

World Student Christian Federation – Europe Region

Policy Paper for the Years 2003–2005

(As Approved by the European Regional Assembly,
Åland, Finland, October 2003)

The following policy document constitutes the basis for the future vision, programmes and activities of WSCF Europe. This policy is to be implemented under the mandate of the European Regional Committee (ERC) elected at the European Regional Assembly (ERA) in Åland 2003.

I. THEOLOGY

WSCF Europe will work in the next two years on the issues of a theological nature, through the Theology Interest Group (ThIG).

1. The ThIG will organise a conference on the theme of *Muslim-Christian Interreligious Dialogue*, to be held in Norway in autumn 2004. The event will involve European Muslim student organisations and will explore: the opportunities and challenges of sharing our faith; the issues of racism, human rights, women's rights and equality, ethics, political participation and democracy.
2. When choosing *key topics* for other events organised by the ThIG, the interest group will give preference to the following three themes: European contextual theologies; European institutions and churches; liturgy and prayer.
3. A workshop on *ecumenism* shall be included in the programme of every conference organised by WSCF-E.
4. A *worship songbook* in electronic form is to be created by the ThIG.
5. Important *theological developments* in the ecumenical world shall be monitored by the ThIG, which will make concise information about these available on the WSCF-E website.

II. CULTURE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

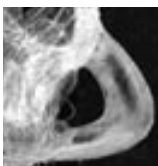
Culture and arts as methods and topics are already present in many of our WSCF Europe events. A strong need is felt, however, to offer more space for sharing our diverse but often undiscovered cultural heritages and traditions with each other as members of our SCMs. The three interest groups within the previous regional structure do not cover an important field of Christian presence in the society and in the university. Therefore, the ERC, following the suggestion of several SCMs, recommended establishing a new interest group, focusing on the issues of culture and higher education. WSCF-E, at the ERA, therefore established a Culture and Higher Education Interest Group (CHEIG).

1. Questions connected with *culture and identity* are behind many of our current discussions on theology, solidarity and gender issues. The CHEIG should facilitate mutual enrichment in intercultural dialogue; help to spread knowledge about each other as nations, countries and regions in Europe. By opening this new area of interest, WSCF Europe can attract new and creative ways of thinking, which can contribute to the discussions on the cultural mosaic of our region.
2. In its introductory first term, the CHEIG, taking into account different interest fields and interpretations of culture, will focus on the theme *Global and Local: Cultural Identities in Europe*; other forms of events such as festivals, consultations and exchanges; exploring the possibility of a *film festival*; promoting educational aspects and cultural expressions in all conferences arranged by WSCF-E.
3. The CHEIG will connect WSCF-E to the ongoing dialogue about *higher education* within Europe; in other regions of the Federation; through maintaining and establishing contacts with cultural and educational institutions and organisations (eg. UNESCO).

III. SOLIDARITY

WSCF Europe will work in the next two years on issues concerning human integrity, through the Solidarity Interest Group (SIG).

1. The SIG will raise awareness on the following areas: child labour; human rights, such as trafficking of women, men and children; minority issues. Awareness will be raised through the development of the Solidarity section of the website, to act as a means of exchange on solidarity issues. This section will contain contributions from member movements about their activities and experiences, including SCMs from WSCF Europe and also worldwide, through representatives of other WSCF regions.
2. The SIG will organise a bi-regional conference with the *Latin American – Caribbean Region* in June 2004 in the Agape Ecumenical Centre, Italy. The aim of the event will be to examine how globalisation affects the everyday life of young people in Latin America and Europe, and also to strengthen the connection between the European and Latin American regions.
3. The SIG will also suggest and facilitate *bilateral partnerships* of solidarity between the SCMs in Europe and worldwide. The partners will support and empower each other through mutual sharing of news, ideas, activities and visions.
4. As a follow up to the conference *Roma and Gadje: The Challenge of Being Different* that took place in Brasov, Romania in May 2003, the SIG will create a database on organisations working on Roma issues in Europe (both religious and nonreligious), which will be made accessible to the SCMs. The SIG will continue to send information to the participants and others interested in Roma issues. The SIG will also maintain contact with the Roma village that



was visited during the Brasov conference, in order to explore ways of contributing to a project there. This project seeks to further the educational development of the village children.

5. The Europe Region will propose to the WSCF General Assembly in 2004 that resources (such as Bible studies, guidelines and case studies) on *overcoming violence* on a global level be created.

IV. GENDER

The group formerly entitled "Gender and Education", will work in the next two years on issues related to gender and will now be called the Gender Interest Group (GIG).

1. Gender issues shall be *integrated* into all WSCF-E events. A serious effort should be made to share tasks and responsibilities in an equal way between women and men.
2. A conference to take place in 2005 on the theme of *Respecting Human Integrity and Dignity* will look into the issues of sexual harassment, sexual abuse and trafficking of women; taking into account the perspectives of equality, power structures, global/local structures, solidarity, authority and transparency.
3. The updated WSCF-E guidelines (*Respecting Human Dignity and Integrity: Sexual Harassment Guidelines of WSCF Europe*, in both the longer and shorter versions) should be fully incorporated into the life of WSCF-E through their distribution and promotion.

V. COMMUNICATIONS

The role of the Communications Interest Group (CIG) will be the following:

1. To update the *website* on a regular basis, which shall include: providing a calendar of the upcoming events, offering information well ahead of time; creating a photo gallery, which could serve as a future basis for a photo archive of WSCF events history.
2. To maintain the (*e-mailing list*) of the SCMs and send a short e- and postal mailing on a regular basis containing news from SCMs and WSCF activities, provided by the interest group coordinators.
3. To remind interest groups coordi-

nators of their responsibility for keeping members of their interest groups *updated* on their area of work. Clear tasks should be assigned.

4. To discuss the layout of *Mozaik* with the Editorial Board. Such a consultation should decide whether *Mozaik* can include the Newsletter information about National SCMs in order to strengthen links between Movements and make their work more visible on a global level.
5. The ERC will define the relationship between the communications co-ordinator and *Mozaik's* editor-in-chief and make this known to all concerned.

6. The ERC will update the basic-information-booklet for preparatory committees on *How to Organise a Conference*.

LINGUA FRANCA AND MOVEMENT BUILDING

The Lingua Franca Language and Leadership Training Project will shift its focus to Eastern and South Eastern Europe, while still maintaining some courses in Central Europe. The CESR will help in fundraising and organising courses and leadership training events in Central Europe. The Europe Region, through the ERC, will search for new partnerships and contact movements in the *Mediterranean* area and enable the development of strategies for empowerment within the existing Movements in this part of Europe.



GLOBAL VISIONS FOR WSCF

Through its representation on the Executive Committee (ExCo), the European region of WSCF will seek to ensure that WSCF focuses on meaningful programmes and constructive visions for the future of the Federation.

1. The Europe region will promote the need for publications such as *Student World* as a forum of dialogue, spiritual and intellectual exchange for the global Federation, in WSCF regions and in national SCMs, as well as raising awareness of WSCF to partners and outside organisations.
2. Acknowledging that WSCF is a federation of national movements, WSCF-E will seek to ensure that the regions, while fully taking part in the life and work of the global federation, are autonomous in the majority of their own decision-making and programmes. The priority for WSCF as a whole should be regional and sub-regional events, which are the most effective ways of movement building. At the same time, WSCF-E will encourage efforts to bind the regions together such as: internships fostering co-operation between regions, along the lines of the *Frontier Internship in Mission (FIM)* programme and the *Deborah Project*; and mutual invitations to conferences. WSCF-E will continue and extend its practice of inviting participants to its events from other WSCF regions; focused thematic co-operation on a global level, such as the inter-regional work on HIV/AIDS in this quadrennium.
3. The WSCF-E ExCo members will recommend that *ExCo meetings* be held in conjunction with a larger conference. Such conferences would involve the ExCo in the life of the regions and inspire greater regional involvement in WSCF.



These events would involve as many WSCF members from the host region as possible, giving a global dimension to their thematic and programmatic work and their leadership training.

4. WSCF-E will encourage the whole Federation to strengthen the connection with the churches and ecumenical organisations at all levels, from the global to the local. This will be of mutual benefit to WSCF, the churches and the ecumenical organisations.

“ESCAPING FORWARD”

Instead of constantly cutting our programmatic and structural work, and thus placing the Federation in danger of disappearing within some years, we suggest the mentality and spirituality of “escaping forward” which would mean a renewed engagement in creative projects and programmes that aim to reach a broader constituency of students, donors and partners.

