

**Consultation on Dialogues between Orthodox Churches and other member churches of CEC
Pullach, Germany, 23—25 June 2008**

Communiqué

The Conference of European Churches Commission Churches in Dialogue invited theologians who are members of the Orthodox Churches and Churches shaped by the Reformation and reform movements to meet to evaluate past and current bilateral theological dialogues. Two observers from CCEE were also present. Participants met in the Pullach-seminary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany.

We are grateful for the hospitality we received in the seminary with its prayerful atmosphere. We discussed a series of papers (see the list below) from both sides of each dialogue. The following dialogues were included:

World Alliance of the Reformed Churches - Eastern Orthodox
Lutheran World Federation -Orthodox
Anglican Communion – Eastern Orthodox
Old Catholic-Orthodox dialogue

Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)– Ecumenical Patriarchate
EKD – Russian Orthodox Church
EKD – Romanian Orthodox Church
EKD- Bulgarian Orthodox Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland –Russian Orthodox Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland – Finnish Orthodox Church

Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe – Orthodox
The Communion of the Porvoo Churches-Orthodox.

Common topics that we discussed

The accounts of the dialogues were positive in all instances. Topics covered included among others some aspects of Trinitarian theology, Christology and Soteriology. It is evident that ecclesiology is still a matter of division among traditions. In discussion we discovered that despite the convergence and consensus achieved in certain areas, further steps could be taken to deepen that for a more fruitful outcome. We have taken notice that in most of our churches these positive outcomes have not been communicated to all levels of church life.

In discussion it became evident that even among ourselves we are not always fully aware of the ecclesiological self understanding of our dialogue partners. We realize that it is incumbent on us all in dialogues to begin to understand the other from his or her respective Church tradition.

We recognized that the dialogues and the subsequent documents produced were created within a specific time and political context; the context for many of these dialogues no longer obtains for all our churches. We can not ignore the contextual and social implications when a dialogue takes place. Many participants in the dialogue may not have been fully aware of these external factors.

There is a need to clarify the aim and objectives of each dialogue. The methodology adopted should not only be consonant with the intended aims of the dialogue but also involve a self critical reflection about the process. We are grateful that in the majority of cases the results are published. In many instances it could be possible for a subsequent dialogue to build on the previous outcomes to avoid duplication. The statements should always be published in the languages of all the participant churches.

More account must be taken than in the past of the fact that dialogue partners evaluate the respective importance of theological questions in different ways. This can cause problems of ambiguity when the statements are read by others not involved in the dialogue. It has become clear that in some instances we read the same document in different ways and interpret terminology differently. This needs to be considered when the documents are being created.

It is imperative that the Churches represent themselves consistently with every dialogue partner.

The goal of deeper mutual understanding requires the dialogues to focus not only on traditional systematic themes but also on the liturgical life and witness of our Churches in contemporary society.

The dangers of commitment to the dialogues becoming the narrow preoccupation of a few is to be avoided. It is recommended that the common statements adopted should also consider the appropriate means of their reception. The documents should clarify explicitly the ecumenical achievements of the dialogues. Awareness of the importance of and sensitivities involved in dialogues should make the process of reception more readily achieved.

Further questions and recommendations

Do the outcomes differ if we are involved in “Conversations” rather than “Dialogues”?

In what ways can the participating Churches improve the current process of reception?

Each dialogue should consider the appropriate mode of reception in their respective churches for the agreed statements;

The participants of this consultation at Pullach recommend that the CEC continue this consultation process with regard of the bilateral dialogues.

The papers presented at this consultation:

World Alliance of the Reformed Churches -Orthodox

- a) Michael Weinrich, The dialogue between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Churches. Taking stock from a Reformed point of view
- b) Dorin, Oancea, The Theological Bilateral Dialogue between the Orthodox Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. An Evaluation from an Orthodox Point of View

Lutheran World Federation -Orthodox

- a) Viorel Ionita, The Lutheran World Federation-Orthodox Dialogue
- b) Risto, Saarinen, The Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission

Anglican Communion – Eastern Orthodox

- a) Paul, Avis, Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue
- b) Ioan Mircea Ielciu, Considerations on the Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue

Old Catholic-Orthodox

- a) Urs von Arx, Evaluation of the Orthodox-Old Catholic Dialogue (1975-1887)
- b) Vasile Leab, The Orthodox-Old Catholic Dialogue. Estimation of the Present Stage

EKD – Ecumenical Patriarchate

- a) Radu Constantin Miron, Reflections on the EKD- Ecumenical Patriarchate Dialogue
- b) Reinhard Thöle, The Dialogues of Evangelical Church in Germany with the Orthodox Churches. A Preliminary Review

EKD – Russian Orthodox Church

- a) Andrei Eliseev, A dialogue between the EKD and the ROC. A general assessment.
- b) Reinhard Thöle, The Dialogues of Evangelical Church in Germany with the Orthodox Churches. A Preliminary Review

EKD – Romanian Orthodox Church

- a) Daniel, Benga, Assessment of the Dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Church in Germany (1979-2006)
- b) Reinhard Thöle, The Dialogues of Evangelical Church in Germany with the Orthodox Churches. A Preliminary Review

EKD- Bulgarian Orthodox Church

- a) Daniel Benga, Assessment of the Dialogue between the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Evangelical Church in Germany
- b) Reinhard Thöle, The Dialogues of Evangelical Church in Germany with the Orthodox Churches. A Preliminary Review

Lutheran Evangelical Church in Finland –Russian Orthodox Church

- a) Juhani, Forsberg, Evaluation and reception of the dialogues between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and Orthodox Church

Lutheran Evangelical Church – Orthodox Church in Finland

- a) Kalevi, Toiviainen, The discussions between the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Finnish Orthodox Church, 1989-2007
- b) Pekka Metso, Evaluation on the dialogue between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Orthodox Church of Finland

CPCE – Eastern Orthodox

- a) Ciprian Burlacioiu, Evaluation of the Dialogue between Representatives of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe and Orthodox Theologians Orthodox Position
- b) Friedericke, Nüssel, Evaluation of the dialogue between the CPCE-Churches and the Orthodox Churches of CEC

Porvoo-Eastern Orthodox

- a) Ionut-Alexandru Tudorie, Theological Dialogue between the Eastern Orthodox Churches and Porvoo communion
- b) Matti Repo, A Quick Glance on the Eastern Orthodox-Porvoo Dialogue from 2005 to 2008

Pullach, 25th of June 2008