



**Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE)  
- Leuenberg Church Fellowship -**

**Press release**

## **CPCE visits Churches in Sweden and Finland**

**Swedish and Finnish churches are being invited to further cooperation with CPCE – a pan-European Consultation on the Ordained Ministry meets in November**

From 21st to 23rd June a delegation from CPCE, the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe visited several churches in Sweden and Finland and invited them to further cooperation. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and the Church of Sweden as well as the Mission Church in Sweden have not signed the Leuenberg Agreement, the foundational document of the CPCE, but stand as so-called “participating churches” in a close working relation to CPCE.

CPCE General Secretary Michael Bünker invited the churches to take part as guests at the coming General Assembly of CPCE in Florence in 2012. The theological discussion on church fellowship has always been enriched by the contributions of the Swedish and Finnish churches, said Bünker. He also invited them to make their own contribution from the Nordic Reformation to the CPCE project “European Cities of the Reformation”.

Fundamental ecumenical models and current theological challenges were discussed, such as the significance of the office of church leadership for the unity of the church. The Co-President of CPCE, Stephanie Dietrich, underlined in the conversations the basic attitude of the Lutheran World Federation and her own church, the Church of Norway, which signed the Agreement in 1999. “A fellowship between episcopally constituted churches need not exclude fellowship with those which exercise church oversight otherwise than through the bishop’s office. The foundation for church fellowship is agreement in the preaching of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments, not a particular ordering of ministries.” The CPCE study currently in preparation on “Ministry and Ordination” is an invitation to the participating and member churches to work further on this theme.

Presidium member Michael Beintker stressed the necessity of further pan-European projects. A comparable theological training throughout the European churches should be striven for as a step towards greater community. In November 2012 a CPCE consultation on the theme that has been running since 2003 will discuss a text on the principles of training for ministry in CPCE.

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At present 105 Protestant churches in Europe (including five South-American churches originating from Europe ) belong to the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE). Lutheran, Reformed, United and Methodist along with pre-Reformation

churches such as Hussites and Czech Brethren grant each other pulpit and table fellowship on the basis of the Leuenberg Agreement of 1973. The Secretariat is housed in the Severin-Schreiber-Gasse 3, A-1180 Vienna, [office@leuenberg.eu](mailto:office@leuenberg.eu), tel. +43.1.4791523.900, fax .110 The CPCE press officer is Dipl.theol. Thomas Flügge (Bern), tel. +41.31.3702502, [t.fluegge@leuenberg.eu](mailto:t.fluegge@leuenberg.eu).