

Roadmap to a European Christian “Convention”

We, members of European Christian movements and churches, met in the Protestant Academy in Bad Boll (Germany) from 1 to 3 June 2015 to start the preparatory process for a European Christian “Convention”.

Our Common Vision for a European Christian “Convention”

Coming from a diversity of national, cultural and social backgrounds, Europe is our common home. Living our faith in different church traditions, we are united by the same gospel. Our diversity enriches us and we want to celebrate our faith together.

We acknowledge our responsibility to create a future with hope for the whole of Europe and for the world. We stand up for peace, freedom and well-being, compassion and solidarity. At this time of crises we want to contribute to European unity and Europe’s responsibility in the world. Inspired by our Christian faith we want to strengthen the fabric of European society.

The Christian vision for peace, freedom and justice gave impetus to the European project. Today, peace and freedom in Europe are threatened by a increasing number of conflicts. Inequality is growing. More and more people are facing poverty and social exclusion. Countless people have died because of the walling-up of Europe’s external frontiers leading to new borders within Europe and with its neighbours.

We want to live up to the Ecumenical commitment of the churches in Europe for unity.

“We are convinced that the spiritual heritage of Christianity constitutes an empowering source of inspiration and enrichment for Europe. On the basis of our Christian faith, we work towards a humane, socially conscious Europe, in which human rights and the basic values of peace, justice, freedom, tolerance, participation and solidarity prevail.” (Charta Oecumenica, 2001)

Therefore we want to initiate a process towards a European Christian Convention ...

... as a participatory large-scale gathering

A Christian event - fully ecumenical - open to everyone – bringing together people from all over Europe and beyond!

... as the culmination of a journey

We want to create a movement in which events and meetings in Europe are steps on the way: crossing borders in the form of a pilgrimage, a peace train – starting small and growing fast. We hope this will be first of a series of such gatherings.

... as a place to share our spirituality

Sharing the Bible, praying and singing are at the heart of our spirituality and thus central to our “Convention”. We want to share with each other our spiritual journeys and our experiences. The European Christian „Convention“ is part of a pilgrimage contributing to the transformation of our world.

... as a festival of creativity

With music, theatre, arts as well as the richness of cultural life in our churches and movements, including open space for youth culture.

... as a place of dialogue

between our Christian traditions and with the people of the different faiths and worldviews that make up Europe.

... as a place to address burning issues

There is space for large debates and small workshops, for exhibitions and initiatives. We want to bring in a positive vision for Europe from a Christian perspective and to contribute to the building of European society. We want to tackle the challenges Europe is facing. We want to strengthen European values. We want to contribute to a “Soul for Europe”.

The Process

Setting up a provisional Coordination Team

The meeting in Bad Boll has set up a provisional Coordination Team to prepare the next steps in the process. Its task is to explore those organisations and churches that are prepared to join the process and to propose an organisational structure in the next meeting.

The provisional Coordination Team will prepare the organisational structures. Another meeting in 2016 will provide the space for organisations and churches to start the process leading on to a possible „Convention“ at the beginning of the next decade.

An independent and interactive Blog could provide a platform for further dialogue

Questions to be followed up:

- Clarify the commitment and mandate of organisations and supporters.
- Identify potential meeting places with the necessary infrastructure and accessibility.
- Consider the symbolic value of a meeting place.
- Encourage invitations to host such an event. The hosts could include a variety of actors (churches, organisations, universities, ...)
- Identify sources of funding
- To decide on the final name of the gathering
- Consider events and meetings as steps on the way.

Let us start now! Join us! Make it happen!

As participants in the meeting we encourage all interested organisations and churches to discuss this paper and to provide feedback to the provisional Coordination Team (ak.hergert@bluewin.ch) by October 2015.

Annex:

Members of the provisional Coordination Team

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The provisional Coordination Team has the possibility to co-opt further members if needed.