

Meeting of General Secretaries of the European Council of Churches (ENCC's), 14–6 May, Helsinki, Finland (Orthodox Sofia Centre) and Tallinn, Estonia

DANIEL BUDA*

There is a tradition developed over the last years that the ENCC's General Secretaries meet yearly in different part of Europe, under the moderation of Conference of European Churches, with the participation of World Council of Churches (WCC) in order to inform and update each other on their programs and activities and to discuss an issue of common interest and concern. This year the meeting was hosted by two National Council of Churches: Finland and Estonia. The issue chosen to be discussed was the role of the National Council of Churches in the public sphere.

As usual, the meeting started with the presentations of activity reports of each national council. Each General Secretary emphasised the main activities implemented in the last year, as well as the challenges that the national councils and their member churches are facing. An important point on their agenda was ENCCs participation in the WCC and CEC Assemblies that will take place this year: CEC Assembly in Budapest, Hungary, 3–8 July respectively WCC Assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea, 30 October – 6 November.

The afternoon sessions of the first days was dedicated to a plenary session on religious instruction from different perspectives. Dr. Einike Pilli, Education Project Director of the Estonian National Council of Churches presented a paper on "Religious Instruction from the Estonian Perspective." She focused on the work with young people in the church. In Estonia, as in other parts of the world, young people have a need for spirituality; however most of them reject the traditional ways of experiencing and transmitting the message of the Gospel. They use the most modern ways of communication, like Facebook, Twiter etc. and would like to see the Christian message transmitted in these ways. They are also much more tolerant with other confessions and religions that the older generation and ready to work ecumenically much more. The challenge for the churches is how to cultivate the enthusiasm of young people and also to respond to their needs and expectations without simplifying

* Daniel Buda, Rev. Lect. PhD of Church History at the Andrei Şaguna Faculty for Orthodox Theology, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu; Programme Executive Coordinator for Church and Ecumenical Relations at WCC, Geneva. Contact details: WCC, Route de Ferney 150, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland; e-mail: daniel77bde@yahoo.de.