- 1990 German Unification
- 1990 Paris Charter for a New Europe

## A divided continent

During the last days and immediately after WW II, Churchill, Roosevelt then Truman, and Stalin negotiated a new European order at conferences in Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam. Europe was divided, in effect, into two spheres of influence; the Berlin wall becoming the main symbol of division. Until the fall of communism in Eastern European in 1989-90, European politics were determined by an East-West confrontation and the 'Cold War'. The term 'Cold War' denotes the ideological, political and economic struggles for power between the two super-powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, each being the centre of a group of allies.

## The Cold War

Within the Cold War era several periods can be distinguished in which different policies were applied. After WW II and until the late 1960s, the super-powers used ideological, political and economic means to establish their spheres of influence. The 1970s saw a certain easing of tensions due to a *détente* policy and the emergence of the concept of 'peaceful co-existence'. The 1980s were characterized by renewed tensions, the arms race and a re-enforced policy of deterrence.

Western European peace movements organized demonstrations in various capitals. Towards the end of the decade, the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev introduced his policies of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika', and advocated substantial arms reductions.

## Absence of war, but no peace

Throughout the Cold War the United States and the Soviet Union avoided direct military confrontation in Europe. They engaged in actual combat only to keep allies from defecting to the 'other side' or to overthrow them after they had done so. Thus the Soviet Union sent troops to preserve communist rule in East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Afghanistan (1979). For its part, the United States fought communist leaderships in Latin America, the Caribbean and in South East Asia.

## Effects on other world regions

'The Cold War was, for the most part, cold only in Europe and North America. In many parts of the developing world it was in fact very hot [...] The Cold War meant that weapons, the loans needed to finance the purchase of weapons, and ideologies came from the North; the South contributed its environments, peoples, and national economies.' (Lederach, *Building Peace*).



**Right:** The Berlin Wall, symbol of Europe's divisions



### Churches and repentance

After 1945, Protestant church leaders in Germany confessed that Christians had been implicated in the crimes committed by the National Socialist government before and during the war.

The **Stuttgart Declaration** (19 October 1945) was a significant step towards the re-integration of Germans into the ecumenical communion. Similar declarations were made in Hungary deploring the political errors of the church, and the 'Darmstädter Wort' of the leaders of the Confessing Church in Germany (1947). In 1948, anonymous voices in Czechoslovakia blamed the political impotence of the government on the moral and spiritual weakness that had already been manifested in the expulsion of Germans in 1945.

The devastating effects of WW II and the East-West confrontation were very much at the heart of the founding Assembly of the World Council of Churches in **Amsterdam (1948)**. Still under the shadow of the recent war, the Assembly rejected (though not unanimously) war as 'contrary to the will of God'. In response to capitalism on the one side and to communism on the other, the Assembly adopted the concept of the 'responsible society', which was not to be seen as an 'alternative social or political system', but as 'a criterion by which we judge all existing social orders' (WCC II Assembly, Evanston).

Though there were different opinions among the churches, ranging from Christian pacifism to those who believe that in certain circumstances military intervention was justifiable, the churches through the Commission on International Affairs always supported the **disarmament** efforts of the UN and raised their voices where peace was at stake. Of special concern was the threat and proliferation of

**nuclear weapons**. It was not, however, until the Vancouver Assembly in 1983 that the churches agreed on an all-out rejection by affirming that: 'the production and development of nuclear weapons as well as their use constitutes a crime against humanity.'

From its early days, the WCC had always underlined the connection between the use of violence and the root causes of conflict. As more and more churches from the southern hemisphere joined the council, the issues of violence and deterrence, formerly discussed in the framework of East-West confrontation, was now also raised in the context of the struggle for justice on a global scale and the **North-South dimension** became an emphasis on the WCC agenda.

The foundation in 1975 of the **Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe** (CSCE) provided a new platform to address East-West issues, especially related to human rights and to security. The World Council of Churches as well as the Conference of European Churches had supported the establishment of the CSCE from the very beginning. Following the Nairobi Assembly in 1975, the WCC asked the Conference of European Churches, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA and the Canadian Council of Churches to take the lead in monitoring and lobbying the CSCE on behalf of the churches. This gave birth to the formation of the **Churches' Human Rights Programme** (CHRP), which still exists today.

The ecumenical organizations were often attacked for failing to engage during the Cold War in protecting **human rights in communist countries**. John C. Bennett writes in an article for the Ecumenical

### The Stuttgart Declaration (1945)

*'With great pain do we say: through us has endless suffering been brought to many peoples and countries. What we have often borne witness to before our congregations that we declare in the name of the whole church.*

*True, we have struggled for many years in the name of Jesus Christ against the spirit which has found its terrible expression in the National Socialist régime of violence, but we accuse ourselves for not witnessing more courageously, for not praying more faithfully, for not believing more joyously and for not loving more ardently. Now a new beginning is to be made in our churches.'*

The above extract comes from the *Stuttgart Declaration of the German Protestant Churches* (19 October 1945), a highly significant step towards the re-integration of Germans into the ecumenical movement.

Similar declarations were also made by others: in Hungary deploring the political errors of the church; and the 'Darmstädter Wort' of the leaders of the Confessing Church in Germany (1947). In 1948, anonymous voices in Czechoslovakia blamed their government for the expulsion of Germans in 1945.





**Left:** Soviet infantry charge in WW II. Wars have killed an estimated 74 million people in Europe during the 20th Century

Dictionary: 'Official criticism of communism was indeed muted - in the interest of preserving freedom for Christians in communist countries and of ensuring their continued ecumenical participation.' Since files have now become available from some intelligence service archives, the issue has met with renewed interest and new research projects have been launched.

At the time of the **WCC Vancouver Assembly** (1983), the East-West confrontation and the policy of deterrence had reached a new climax. The delegates of the GDR who came to the Assembly asked that a council for peace be convened. Linking the struggle for peace with the struggle for justice and the new awareness of environmental threats, the Assembly launched a 'conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant) for justice, peace and the integrity of creation'. In Europe, this process was particularly taken up by churches in German-speaking countries. National assemblies and preparations for the European Ecumenical Assembly in Basel (May 1989) and the WCC World Convocation in Seoul (1990) coincided with the 'non-violent' people's revolutions in Eastern Europe, which finally led to the fall of communism.

### **1989: Hopes for a New Europe**

In 1989, people all over Europe rejoiced at the radical changes that had occurred on the continent. As the Second European Ecumenical Assembly worded it some eight years later: 'We rejoice in the gift of freedom and mobility; we welcome the new possibilities we have to get to understand one another, to serve one another, and to live together. During these days, we are full of joy above all because, as the people of God, we tread the pilgrim path in our yearning for unity.'

Soon after the revolutionary changes in

Central and Eastern Europe, the heads of states and governments of Europe signed the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990). It is this Charter that symbolised the end of the Cold War and the beginning of a new era. In this Charter, political leaders paint a picture of a new Europe and commit themselves to the implementation of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In the words of the Charter:

'We, the Heads of State or Government of the States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, have assembled in Paris at a time of profound change and historic expectations. The era of confrontation and division of Europe has ended. We declare that henceforth our relations will be founded on respect and co-operation. Europe is liberating itself from the legacy of the past. The courage of men and women, the strength of the will of the peoples and the power of the ideas of the Helsinki Final Act have opened a new era of democracy, peace and unity in Europe. Ours is a time for fulfilling the hopes and expectations our peoples have cherished for decades: steadfast commitment to democracy based on human rights and fundamental freedoms; prosperity through economic liberty and social justice; and equal security for all our countries [...] We undertake to build, consolidate and strengthen democracy as the only system of government of our nations [...] Democratic government is based on the will of the people, expressed regularly through free and fair elections. Democracy has as its foundation respect for the human person and the rule of law. Democracy is the best safeguard of freedom of expression, tolerance of all groups of society, and equality of opportunity for each person.'

Only a few months before the dramatic developments in Europe, the churches

had expressed their vision of Europe in the final document of the European Ecumenical Assembly in Basel:

'Recently, the thinking about Europe's future has been stimulated by the image of a common European house [...] In a common house there are common responsibilities. It is not acceptable that some of its parts are in deterioration, while others shine in luxury. In a common house, life is guided by the spirit of co-operation, not confrontation. It is also important that the vision of a common European house implies criticism of all walls, barriers and ditches which make communication impossible. The image expresses that we must learn to live with many people on a small continent. There is limited space; resources are scarce. Some basic 'house rules' are needed to make this possible. Such rules would include:

- the principle of equality of all who live there, whether strong or weak;
- the recognition of such values as freedom, justice, tolerance, solidarity, participation;
- a positive attitude towards adherents of different religions, cultures and world views;
- open doors, open windows: in other words: many personal contacts; exchange of ideas; dialogue instead of resolving conflicts through violence.

The European house should be an 'open house', a place of refuge and protection, a place of welcome, a place of hospitality where guests are not discriminated against but treated as members of the family. In this house nobody should fear to speak the truth. Within the European house, those who live there should work against the inequalities of rich and poor within Europe, against the division of North and South within Europe, of discriminatory treatment of non-citizens, of the injustice of mass unemployment, of the neglect of youth and the abandonment of the elderly. The

**Right:** New divisions in Europe. The 'Green Line' which divides the Greek and Turkish-controlled zones in Cyprus. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, Cyprus remains the only divided European country



“daily bread” should be fairly shared among all persons.’

### New tensions

However, as Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow and All Russia indicated at the Second European Ecumenical Assembly in Graz (see sidebar), not all of the hopes of 1989-90 materialized. A few facts demonstrate unreconciled realities in Europe:

- while the processes of integration have continued in Western Europe, Eastern Europe has often experienced disintegration;
- after 1989, war and armed conflict surfaced again in Europe;
- most armed conflicts are now internal rather than inter-state wars;
- religion has increasingly become an element of conflict;
- ethnic tension is increasing;
- racism and xenophobia are spreading;
- trafficking in women from East to West has become a major issue;
- unemployment has increased;
- the recent Human Development Report (published by UNDP) indicates that human development has decreased in Central and Eastern Europe, although the transition process towards market economies is well under way;
- the gap between rich and poor in Western societies is widening;
- many have lost their trust in institutions and politics;
- floods, the frequency of avalanches and the poisoning of rivers by mine companies are only some of the indicators of an endangered environment;
- many speak of an ecumenical crisis in Europe.

On the basis of these developments the Conference of European Churches together with its Roman-Catholic counterpart, the Council of European Bishops Conferences, called for a Second European Ecumenical Assembly in 1997 with the title:

‘Reconciliation - Gift of God and Source of New Life’. About 12,000 participants came from all over Europe to the Austrian city of Graz in order to share experiences, hopes and concrete examples of reconciliation. The Church delegates adopted recommendations for the continuing process of reconciliation in Europe and the churches’ role in it.

As a follow-up to the 1997 Ecumenical Assembly, the churches in Europe are now engaged in drafting a **Charta Oecumenica**. Its objective is to establish guidelines for good relationships and common witness. A European Christian Environmental Network was founded, and a Churches’ Reconciliation Commission, which is meant to mediate in situations of conflict, especially with a religious dimension, is under consideration.

Over the years, churches, church-related agencies and individual Christians made **significant contributions to reconciliation**, as in the following diverse examples:

- In 1995 the Church of the Czech Brethren adopted a declaration expressing guilt concerning the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia after WW II.
- The Roman Catholic Church apologized for the sentence of death imposed by the Council of Constance on the Czech Reformer Jan Hus.
- The member churches of the Polish Ecumenical Council, the EKD, and the churches in Ukraine and Belarus are engaged in a long-term process of dialogue and reconciliation, addressing historical as well as contemporary divisions.
- Christians, Jews and Muslims have formed an Inter-religious Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to restore relations and jointly to propose drafts for new religious legislation.

*‘The Cold War was over. The Warsaw Pact ceased to exist. New states emerged. The euphoria of the first period of reforms in many post-totalitarian states has proved to be unjustified. The material condition of the majority of the population has deteriorated considerably, while hope has given way to hopelessness and even despair. Bloody inter-ethnic, interstate and civil conflicts have flared up. They have led to the loss of many lives among both combatants and peaceful civilians, provoked mass migration and produced a large flow of refugees. Major factors in the way people’s quality of life has fallen have been growing unemployment and an unprecedented spread of crime and of all manifestations of immorality [...] It would seem that with the end of the Cold War and the ideological and political divisions of our continent, it should have become a fellowship of prosperous nations and states. Reality, however, has proved otherwise. In place of the old, new divisions and new problems have emerged. While integration in Western Europe continues, Eastern Europe is disintegrating. The economic gap between countries in the East and West of our continent is developing and deepening. There is a real threat that the old ‘iron curtain’ will be replaced by a new ‘silver curtain’ drawing a dividing line not only between states, but also within states.’*

**Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow and All Russia, addresses the Second European Ecumenical Assembly, Graz 1997 (extracts).**

# Churches & mission in Europe



**Above:** Eucharist during the annual Kirchentag of the German churches, 1997

*'Mission is at the very heart of the church. If there is no mission, there is no church.'*

Living the Story of Christ—Mission in Europe Today, 26-31 October 1999, Amersfoort, Netherlands

*'In order to fulfil their task credibly, the Churches should not develop their mission in competition with one another, but rather in co-operation, as a common witness for the world.'*

Towards Reconciliation in a Common Mission in Secularized Europe: Some Guidelines, CEC

Mission has always been a fundamental characteristic of the life and work of the churches in Europe. St Paul, other Apostles and later their followers evangelized Europe from South to North. It was from the Middle East and Europe that Christianity spread throughout the world. It is also from Europe that deep denominational divisions have been exported.

Most Western church historians consider the 19th Century to be the 'great century' of Protestant and Catholic missions. In world history this period is also pre-eminently the European century, for, during it, Europe was able to impose much of its interest, ideas and power on a large portion of the inhabited world. The economic and imperial supremacy of Europe was joined by an unexpected Christian pietistic revival, which affected almost every denomination and church in every Western country. Before the 19th Century, the USA had itself been a mission field rather than a provider of overseas missionaries. It later evolved to become one of world's great Christian powers.

The revival among Protestants led to a proliferation of home and foreign missionary societies before 1914. The motivation behind and understanding of mission for the members and supporters of these societies were highly diverse. Overseas missionary work of the European Roman Catholics was undertaken by religious communities and ordained leaders. As in other Western churches, Catholic missionary societies experienced a revival in the mid-19th Century. More recently, the Pope and other Catholic leaders have called for a 're-evangelization' of the European continent. The 'great captivity' of the Orthodox churches under the Islamic rule of the Ottoman Empire meant that modern missionary initiatives were largely confined to the Russian Orthodox Church, especially among

the native peoples of Siberia and Alaska. In the 20th Century a revival of missionary theology and outreach has been led by the Greek churches.

After 1900, mission truly became an ecumenical priority and the century began with two far-reaching events. The first was a meeting of the South India missionary conference in Madras (1900). The second was an ecumenical missionary conference in New York (1900). Both events heralded a new missionary consciousness which recognized mission as essential to the life of the church. They called for churches to act together in evangelization. There were also appeals for an international body to co-ordinate and promote mission to the world. The vision began to find concrete expression at the **Edinburgh World Missionary Conference** (1910), one of the foundational events of the modern ecumenical movement. It was followed by the creation of the International Review of Missions (1912) and the International Missionary Council (IMC)(1921).

Missionary leaders played major roles in the establishment of the WCC in 1948. In 1961 the IMC was re-named the Division on World Mission and Evangelism, thereby affirming the central importance for the churches 'to manifest in and to the world the fellowship and unity which is in Christ' (WCC Central Committee 1964). Thereafter, the WCC, and later its sister organization the Conference of European Churches (CEC), have devoted utmost attention to reflection and action on critical mission issues. From the 1950s to the 1990s, study and dialogue on 'common witness and proselytism' were dealt with in the WCC and in the Joint Working Group with the Roman Catholic Church on an inter-continental level. This had particularly important implications for a common understanding of mission in Europe.

**Right:** an Orthodox baptism in Russia. Church baptisms are declining in many Western European countries, whereas there are signs of a religious revival in Eastern Europe



**Landmark international ecumenical conferences and study processes on mission and evangelism in Europe include:**

**1954: Willingen**, International Missionary Council; the conference publicized the idea to refer mission back to God's Mission, the *missio Dei* concept.

**1960s:** the WCC study on the 'Missionary Structure of the Congregation' had a significant impact on Western Europe.

**1974: Lausanne;** prepared by the Billy Graham Association, gave birth to the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the Lausanne movement.

**1980s:** CEC's study process on 'Mission of the Churches in a Secularized Europe' (cf. Linn, Gerhard: *Hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Towards missionary congregations in Europe*, WCC 1994).

**1986: IX CEC Assembly**, Stirling, Scotland (identified mission in a secularized Europe as a priority).

**1997: Second European Ecumenical Assembly** in Graz, (CEC and CCEE).

**1999: Amersfoort** (co-organized by the Dutch Mission Council on behalf of the European mission councils, CEC, European Evangelical Alliance and the CWM European region).

In contemporary Christian churches and the ecumenical movement in general, mission is once more on the agenda. The new freedom of churches

in Central and Eastern Europe offers new possibilities and significant challenges to local churches as well as to foreign missionaries. Networks on Urban and Industrial Mission in the Protestant and Catholic Churches, or the annual informal meeting of European mission councils concerned with European mission co-operation with other continents, are other manifestations of renewed interest and approaches to mission. Other new developments influencing mission thinking include relations between the historic churches and ethnic immigrant communities. Europe is also a priority of the evangelical movement. The Europe Lausanne Committee, and other groups, have all made evangelism in Europe their priority.

CEC, in addition to working with traditional partners, has engaged in active dialogue with other actors and has organized consultations with church leaders, academics and missiologists (including Baptist and Pentecostal church representatives), and a CEC mission consultancy is being established. More recent mission documents, written from various perspectives, still struggle with the same question: what does mission mean in a secularized, post-modern and pluralist Europe? The vital question with respect to mission in Europe today is how can the churches carry out a common mission? A positive sign for CEC is the 'rapprochement' of churches in more than one European country and

the contribution made by multi-lateral and bi-lateral dialogues between the churches.

Many of these new situations and concerns were summarized during a CEC consultation on the theme '*Giving an Account of Hope - the Common Calling of the European Churches to Mission*' (March 2000, Germany).

The consultation made the following recommendations to CEC and to churches in Europe:

- to give mission a higher priority in their work, in co-operation with national mission councils, mission agencies and missionary societies;
- to move forward towards a common mission. Every church already has some institutions, initiatives and resources which will be helpful in doing this. These must be made widely known and accessible through a network;
- to make missionary studies a part of theological training, and to develop a joint missionary programme among the various confessional faculties and institutions;
- that effective mission be always done in relation to a context. That means that missionary work should take seriously the cultural, political and economic situation of Europe today as the context;
- that there be mutual respect and mutual esteem among churches and religious communities, which is also a part of mission.

### Mission or proselytism? New ecumenical challenges

Traditionally, **proselytism** meant the coerced conversion of a person to another faith. Ecumenically, the term has acquired a negative connotation: the perversion of witness through improper persuasion or force. Proselytism became a critical inter-church problem through Western missionary work conducted in countries where other Christians were already present, and with the formation of Greek Catholic (Uniate) churches among historically Orthodox populations. The debate has become more acute with the renewed freedoms of churches in Central and Eastern Europe, with competing church claims and with the influx of foreign missionaries to the 'canonical territories' or traditional homes of other churches. If wide ecumenical consensus condemning proselytism has in principle been achieved, the distinctions between mission and proselytism have not always been easy in practice, and not all groups have upheld international agreements.

# Churches, diakonia & solidarity in Europe



Above: Refugees from Kosovo in Albania during 1999 conflict

Diakonia, the 'responsible service of the gospel by deeds and by words performed by Christians in response to the needs of people', is rooted in and modelled on Christ's service and teachings. Old Testament law provides a variety of ways to alleviate the suffering of the poor. In certain periods of Christian history, Christian care and solidarity have been exemplary and pioneering. In more recent centuries, religious orders (in the Catholic Church), brotherhoods and sisterhoods (in the Orthodox Church) and renewed forms of the diaconate (Protestant churches) have contributed to a specialization and to an institutionalization of social diakonia. Secular 'humanitarian' movements and professional workers also emerged during the 19th Century.

The involvement of the ecumenical movement, and especially of the WCC and CEC, has been central in the reflection and formulation of a renewed theology and practice of Christian solidarity. The second world war and its aftermath provided unprecedented challenges to philanthropic agencies and relief organizations in Europe. WCC consultations, such as that in Swanwick (UK, 1966) added to the prevailing concept of social relief and service the idea of social advancement and action. Service to refugees developed into inter-church aid. The WCC first began to help co-ordinate and subsequently to channel assistance from a range of European and other Christian organizations to those in need.

In Western Europe during the 1960s to the 1980s various governments assumed more responsibility for social security, and some churches had left diakonia in the hands of the social services and welfare and saw their role as mainly one of 'plugging the gaps'. Christian socialism found itself in dialogue (or locked into combat) with many other forms of socialism.

Some churches established 'boards of social responsibility' which tried to influence government policy and thereby engage in prophetic diakonia. In Eastern Europe, where churches were forcefully prevented from having any social or political role, and also in Western Europe, Christians were reflecting seriously about the new roles and challenges facing churches under the communist and capitalist systems.

## Urban/industrial mission

After 1945, Western European churches, while realizing the need to accompany working life in industrialized societies, had no instrument to do so. They saw the benefit of building up networks and of collaborating with self-organized groups. More recently, urban/industrial mission has had to tackle the consequences of deregulated work, increased poverty, women's employment (especially 'homework'), trafficking in women and children, uprootedness, long-term unemployment (e.g. closure of coal and steel industries), and competitive globalization models. An increasing number of churches have opened food kitchens to assist marginalized and excluded people in countries where such a need had disappeared decades ago. Immigration also poses new challenges to urban mission. There are new experiences with people of other faiths in joint urban/rural mission in combatting the upsurge of nationalism and racism. At the institutional level, European churches have initiated studies on the relationship between the churches and the economy. Diakonia is required to respond to the need for a renewal of values in society. **Europe cannot work in isolation from other regions.**

In the 1980s, WCC's CICARWS (Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugees and World Service) saw Europe as a new mission field in need of spiritual help from the Third World.



**Left:** Romanian Orthodox nun assists an elderly man. A tremendous revival in diakonia has taken place in Eastern Europe in recent years

It sponsored a number of ecumenical consultations, in particular the world consultation, *Diakonia 2000: Called to be neighbours*, in Larnaca in 1986, when churches recognized the need for a more comprehensive, holistic and liberating diakonia aimed at transformation on all levels, and taking into account other, sometimes less obvious, forms of aid than the purely material kind.

Today, individual churches vary greatly in their expression of diakonia. In some countries like Germany, church tax supports extensive independent Protestant and Catholic diaconal institutions, and in many countries of Northern Europe the churches have significant aid agencies responsible for international relief and development programmes. In the UK, there has been a significant growth of local church-based community work projects in recent years. Specialized lobbying instruments such as APRODEV in Brussels have been established by church agencies to influence European Union development policy. In 1996, the WCC and the Lutheran World Federation founded ACT International-Action by Churches Together to facilitate an international professional co-ordination of ecumenical humanitarian relief.

An extraordinary revival of church and ecumenical diaconal initiatives developed after 1989 with the changes and new possibilities in Eastern Europe. The period of the 1990s was marked by health and welfare crises in the 'transition economies' of the 'New Europe'. The WCC established an Eastern Europe Office in 1994 to focus on diaconal work in the region.

#### **New challenges in the region**

For the first time after World War II, European churches met in Bratislava for an 'All European Diakonia Consultation' (October 1994) at the invitation of CEC, in collaboration

with WCC Unit IV, Eurodiakonia and the European Federation for Diakonia. Churches made a diagnosis in response to changes in Europe, acknowledging that Europe could not be seen in isolation from other continents. The presence of migrants and refugees from all over the world in local communities in Europe made visible the oppression, injustice and war affecting many countries, and represented a major concern for diakonia. The consultation also noted that in the new Europe, some doors for mobility were opened, while others were closing, preventing the free movement of people and also splitting families. **The Bratislava Declaration** affirmed that the intention to work *with* rather than *for* people was central to diakonia aiming for empowerment and transformation.

In recent years, European churches have become increasingly preoccupied with the consequences of economic globalisation. For example, the WCC/Work and Economy Network Consultation on Globalization (Malaga, 1998), made recommendations in response to the new economic, political and cultural challenges. It raised sharply the need to value and support active networks, to develop an ecumenical agenda on work, activity and employment and to develop ecumenical reflection and action on the nature of democracy and its implementation.

A second all-European forum on church diakonia, took place in 2001, to review the Bratislava Declaration in the face of growing poverty, economic insecurity, rising racism, xenophobia, threats posed by transitions to market economy, and the incapacity of states to respond to supra-national actors.

#### **Churches and the Uprooted**

The plight of refugees has been on the agenda of the WCC from the outset. During WW II, when the WCC was still 'in the process of creation',

Jewish and other refugees in Europe received ecumenical assistance to escape Nazi persecution. The ecumenical refugee programme developed into WCC's single largest operation in the area of solidarity. In subsequent years responsibilities were gradually transferred to local churches and specialized networks. The emphasis now shifted to the protection and assistance of all forcibly 'uprooted people'—refugees, migrants and internally displaced people. The Churches' Committee on Migrant Workers in Western Europe, launched in 1963, supplied continuous information to the churches, and supported or initiated actions to eliminate problems. It continues today as the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe with offices in Brussels. Similarly, the European Churches' Working Group on Asylum and Refugees was formed in 1983 as a joint effort of CICARWS and CEC. Its task was to provide a forum for joint analyses and actions on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe. Later, it focused on the possible consequences of the 1995 Single European Act, on strategies for increasing parish involvement with refugees, and on the changing situation in Eastern and Central Europe.

**Diakonia and solidarity** continue to stand as major preoccupations for the churches. How does one reconcile local participation with professionalization? When some Christians speak of diakonia as 'reconciliation and healing', do they not run the risk of reducing the other aspects of the Christian faith? Can churches do more together to serve those in need? How can local parish outreach and international professional and institutional diakonia be more carefully balanced?

# Churches, human rights & religious freedom in Europe



**Above:** An Orthodox nun surveys one of the many churches destroyed by ongoing inter-ethnic conflicts in Kosovo (1999). WCC has intervened in favour of both Albanian and Serb victims of violence

Interest in and support for human rights issues by the ecumenical movement is demonstrated in the early contributions of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), which took a major role in drafting the article on religious liberty in the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights and also actively supported provisions in the UN Charter for a commission on human rights. The churches' commitment to human rights issues took a more definite shape in the 1960s and 1970s when local churches in Eastern Europe introduced different insights from those of Western Europe. A landmark consultation entitled 'Human Rights and Christian Responsibility', which convened in St Pölten, Austria in 1974, was preceded by regional meetings. Until then, human rights related ecumenical documents focused on the 'Third World' with a discourse centered on liberation. However, in the following year, ecumenical bodies (WCC, CEC, LWF) and several churches of Europe played an active part in the efforts which led to the Helsinki Agreement on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

## Central & Eastern Europe

In an important statement issued by the Nairobi Assembly, the WCC expressed how difficult it was to maintain a balance between upholding human rights and the need to respect the often difficult situations affecting the churches, especially in Central and Eastern Europe: 'The Assembly recognizes that churches in different parts of Europe are living and working under very different conditions and traditions. Political systems, constitutions, and administrative practices vary from nation to nation [...] In spite of these differences, Christians in both parts of Europe, and indeed throughout the

whole world, are one in Christ. The solidarity which results from faith in our common Lord permits the mutual sharing of joys and sufferings and requires mutual correction. Christians dare not remain silent when other members of the Body of Christ face problems in any part of the world. But whatever is said and done must be preceded by consultation and must be an expression of Christian love.' (Statement of the WCC Nairobi Assembly on the Helsinki Accord).

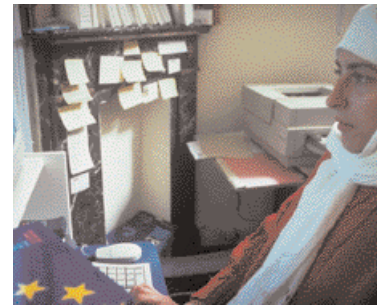
## Ecumenical policy on human rights

A global review of ecumenical policy and practice on human rights was undertaken at the request of the WCC Central Committee in 1994. Within this framework, a European Meeting jointly convened by WCC and CEC took place in Geneva in June 1996. Participants affirmed that 'the meeting [...] made them aware of the fact that Europeans, East and West, are deeply affected by recent history. Although we recognize and affirm that Europe is one continent,' they said, 'we were also made to realize that there is a tremendous diversity of cultural, political, social and economic contexts resulting from history.' They also confirmed for themselves such rights as religious freedom, and the need for continuing dialogue on issues such as proselytism and mission. They acknowledged that 'ecumenical bodies could play a unique role in confidence building initiatives among churches in conflict' and that 'reconciliation is often painful and the healing process takes a long time, since it requires working through post-conflict memories. The ecumenical community often gives significant support to local initiatives, even when the church leadership fails to do so. In the process of human action, churches and ecumenical bodies have to be sensitive to the question of differences between East and West in



**Left:** Hungarian refugees fleeing the Soviet invasion. Advocacy with uprooted people has been one of the primary concerns of the WCC

**Right:** The rights of women and children have received increased attention in recent years



understanding the language and definitions of human rights concepts.’

The current human rights concerns among churches of Europe strongly reflect the **indivisibility of civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights**. They include conscientious objection to military service, debt cancellation, the effects of large-scale financial transactions in international markets, currency tax on transactions, ethical issues related to developments in technology (bio-ethics), environmental issues, freedom of religion or belief, issues related to migration, ethnic minorities and disarmament.

#### **Christian women in Europe**

The struggle for women’s rights has been strongly associated with the movement for human rights. Many Christian women’s movements were founded in Europe during the 18th and 19th Centuries. In the second half of the 20th Century a new phenomenon emerged, the Christian feminist movement with its feminist theology. It included the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women, first raised in Brussels in 1978, which seeks to link together both traditional and radical Christian women and Christian women’s organizations throughout Europe. Its members come from all European churches, including the Roman Catholic. It seeks to bring about the greater participation of women in church and society and also to promote the unity of the churches and the unity and peace of Europe. The third assembly of the Forum was held in York, England (July 1990) with the theme ‘From Division to Vision’.

#### **Religious Freedom**

The years following 1989 again saw a widespread and heated debate among religious communities, governments

and human rights organizations about the implementation of religious freedom. After the fall of communism, all major legal provisions in Central and Eastern Europe had to be revised, including those which had an impact on religious freedom. The debate, however, was by no means limited to Eastern Europe. It was also a revitalized debate in the West, owing to the emergence of new religious movements, secularization and other developments in Western society.

While religious freedom of the individual seems to be well protected in almost all European Constitutions and official legal documents, the rights and duties of religious communities and their institutions require further discussion.

Many countries rank their religious communities into different categories, granting particular rights to traditional or majority confessional groups. In many instances this has given rise to major concerns. In International Law (e.g. Art. 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Art. 9 of the European Human Rights Convention) there is no prohibition of multi-tier systems, but these may not lead to discrimination against minority beliefs or non-believers. The question has been raised whether or not there should be any registration for religious communities at all, and if so, how to establish the criteria for doing so.

This concern escalated in importance with the **emergence of new religious movements**, often referred to as ‘sects’. However, debates in the European Parliament and in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe have not produced a definition of the term ‘sect’. In some countries, governments have established observatories and

published lists of so-called ‘sects’, resulting in protests. These lists demonstrate that it is very difficult to draw a dividing line between ‘sects’ and recognized religious communities.

European governments have also expressed concern about the rise of fundamentalism, and the increased role of religion as a factor in conflict situations. The Council of Europe and the OSCE have organized a series of conferences and discussions on religion and democracy and on religion and conflict. Moreover, the OSCE has established an advisory panel of experts, to counsel the OSCE and participating states on legal matters, conflict prevention, mediation and education for tolerance.

In the process of European integration, several churches have fought for the European Union to recognize the **diverse patterns of church-state relations** in European countries. In addition to the EU’s Amsterdam Treaty (not legally binding) a new declaration has taken up this concern. The year 2000 EU Charter on Fundamental Rights states:

‘Conscious of its **spiritual and moral heritage**, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities.’

The Charter recognizes freedom of conscience, religion and belief for the individual, using the European Human Rights Convention as a model. However, attempts to include a reference to the rights of religious communities have so far failed to be included.



# A heart & soul for Europe?



**Above:** The Hospitality of Abraham depicting the Holy Trinity, by icon painter St. Andrey Rublev, Russia (c.1420)

## Address to the churches (1992)

*'If in the ten years ahead of us we do not succeed in giving Europe its soul, a spiritual dimension, true significance, then we will have been wasting our time. That is the lesson of my experience; Europe cannot live by legal argument and economic know-how alone. The potential of the Maastricht Treaty will not be realized without some form of inspiration.'*

Summary address of European Commission President Delors to the European Protestant Churches (1992). Since 1994, the Conference of European Churches, together with other religious and humanist organizations, has been involved in a 'Common Programme: Giving a Soul to Europe'.

## The Orthodox Church

*Extracts from the address by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I to the Special European Parliament session, Strasbourg, April 1994:*

'Orthodoxy and the Ecumenical Patriarchate constitute axes of reference and unity in Europe, unity for which we have been waging struggles for centuries [...] Despite universal changes in European history, Old and New Rome (Constantinople) remain as axes of reference and unity for European civilisation [...] The unification of Europe, to which you have devoted your strength, is a task already known and familiar to the Ecumenical Patriarchate: We have been officiating over a tradition of 17 centuries of care and struggles for the salvation and unity of European civilisation. On the path of Europe and beyond the confines of the present 12-nation European Community, lie other populous nations following in unison, the majority of which uphold Orthodox canonical traditions. Allow us just to express the hope that those peoples will be called soon to participate in the life and institutions of a United Europe.'

The Patriarch reminded the Eurodeputies of the centre of Orthodoxy's special character and tradition, a tradition which is remote from political and other institutions of power which have been created in the West. Referring to present-day civilisation, he underlined two major problems: unemployment and ecology. 'It is obvious that neither moral admonitions nor fragmentary fiscal policy measures are adequate to cope with unemployment,' the Patriarch said, adding that 'from the beginning we should place under critique manifest priorities in our civilisation, the priority of so-called growth conceived only in terms of "economic magnitudes". We are

enslaved by a tyrannical necessity to increase production continuously and, consequently, by the continuous creation of new and more consumer needs.'

Commenting on the world ecological problem, the Patriarch observed that it, 'requires radical revision of our sense of the universe, a different interpretation of matter and the world and attitude toward nature by people, a different interpretation of the concept and use of material goods [...] A lack of theological tenets lies behind present-day stalemates in European life.'

## The Reformed Church

*Report by the General Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church, approved by the Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church in March 1996 (extracts).*

'The moral impulse which arose from the bitter experiences of war and social misery was transposed in political and economic efforts to regulate in a new way the relations between the countries of Western Europe. These moral motivations which underlaid the limited West European endeavour at integration of the period after the Second World War are still relevant. And they acquire a new content when we look at Europe in its totality now. In other words, the call to reconciliation and justice is now the driving force to strive for the integration of Europe as a whole: East and West, North and South. The major problems of Europe today in the area of justice, peace and the integrity of creation demand an approach which transcends the national borders, as do these problems.'

The contribution of the churches to Europe—and this will be also an answer to the question of President Delors about "a heart and a soul for

Europe”—shall indeed be in the proclamation of the Good News, from which we (the churches) derive our very existence.’

### **The Roman Catholic Church**

*Extracts from the speech of Pope John Paul II during his apostolic visitation to Germany, at the Angelus prayer in Berlin, on 23 June 1996:*

‘From this famous city, which in a very special way has experienced the fate of European history in this century, I would like to announce to the whole Church my intention to convoke a Second Assembly for Europe of the Synod of Bishops [...] This must be done in such a way that the immense spiritual reserves of this continent can fully develop in all areas, and conditions can be created for an era of true rebirth at the religious, economic and social levels [...] The events of 1989, initially having received an immediate and enthusiastic response, gave the impression that in one stroke many social, cultural and spiritual crises were resolved; in reality these events only opened a door unexpectedly onto a vast area where different peoples found themselves without notice in possession of age-old prerogatives which had been repressed for a long time. These same people also found themselves in a process of pursuing paths of their own choosing. This widespread movement of a new-found freedom could not, by its very nature, be contained in the territory where it first began; in some way, its effects were felt in the rest of Europe, placing other nations before the same new conditions which, from that time onwards, could no longer be hidden within the forced confines of an oppressive regime. Geographically, Europe found itself open, dramatically exposed to a grave series of demands as well as ‘new dangers and new threats,’ especially that of nationalism

[...] These new events are also seen in relation to other phenomena which by now have become a part of the entire continent of Europe: materialism, agnostic indifference, a new mentality in countries which have emerged from totalitarian oppression, the complex character of society with its occurrences of religious subjectivism and relativistic individualism, the norm of truth in pluralism, the over-valuing of subjectivity and tolerance, and the temptation of gnosticism in culture, particularly through movements characterized by pantheism. In a positive sense, other new elements must also be noted in the European experience, e.g., the dialogue with European culture founded on the fact that the doctrine of creation, redemption and communion with God is higher than relativism or pantheism; the catechumenate of adults; the search for spirituality in civil life and in the interaction of peoples; the new awareness of the importance of the family; and the protection of human life in all its stages and aspects. These elements provide avenues for hope and permit a glimpse into the future of the continent [...] It is a question of a proclamation to be accomplished with a renewed spirit of mission on a continent which is deeply and distinctly marked by signs calling for an active obedient response to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church through the experiences of each particular Church on the European continent, in this period approaching the beginning of the Third Millennium after Christ.’

### **The Anglican Church**

*Extracts from the address by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, Karlsruhe, Germany, March 1999:*

‘Let me turn now to the notion of Europe’s soul. As I indicated a moment ago, this to me is all about

values—values that transcend us as individuals while providing the essential oxygen of living, breathing, healthy communities. At this vital juncture in the history of our continent I believe that we must make the nurturing of the soul of Europe a top priority. And I believe that religion in general, and Christianity in particular, have a crucial role in that project. I hold that to be true for believers and non-believers alike. For believers, as testimony to the transcendental meaning and purpose of life; for those who have not found God, as a source of moral strength and orientation, to underpin human endeavour and give it the best chance of prospering [...] There is no room for complacency, but there is I believe a courageous and hopeful spirit at work that offers grounds for confidence. Despite that, some will argue, of course, that the religious quest is a transitional, almost an evolutionary process—with the rather patronizing implication that once people reach a sufficient level of maturity they will cease to need that particular crutch to lean on. I must confess, I have little time for the argument or the conclusion. To the extent that we in Europe have lost a sense of the vitality, of the centrality of religion—and of a spiritual dimension in our lives—the progress that some claim is a profound loss. We have not put aside childish things—in the words of the gospel—rather we are in danger of abandoning things that are vital to our adult maturity, as individuals and as a civilisation. Reclaiming that spiritual dimension and vision, and applying it in future in a way that revitalises our collective endeavour is I believe the best way of giving meaning and strength to the millennium and the soul of Europe.’

# Sources & resources

## PRIMARY SOURCES USED

(See recommended reading for other general sources used or quoted in the document)

- Lecture by Hans L Zetterberg, Professor of Sociology, University of Stockholm ([www.cityuniv.se/kurs/europeanHouse/fls/401-2e](http://www.cityuniv.se/kurs/europeanHouse/fls/401-2e))
- BBC Online Network, *Euro Facts*
- European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, *Annual Report 1999*
- IFRC, *World Disasters Report 2000*
- UNICEF; *The Progress of Nations 2000*
- *World Migration Report 2000*, International Organization for Migration, Geneva
- United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General, *Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*, 2000
- United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, *Poverty in Transition*, 1988
- *Le Monde Diplomatique*
- Diego Marani, *Las Aventuras des inspector Cabillot*, the first book in Europanto; Editions Mazarine, 1999

## USEFUL ADDRESSES

### World Council of Churches

PO Box 2100,  
150, route de Ferney, CH-1211 Geneva 2  
Tel: +41 22 791 61 11  
Fax: +41 22 788 0067  
E-mail: [europe@wcc-coe.org](mailto:europe@wcc-coe.org)

### Conference of European Churches

PO Box 2100,  
150, route de Ferney, CH-1211 Geneva 2  
Tel: +41 22 791 61 11  
Fax: +41 22 791 62 27  
E-mail: [cec@cec-kek.org](mailto:cec@cec-kek.org)

## RECOMMENDED READING

- *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, WCC Publications, Geneva, 1991
- *Charter of Paris for a New Europe*, Paris, 1990
- *Peace with Justice*. The official documentation of the European Ecumenical Assembly, Basel, Switzerland, 15-21 May 1989, Conference of European Churches, Geneva 1989
- *Europe on the Move: Documentation from a Special Meeting of European Church Leaders*, CEC, Geneva, 1990
- *Europe 1992: Promise and Challenge*, WCC-CIA, Geneva 1992
- *Reconciliation - Gift of God and Source of New Life*. Documents from the Second European Ecumenical Assembly in Graz, Verlag Styria, Graz, Köln, Wien, 1998
- *Pocket Europe in Figures*, The Economist, 2000
- *The Green Guide: Europe*, Michelin, 2000
- *Histoire des Religions en Europe*, Hachette, 1999
- *E. Korthals Altes, Heart and Soul for Europe: An Essay on Spiritual Renewal*, Van Gorcum Comp., Assen, 1999
- *M. Emerson, Redrawing the Map of Europe*, Macmillan Press, 1998
- *J.M. Roberts, The Penguin History of Europe*, Penguin, 1996
- *J. Lederach, Building Peace - Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, United States Institute for Peace, Washington DC, 1999
- *R. Lodwick, Remembering the Future: the Challenge of the Churches in Europe*, Friendship Press, 1995
- *W.A. Visser't Hooft, Memoires*, WCC Publications, Geneva, 1973

## INTERNET RESOURCES

### CHURCHES & ECUMENISM

- **World Council of Churches:** [www.wcc-coe.org](http://www.wcc-coe.org)
- **Conference of European Churches:** [www.cec-kek.org](http://www.cec-kek.org)
- **Baptists:** [www.bwanet.org](http://www.bwanet.org)
- **Lutherans:** [www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)
- **Methodists:** [www.worldmethodistcouncil.org](http://www.worldmethodistcouncil.org)
- **Old Catholics:** [www.old-catholic.org](http://www.old-catholic.org)
- **Orthodox churches:** [www.oca.org/pages/orth\\_chri/Orthodox-Churches/](http://www.oca.org/pages/orth_chri/Orthodox-Churches/)
- **Pentecostals:** [www.pentecostalworldconf.org](http://www.pentecostalworldconf.org)
- **Reformed churches:** [www.reformiert-online.net](http://www.reformiert-online.net)
- **Roman Catholic Church:** [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)
- **Council of European Bishops' Conferences:** [www.kath.ch/ccee/](http://www.kath.ch/ccee/)
- **Leuenberg Church Fellowship:** [www.leuenberg.net](http://www.leuenberg.net)

### INSTITUTIONS

- **Council of Europe:** [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)
- **European Union:** [www.europa.eu.int](http://www.europa.eu.int)
- **Organization for Security & Co-operation in Europe:** [www.osce.org](http://www.osce.org)

### OTHER SITES

- **European Christian Internet Conference:** [www.ecic.org](http://www.ecic.org)
- **NGO and humanitarian portal:** [www.europaworld.org](http://www.europaworld.org)
- **General European information portal:** [www.euroguide.org](http://www.euroguide.org)
- **Detailed and authoritative Country Studies:** <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs>
- **Redrawing the map of Europe:** comprehensive and original interactive resource [www.nirvanet.com/en/understand/europe/](http://www.nirvanet.com/en/understand/europe/)