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Message from the LWF European Regions' Meeting

held in Helsinki, Finland, 30 September – 2 October 2013

The LWF European Regions' Meeting was hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.

The three European regions (Central Western, Central Eastern and the Nordic) were represented by 40 participants from 24 LWF member churches.

During the sessions and group discussions the following issues were raised:

1. The rich diversity of LWF Communion member churches in Europe includes contextual differences that lead to a variety of approaches and emphases. The member churches recognize the significance of togetherness and companionship between minority and majority churches and desire to learn from each other. At the same time they are thankful for their independence.
2. Cooperation and dialogue between Lutherans and Catholics – the significance of working together for the renewal of the Church and bearing common testimony in secularized society.
3. The road to the 2017 commemoration – LWF should keep member churches informed about tools being used or developed by churches as they prepare for 2017. The Communion office should prepare a webpage as a platform for the member churches to communicate and inform each other.
4. The importance of the Communion – the LWF member churches representatives discussed issues raised in the LWF Council document "Claiming the Gift of Communion in a Fragmented World" and the "LWF Gender Justice Policy." Churches are encouraged to study and discuss the document and the policy.

Recommendations:

1. To receive the document "From Conflict to Communion" for study and reflection.
2. To consider LWF member churches' responses to the documents mentioned above.
3. For the next European Regions' meeting we recommend to focus and work on some themes that are relevant and challenging to particular regions: state and church relations, secularization, demographical developments, social circumstances, migration, ecology and the role of the church when membership is decreasing.

European LWF member churches as a part of a global communion understand that their advocacy is not limited to the European region and recognize some important issues in the global communion that should be highlighted and supported. We are concerned about the situation in the Middle East that challenge our churches to continue to pray for peace and climate changes going on, affecting us all, but especially the poorest and most vulnerable. Through LWF and related partners, we should strengthen our efforts to be a strong voice for hope, advocacy and diakonia.