

**13<sup>th</sup> CELC-Meeting of the European Region**  
**Porto, Portugal 10<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> of Mai 2012 - Thursday to Sunday**

Minutes

10th of May - morning session

The 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CELC (European Region) began at 9:30 am on the 10th of May, 2012, at Vila Nova de Gaia, next Porto – Seminario Cristo Rei. An opening devotion was held by Benjamin Stöhr, Germany to 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:21-25. Chairman Artur Villares opened the conference.

There was following attendance:

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

| Country        | Participants  | Church   | Participant's official capacity   |
|----------------|---|--|---|
| Albania        | Mikel Bishka<br>Agron Mece<br>Vitori Mece<br>Pavlina Bishka   | CELCA  | Visitor<br>Visitor<br>Visitor<br>Visitor  |
| Bulgaria       | Todor Georgiev Ganchovski   | BLC/WELS   | Voting Delegate   |
| Czech Republic | Rev. Martin Vrsecký   |  | Voting Delegate   |
| <i>Finland</i> | <i>Rev. Juhani Viitala (will arrive the next day)</i><br><i>Hans Ahlskog (arrives today)</i>  | <i>SLT Finland</i>                                       | <i>Voting Delegate</i><br><br>Official Guest  |
| Germany        | Pf. Martin Wilde<br>Dr. Gottfried Herrmann<br>Pf. em. Gerhard Wilde<br>Pf. Karsten Drechsler<br>Anna Christina Herrmann<br><u>Seminary Students:</u><br>Carsten Hoffmann<br>Benjamin Stöhr<br>Tobias Hübener<br>David Edvardsen | ELFK   | Voting Delegate<br>Voting Delegate<br>Advisory Delegate<br>Advisory Delegate<br>Visitor<br>Official Guest<br>Official Guest<br>Official Guest<br>Official Guest |
| Norway         | Rev. Tor Jakob Welde<br>Rev. Oyvind Edvardssen  | LBK Norway   | Voting Delegate<br>Voting Delegate  |
| Portugal       | Rev. Artur Villares<br>Rev. António Canoa   | ILP  | Voting Delegate<br>Voting Delegate  |
| Russia         | Andrey Kozionov<br>Alexander Smirnov<br>Larisa Smirnov  | CELC Russia  | Voting Delegate<br>Voting Delegate<br>Visitor   |
| Sweden         | Dr. Seth Erlandsson<br>Rev. Lars Gunnarsson<br>Birgitta Erlandsson<br>Christin Gunnarsson<br>Ingrid Olsson<br>Anna Karlsson   | LBK Sweden   | Voting Delegate<br>Voting Delegate<br>Visitor<br>Visitor<br>Visitor<br>Visitor  |
| Ukraine        | Rev. John Vogt<br>Sandra Vogt   | ULC  | Voting Delegate<br>Visitor  |
| USA            | Rev. Dan Koelpin<br>Prof. Ken Cherney   | WELS - CELC President<br>WELS - CICR Liaison to Portugal | Official Guest<br>Official Guest  |

Madalena Meireles and Pedro Rei from Portugal were introduced.

Artur Villares as the Portuguese host gave words of greetings to the assembly. He showed the Agenda and gave some information to it. The presentation of "Archeology and the Bible" will be given by his future son in law Dominik Elkowicz. He lives in Mainz having contact to the Civil Chaplain of the WELS in Germany and is hopefully becoming a CELC-Lutheran.

Artur Villares also gave greetings from the member church in Latvia. They cannot come because of their by vocational work they have to do. They send their 1<sup>st</sup> response to paper 4 done by Sweden.

**The conference theme dealt with the 5<sup>th</sup> petition "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." WHAT WE LIVE FROM: FORGIVENESS OF SINS**

Because the people from Finland did not arrive yet, Ovind Edvardson from Norway started to present paper 2. Forgiveness of sins – Proclaimed to all (central message for outreach, preaching, common confession)

After a short break more visitors from Portugal were introduced – Diana Villares and Ana Pinto and Dominik Elkowicz.

The 1<sup>st</sup> response to the Norwegian paper was given by Andrey Kozionov – Russia. Artur Villares told that this week is the most important week for the celebration of Fatima in Portugal. Many people walk to Fatima because they think; they can do this for their salvation. It is a very Roman Catholic environment in Portugal. It's our treasure and it is so important to preach the gospel. The word is powerful, but our "marketing" is often very poor. We have to use modern means to get it to the people but also Liturgy and repetition, are good to keep the faith and address the faith.

Hans Ahlskog from Finland arrived during the discussion.

Chairman and Secretary gave some more information about this meeting. The morning session closed with singing the hymn "The Churches one foundation".

The afternoon session began with singing of hymn: "Open now Thy gates of beauty". Karsten Drechsler from Germany presented the 3<sup>rd</sup> paper: Forgiveness of sin assured to individuals (subjective justification, private confession, church discipline) closing with hymn: "Salvation unto us has come"

The First Response was given by Martin Vrsecký: Czech Republic. A discussion followed talking about the different desire of the people for private confession depending on the forms of private confessions, creating an atmosphere of Gods love for private confession. Talking secondly about church discipline as a labor of love even it is very difficult, as a labor of the whole congregation.

After a coffee break the afternoon session continued with the presentation of member churches in alphabetical order. Albania started, followed by Bulgaria and Czech Republic closed at 6:30 pm.

After a break and dinner, the assembly met again at 9:00 pm for a presentation of Dan Koelbin, worldwide CELC President and Administrator of the Board for World Missions

(BWM/WELS), informing about world mission fields of the WELS. Artur Villares closed with more information about our meeting and the assembly sang hymn "Abide with me".

#### 11th of May 2012 - morning session

The morning session began at 9:30 am with a devotion of Carsten Hoffmann to Mark 13:28ff. The Chairman gave some information about the schedule.

Seth Erlandsson, Sweden, delivered paper 4: Forgiveness of sins distributed through the ministry (common priesthood of all believers, pastoral office, in family, congregational groups, conferences, even from child to child – by the means of grace).

Artur Villares read the 1st response from Ugis Sildegs, Latvia.

After a coffee break a discussion followed. It was talked about the questions: What do you do when people don't feel the need of forgiveness rather feeling themselves as victims? What do you do when people are renitent to forgive? What do you do when people refuse the comfort of forgiveness in Christ? How do the believers present both law and gospel to today's secularized world?

Juhanni Viitala from Finland arrived. He expressed his sorrow that he was not aware that he should present the paper Finland was supposed to write. So the time planned for the paper should be covered up by the presentations of the member churches.

The yesterday minutes were read and accepted.

Following member churches presented themselves: Germany by Martin Wilde, a Swedish speaking Finish church which is not yet a CELC-member but in fellowship with the Finish CELC-member church by Hans Ahlskog, and the Finish CELC-Church by Juhanni Viitala. After this a group picture was taken.

After lunch the assembly went down town Porto for a sightseeing tour guided by Marta Villares. About 9:00 pm a presentation on "Archaeology and the Bible" was given by Dominik Elkowicz.

#### 12<sup>th</sup> of May - morning session

The morning session began at 9:30 am with a devotion held by Artur Villares. The yesterday minutes were read and accepted. The chairman gave some information about the schedule (tomorrow 9:30 am departure for service).

The constitution of the CELC was read – Article VIII – in preparation of the election. Within the CELC Europe the Secretary is also the Vice-president. Arthur Villares - Portugal was denominated and re-elected as the President of the CELC Europe. Martin Vrzecky and Oyvind Edvardssen were denominated. Oyvind Edvardssen was elected for Secretary.

The topic of the next conference should be the 6<sup>th</sup> petition of the Lord's Prayer. Bulgaria was agreed on as the place for our next CELC meeting 2013. Sweden invited for 2015. The date should be 6th to 9th of June 2013.

Gottfried Herrmann gave some information about the archive for the CELC-Europe established in Zwickau/ Germany and asked the essayists of this meeting to send him their papers. Tor Jakob Welde presented the Norwegian sister church. The participants agreed that the group picture will be published on the CELC-web page.

After a coffee break and singing of hymn "A mighty fortress is our God", the meeting was evaluated. Some points of evaluation: - good place of meeting – all together under one roof – singing of hymns, better more hymns – the time of fellowship we had to talk – the cook and kitchen and price was good. The suggestion was made to have a booklet for CELC-hymns we sing at our meetings. Dan Koelpin could take care of that.

Official thanks were passed to our Portuguese host and chairman Artur Villares – especially to the people who prepared all the food – the preachers of the devotions - Essayists and first Responders – the Secretary and the organist Seth Erlandsson and the tour guide Marta Villares. Also thanks to the supporting churches.

The self-presentation of the member churches continued with Sweden by Lars Gunnarsson, Portugal by Artur Villares, Russia by Andrey Kozionov, Ukraine by John Vogt. The Chairman gave an official recognition to Gerhardt Wilde, who attends since the very beginning the CELC-meetings and was the 1rst chairman.

Some participants had to travel home. Enough people remained for the closing service on Sunday together with the local congregation. The Minutes were read and accepted by all voting delegates. The session closed at 1:00 p.m. with best wishes and blessing by the chairman to all participants and hymn: "The church's one foundation".

Artur Villares – Chairman  
Martin Wilde – Secretary