

Considerations regarding the regional groups in the CPCE

1. Point of departure

The 2006 General Assembly in Budapest ascertained that:

- Regional collaboration within the CPCE represents an important level of realising church communion.
- The CPCE's member churches are encouraged, where possible, to get involved in the work of the regional groups.
- The CPCE's regional groups work independently in their particular regional area of responsibility and fund their work.
- The regional groups' work is adopted by the CPCE as its own, or as representative, work if the Council has sanctioned this in good time based on a written agreement. The Council then takes care of subsequent communication.

2. Existing regional groups

Four regional groups are currently working within the remit of the CPCE.

a) The Conference of Rhine Churches (CRC)

The Conference of Rhine Churches was formed in 1961, although its composition has changed since then. It currently has a managing director, who is delegated by the Evangelical Church of Palatinate (Pastor Rudolf Ehrmantraut). The budget consists of annual fees paid by the individual member churches. A leadership committee advises on the business side of the regional group. An agreement exists with the Council of the CPCE.

The following churches and organisations are currently members:

Commission Eglise & Société de la KEK

Evangelical Church in Palatinate¹

Protestant Church H.C. in Austria

Evangelical Church in the Principality of Liechtenstein

Evangelical Church in the Rhineland

Evangelical Church in Hesse and Nassau

*Evangelical Church Council of the Canton of Thurgau*²

Evangelical Church in Baden

Evangelical Church in Württemberg

Evangelical Reformed Church of St Gallen

Evangelical Reformed Church of Schaffhausen

Evangelical Reformed Church of Aargau

Evangelical Reformed Church of the City of Basle

Evangelical Reformed Church of Basle-Country (Basel Landschaft)

Protestantesch Kiirch vu Letzebuerg

Union des Eglises Protestantes d'Alsace et de Lorraine (=Eglise de la CA d'Alsace et de Lorraine and Eglise Protestante Réformée d'Alsace et de Lorraine)

The group's Annual General Meetings are usually held in Strasbourg every May.

¹ Underlined text indicates that a church is a member of two regional groups.

² Italics indicate that a church is only a member of the CPCE via the FSPC.

b) The North-West Group:

The North-West group was formed in 1990 at the initiative of the Rhine Church. Hence the group is managed from its Regional Church Office (by Mr Marcus Wetter). A written agreement was reached with the Council of the CPCE.

The following churches are currently members of this group:

Eglise Protestante Réformée d'Alsace et de Lorraine (now guest status)
Eglise Protestante Unie de Belgique
Evangelical Church in the Rhineland
Evangelical Church of Kurhessen-Waldeck
Evangelical Church of Westphalia
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oldenburg
United Methodist Church Central Conference of Germany
Evangelical Reformed Church
Regional Church of Lippe
Protestantesch Kiirch vu Letzebuerg
Evangelical Reformed Church of Luxembourg
Protestantse Kerk in Nederland
Remonstrantse Broederschap
[Independent Evangelical Reformed Walloon-Dutch Church of Hanau]

The working programme of this regional group consists of annual meetings lasting two days. The subjects are always set at the annual meeting in preparation for the next.

c) The South-East Europe Group

The South-East Europe Group was formed in 1975 at the initiative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, which provides the group with a budget and managing director (Church Councillor Raphael Quandt). A written agreement exists with the Council of the CPCE.

The following churches belong to this regional group:

Biserica Evanghéllica C.A. din Romania
Biserica Evanghéllica Lutherana din Romania
Ceskobratrská Cirkev Evangelická
Chiesa Evangelica Luterana in Italia
Chiesa Evangelica Valdese
German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ukraine (member of ELCRAS)
Evangelicanska cerkev A.V.v Republiki Sloveniji
Protestant Church A.C. in Austria
Evangelical Church in Palatinate
Protestant Church H.C. in Austria
Evangelical Church in the Principality of Liechtenstein
Evangelical Church in Baden
Evangelical Church in Württemberg
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia and other States
United Methodist Church Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe, represented by Austria
Evangelical Reformed Church
Evanjelická cirkev augsburského vyznania na Slovensku
Jugoszláviai Református Keresztyén Egyház
Kárpátaljai Református Egyház

Kościół Ewangelicko-Augsburski w RP
Magyarországi Evangélikus Egyház
Magyarországi Református Egyház
Reformovaná Kresť. Cirkev na Slovensku
Romániai Református Egyház
Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches
Slezká církev evangelická A.V.
Slovenská evanjelika A.V. cirkev v Srbija

This regional group meets annually in either April or May, so far in Gallneukirchen, Austria. The most recent working programme produced a case study on education, which is to be presented to the 2018 General Assembly.

d) Conférence des Eglises Protestantes des Pays Latins d'Europe (Conference of Romance-Language Protestant Churches in Europe) – CEPPLÉ:

This group was set up in 2012 to cover the Romance-language countries and the south-eastern European churches' countries. It is virtually identical with the existing Conference of Romance-Language Protestant Churches in Europe – CEPPLÉ.

Its members are:

Chiesa Evangelica Metodista d'Italia
Chiesa Evangelica Valdese³
*Conference of French-speaking Reformed Churches in German-speaking Switzerland*⁴
Eglise de la CA d'Alsace et de Lorraine
Église Évangélique Libre de Genève
Église évangélique réformée du canton de Vaud
Église Protestante de Genève
Eglise Protestante Réformée d'Alsace et de Lorraine
Eglise Protestante Unie de Belgique
Eglise Unie de France
Église réformée évangélique du canton de Neuchâtel
Evangelical Reformed Church of Graubünden
Evangelical Reformed Church of the Canton of Freiburg
Evangelical Reformed Church in Valais
Fédération des Eglises Évangéliques Baptistes de France⁵
Fédération Protestante de France
Iglesia Evangélica Española
Igreja Evangélica Metodista Portuguesa
Igreja Evangélica Presbiteriana de Portugal
Lusitanian Evangelical Catholic Apostolic Church (Portugal)
Reformed Episcopal Church in Spain
Reformed Churches of Berne-Jura-Solothurn

The agreement with CEPPLÉ as a regional group of the CPCE brought together five members who had no ties before. The written agreement takes account of the fact that some members of CEPPLÉ are not part of the Leuenberg Church Fellowship.

³ Underlined = already a member of a regional group

⁴ Italics = member of the CPCE via the FSPC

⁵ Bold = non-member of the CPCE

3. Potential further regional groups

a) Northern Group:

The Northern Group was due to be convened in October 2010 by a “Liturgy” consultation in Copenhagen. The Lutheran Church of Denmark was in charge of this consultation. The North Elbe Church had been asked to manage the group.

The following churches were invited to attend the consultation and prepare the new regional group:

- Church of Scotland
- Den norske Kirke
- Den reformerte Synode i Danmark
- Eesti evangeelne Luterilik Kirik
- Evangelisk-lutherske Folkekirke i Danmark
- Latvijas Evangeliski Luteriska Baznica
- Lietuvos Evangeliku Liuteronu Baznycia
- Lietuvos Evangeliku Reformatu Baznycia
- Lutheran Church in Ireland
- North Elbe Evangelical Lutheran Church
(merged in 2010 with Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mecklenburg and Pomeranian Evangelical Church to form the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Northern Germany – “Northern Church”)
- Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- Presbyterian Church of Wales
- The Methodist Church in Great Britain
- The Methodist Church in Ireland
- United Free Church of Scotland
- United Methodist Church Nordic and Baltic Area
- United Reformed Church

Participating churches (engaged in work, but not members):

- Suomen Evankelis-Luterilainen Kirkko
- Svenska Kyrkan – Church of Sweden
- Gemensam framtid – Common Future (Association of the Svenska Missionskyrkan [Mission Covenant Church of Sweden], the Union of Baptists and the Methodist Church in Sweden)
- Thjodkirkja Islands

This regional group of the CPCE was not convened. Instead, a second, entirely informal meeting took place in Oslo in 2012. There, the participants agreed to continue these kinds of *ad hoc* meetings without the rigid structure of a regional group.

In 2017, the North-West group took the initiative to invite the western churches of the potential group to their next regional group’s meeting.

b) South America Group:

The five member churches in Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay effectively form their own group.

- Iglesia Evangélica del Rio de la Plata [merged with Iglesias Reformadas en Argentina]
- Iglesia Evangélica Luterana del Ecuador
- Iglesia Evangélica Luterana Unida
- Iglesia Evangélica Metodista
- Iglesia Evangélica Valdense del Rio de la Plata

In 2012, the Iglesia Evangelica Luterana del Ecuador undertook, as the 106th member of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, to encourage the five other South American member churches of the CPCE to form a sub-group as part of the *Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias CLAI* with the aim of nurturing the Leuenberg Church Fellowship.

4. Assistance for the regional groups

The Officer for Church Relations at the head office, Pastor Kathrin Nothacker, assists the regional groups with their work.