

Annual Meeting 2016 Brixen/Bressanone Italy

Moderators Report 2015

Dear members and guests

Looking back and looking forward the present circumstances of ECRL we all are aware how big the challenges for a multifaith networks in Europe and worldwide currently are.

You as members of ECRL and as guests are very much aware, because most of you are committed in the work of your religious community, in interreligious cooperation or in the academic field.

Today and especially tomorrow we will mention many of the current challenges. Main topic for tomorrow will be the "Refugee And Migration Situation In Europe – Addressing Potential For Disharmony" with a Keynote address of Prof. Mark Owen "European Migration and the Role of Religion" and a few short, concise reports of our members from different countries.

In our Annual Council Meeting we will have a second main topic – the future of ECRL.

You are aware of the current situation, I trust. But for me there is no option other than to try to give ECRL - in partnership with the other branches of Religions for Peace in Europe - a new, sustainable basis for the work.

In this light we will have the chance – facilitated by the team of the Winchester Centre of Religion, Reconciliation and Peace (WCRRP) of the University of Winchester UK - to think about the process to determine the future of ECRL and – very important – to discuss a proposal we sent you to build an Interim Partnership ECRL – WCRRP.

I want to invite you to actively participate in these important considerations and processes.

In the last year since our Annual Meeting in Frankfurt I tried to support our General Secretary Jehangir Sarosh in keeping ECRL as active as possible. In these efforts members of the Executive Committee supported us and also the friends of the University in Winchester.

I want to thank especially Jehangir. We met times in our ExComm Meetings or in London, but usually we are in contact on Skype with each other sometimes three or four times in a day.

Often it felt as if we were fulltime volunteers.

Thank you, Jehangir, for your great commitment and for your open and friendly cooperation.

As moderator I get quite a lot of invitations to participate in various events in Europe and I was able to attend some in Paris, Prishtina, Bruxelles, with OSCE/ODIHR in Vienna and Vinnitsa/Ukraine and other places.

The interest in a platform like the ECRL is large, but our resources to respond are very limited. We will return to this later.

In my report I would like to share with you three information:

Sustainable development goals

On September 2015 the nations of the world have adopted in a special UN Assembly 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals are for everyone on earth.

They aim to end poverty and hunger; ensure clean water, affordable energy, health care and education for all; protect the world's ecosystems and shift to a sustainable use of the earth's resources; and build more inclusive, just and peaceful societies.

Religion for Peace International and our NYC Headquarter was involved in this project and we as members of the World Council signed a declaration where it says:

We enthusiastically urge the implementation of the SDGs and the embrace of the unifying concept of "sustainable development." Together, they are critical for the progress of all peoples. They make it clear that "social inclusion" and "environmental sustainability" are integral to development.

As we religious representatives commit to help implement the SDGs, we call upon:

All peoples to adopt the values and cultivate the virtues of sustainable development in their personal and professional lives;

Religious communities and each religious believer to support the SDGs through action, education and advocacy and to help build the trust that can support collaboration for sustainable development.

I want to remind us of this important document and encourage us to deal with it as ECRL. We have so many fields of „Common action“.

1. **Poverty** - End poverty in all its forms everywhere^[20]
2. **Food** - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture^[21]
3. **Health** - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages^[22]
4. **Education** - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all^[23]
5. **Women** - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls^[24]
6. **Water** - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all^[25]
7. **Energy** - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and clean energy for all^[26]
8. **Economy** - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all^[27]
9. **Infrastructure** - Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation^[28]
10. **Inequality** - Reduce inequality within and among countries^[29]
11. **Habitation** - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable^[30]
12. **Consumption** - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns^[31]
13. **Climate** - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts^[32]
14. **Marine-ecosystems** - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development^[33]
15. **Ecosystems** - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss^[34]
16. **Institutions** - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels^[35]
17. **Sustainability** - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development^[36]

Project Berlin – London – Paris

Last year I met in Berlin the commissioner for churches, religion and philosophical communities of the Lord Mayor of Berlin and other responsible persons.

We talked about the situation in major European cities with a high religious diversity, there are numerous initiatives and institutions that seek to improve the coexistence of faithful or devotees from different religions and denominations.

The starting positions in many cities are comparable.

Big cities in Europe are „a laboratory situation for intercultural and interreligious life“.

Despite this comparability an exchange is still missing about what happens in the other cities with regard to interreligious dialogues and interreligious cooperation and what has been successfully implemented.

We drafted in Berlin a proposal that an exchange experience and knowledge of relevant protagonists of European metropolitan areas is required.

In the long term the target group of such exchange could consist of protagonists of interfaith institutions, of people who are responsible for the relationship with the governments and government representatives responsible for the relations with religious communities.

The object of a mutual exchange would be the information of best practice and questions such as

- What are the (common/significant challenges?
- Which approaches, strategies and concrete measures have proved effective?
- Which approaches have proved to be not effective?

ECRL would be the inviting platform, working together with the relevant partners and their support in Berlin, London and possibly Paris.

Berlin is ready to invite for a small „nucleus-circle“ to prepare the project.

Jehangir Sarosh will tell us in his report how his contacts in London went on.

It is still a work in progress and I am convinced that it will be important.

Reformation Jubilee 2017

Next year, 2017, will be the anniversary 500 years of Reformation. Reformation started as re-formation of the one Christian church on several places in Europe during 100 years and is still on going.

One of the symbolic days is October 31 1517 when Luther put his 95 thesis to reform and renew the Christian church to the church door in Wittenberg.

That's why 2017 will be an important and a worldwide Jubilee.

In Europe 65 cities which are important for Reformation will organize big events, theological and cultural events.

The Anniversary of Reformation will be an on going one. In Switzerland e.g. 2019 is very important when Reformation started in Zurich with Zwingli and a bit later in Geneva with Calvin.

One big event in Germany will be the Protestant Kirchentag in May 2017 with together a million participants and a World Reformation Exhibition in Wittenberg.

Reformation had a big historical, cultural, theological, social and economical influence worldwide.

But I am convinced that Reformation, on-going Reformation, is not only an important protestant issue.

Life needs Re-formation, our personal and social life, but also religions need Re-formation in the sense going back to the roots and thinking about what Religion and Faith mean today for every human being and for our religious community.

Last week Protestant leaders at the Protestant Media Days in Berlin pointed out, that the Reformation anniversary 2017 is also to stimulate the dialogue with other religions.

My dream is that the Religious Leaders from different traditions in ECRL could think about Re-formation in our own tradition and taking the impulses from the Reformation Jubilee 2017 for this.

In the ExComm in Zurich last year we had a short discussion about what the Christian Reformation was and is. Our friends from other traditions were very interested to hear more about.

And we as Christians and Protestants we are interested to hear about Re-Formation – semper reformanda – on the basis of the scriptures and traditions in your community.

Tomorrow Dr. Detlef Görriig, the commissioner of EKD for interreligious dialogue, will be with us and I would like to ask him for any information about the presence of the interreligious partners and the dialogue at the Reformation Anniversary and the Protestant Kirchentag next year.

And maybe some of you from different traditions are also interested to think about a small project or a small conference with participants of different traditions next year to share our thoughts and experiences about Re-formation,

Some Activities Moderator ECRL 2015

January 20-22

Paris

Restructuring Working Group ECRL

March 1-4

Paris

Restructuring Working Group ECRL

April 30-Mai 2

London

Meetings

Mai 10-13

Frankfurt

Annual Meeting ECRL

Mai 28-30

Prishtina, Kosovo

International Interfaith Conference

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

« Interfaith Dialogue in time of Social Media : Enabling Agents of Change, Countering Violent Extremism and Hate Speech »

June 3

Bruxelles

The Intergroup of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance (FoRB & RT) of the European Parliament

« The State of Freedom of Religion or Belief in the World »

June 14-17

Paris

Kaiciid Vienna

Seminary

„United Against Violence in the Name of Religion: How do Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Expression Coexist?“

July 2-4

Vienna

OSCE/ODIHR

Second Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM II)

« Freedom of Religion or Belief, Fostering Mutual Respect and Understanding

August 17-19

Vinnitsa, Ukraine

OSCE/ODIHR

Project on „Promoting Security for Religious Communities and Others in the Regions of Ukraine“

Regional Roundtable Vinnitsa

« Dialogue for Civil Society, Religious or Belief Communities, local/regional Authorities, Representatives of the Human Rights Commissioner’s Office, international and national Experts and Others »

October 18-20

Zurich

Meeting ECRL ExComm

October 21-22

Hannover

Meetings with Kirchenamt EKD

November 2-4

Berlin

Meetings with The Commissioner for Churches, Religions and Weltanschauungen – Senate Chancellery – Cultural Affairs of The Governing Mayor of Berlin

December 2-5

London

Meetings in London and University of Winchester