



GENSEC-2026-100

To CEC Member Churches

Brussels, 23 June 2026

CEC Steering Group on Human Rights

Respected Church leaders,

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Dear friends,

Warm greetings from the office of the Conference of European Churches in Brussels. I hope this letter finds you well.

As I mentioned in a previous letter, **Mr Job van Lobenstein** has started as CEC's Programme Officer for Dialogue and Action at the beginning of this year. His area of focus are human rights, particularly but not exclusively freedom of religion or belief.

To steer, profile and advise CEC's work on human rights the CEC Governing Board decided to establish a Steering Group on Human Rights with experts from its Member Churches.

Since starting in Brussels, Job van Lobenstein has met with various stakeholders and familiarised himself with the current discussions on human rights, particularly freedom of religion or belief. He has engaged especially with European political institutions, such as the European Union and the Council of Europe. Based on these initial observations, he has prepared a report, which you will find attached.

In this report, he outlines ongoing discussions within European institutions, regarding human rights and freedom of religion or belief and considers how this issue is addressed within the EU institutions. He also suggests ways in which the Conference of European Churches can contribute to safeguarding and strengthening freedom of religion or belief for all within the European Union and the Council of Europe. The Governing Board of CEC has approved this report and tasked a Steering Group to develop a concrete programme on this work area.

The CEC Steering Group on Human Rights will be composed of approximately 10 to a maximum of 15 experts. The group will focus particularly on freedom of religion or belief as part of the human rights framework. However, other pressing human rights issues will still be discussed. We aim to form a diverse group, bringing together individuals of different church denominations, but also geographical backgrounds, ages, and gender. While knowledge of human rights, particularly freedom of religion or belief, is important, expertise may be gained through academic, professional, or lived experience. We would also welcome members from a variety of disciplines, such as theology, law, political science, or social work.

In practical terms, the work will involve regular meetings to discuss current human rights developments and concerns and to consider how the Conference of European Churches can respond- effectively and sensitively. Meetings will be held online, but also, whenever necessary or advisable, physically.

The mandate of the Steering Group on Human Rights will be in place until the next extended CEC General Assembly in 2028 with the option to be extended. CEC will cover travel and accommodation costs. However, CEC is thankful if a Member Church decides to cover the costs of the expert coming from this Member Church. This would greatly support the mission and work of CEC .



We would therefore like to invite you to nominate an expert from your church to participate in this Steering Group. Please include the candidate's CV with your proposal and send it to the following address: jvl@cec-kek.be.

Further questions can be sent to the same address. We look forward to receiving your nomination **by July 31, 2026**.

Kind regards,



Rev. Frank-Dieter Fischbach

General Secretary