

CEC elects new leadership



The Conference of European Churches (CEC) General Assembly elected new leaders on 19 June.

H.E. Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain of the Ecumenical Patriarchate was elected as president; and Rt Rev. Dr Dagmar Winter and Rev. Frank Kopania as vice presidents.

Archbishop Nikitas is coordinator of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Task Force on Human Trafficking and Modern-day Slavery, and has served as chairman of the Patriarchate's Committee on Youth as well as co-chair and steering committee member of the Elijah Inter-faith Foundation. He is currently co-president of the European Catholic-Orthodox Forum.

The Archbishop said he has always believed that being a Christian means entering into dialogue with other people and other Christian communities.

"Yes, of course we have our differences but we have so much in common: Jesus

Christ,” he said. “We need to know each other; we need to work together.”

For the Archbishop becoming CEC president, means becoming a shepherd of a flock. “To be president of an organisation, one deals with facts and figures but the president of CEC also has to work with people’s souls—and that gives me an opportunity to know about CEC in a different way,” he said. “Most important, I want to build bridges and relationships.”

He added that, many times, there is fear of the other. “I want my relationships to be ones of Christian love, ones of truth and honesty,” he said. “I want to help build stability in CEC’s offices, economic structure, and relationship-wise.”

A big priority is hearing more youth voices and bringing them into CEC to let them know what is really happening. “We need to know what young people think and feel, he said. “We hear from so many people that churches and congregations are shrinking.”

The Archbishop wants to rejuvenate those churches and give them hope. “We can’t say young people are the future of the church — they’re the reality now,” he said.

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