



September 2015

## EFECW News

**New Coordinating Committee (CC)**



*From left to right: Szuszi Soos, Eva Guldanova, Asea Railean, Hannah Golda (front), Gabriele Kienesberger (back), Marijana Ajzenkol, Fiona Buchanan, Marianne Milde CJ*

## 1<sup>st</sup> Coordinating Committee Meeting, Vienna, 14-16 Nov 2014

The new Coordination Committee met in Vienna, from 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> November. An important part of the meeting was dedicated to team building by firstly, getting to know each other better and how each one can and would like to contribute to the different areas of work for the CC and the organization at large. Secondly, the new CC revised the different tasks and roles within the team and defined the respective expectations, and finally reflected on the vision statement from the General Assembly giving emphasis this time on spirituality as one of the main themes/areas.



Apart from the regular business issues (like financial report and budget, reporting, etc.), some sessions dealt with the 9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly evaluation and analyzing the work



priorities as defined there. The team decided to start by the priority on relationships between the national and European level as well as among the national organizations. Each member of the CC is now responsible in maintaining regular contact with 3-4 member countries, to ensure relationships with all members and strengthen the

European network. To support this decision, a questionnaire was developed and sent to all members.

In its first meeting, the CC also reviewed preparations and follow-up plans for the PopUp Monastery (PUM); decided on the renewal and upgrade of our website; asked Maria Koutatzi (ex-CC member) to support the organization as an assistant and Martina Heinrichs as an advisor; and made some short- and long-term plans for future meetings.

## **Coordinating Committee meeting, Belgrade, 19-22 March 2015**

The second meeting of the coordinating committee (CC) took place in Zemun (Belgrade) at a monastery. The two main areas of the discussions were:

- (a) feedback from previous consultation/questionnaire of each CC member with the members. This exercise proved useful for summarising common achievement and challenges as well as identifying communication break-downs.
- (b) Working on the priority areas as decided by the 9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in developing an action plan appropriate to the needs and wishes of the members. In this direction some first indications for the future action plan are:
  - Young women and New members: to evaluate PUM in the context of the young women's strategy and revise accordingly; to develop activities (intergenerational) to enlarge the membership at all levels; to be present in national/European events and present EFECW.
  - Spirituality / spiritual journey: Organise a ecumenical retreat; Develop a manual for an ecumenical retreat; insist on European presence at all neighbourhood meetings, etc.
  - External communication: organise a gender expert meeting maybe on *Gender justice in church and society – women's voices in Europe*. Involving women MEPs, from functions and ministries in churches where gender issues are worked on, networks of female pastors, women from Christian INGOs, women academics, etc.

## **PopUp Monastery (PUM)**

**Pop Up Monastery, 15-21 August 2015, Mariensee, Germany**  
**Impressions by Marianne Milde CJ**

A very special place, the old monastery in MARIENSEE, about 30 km from Hannover, and 10 km from Loccum, where the EFECW 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly 2010 took place.

Here some impressions from the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of this unique experience 15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>th</sup> of August 2015: 18 women from 10 European countries, the team of four women, who had carefully arranged these days, the film-team and last but not least the Abbess and some women from Mariensee.



When I think back, to my mind comes:

- Praying together in the morning and in the evening
- 12 hours silence: from 10 p.m. to 10 a.m.
- My daily duty: cleaning the room of silence every morning
- The generational mix: young and elderly women sharing time and experiences
- The sun and the cloister-garden: learning something new, for instance about herbs
- Discussing some contemporary issues of gender, faith and the future
- Having meal together, three times a day, sitting in groups of six
- Talking about the future in Belarus, Greece, Armenia and so on
- A one day pilgrimage in silence and with reflection-questions and a special co-partner
- Laughing together during the game “sabotage”, finding out who is the good dwarf and who the bad...
- Learning the cloister embroidery and making a smart phone pocket
- ... I could continue ...



And what stays with me in my daily life?

- This experience was great and so was the team!
- EFECW is a fine possibility to give women the chance to grow together, to encourage each other in faith, self-confidence, concerted action, social work and more.
- New friends in different countries
- Rejoicing in life

*And my firm conviction:* PUM must continue in another place. It is really worth!

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## **Please visit: a new design for EFECW website**

The new website is now “ready”! ...Almost ready for two reasons: firstly, the website was planned to be designed, tested and launched by the end of 2015, but because of an unexpected decision from the old website-host, we were obliged to “migrate” to a new version within a month’s time; therefore many parts of the new website menu are “under construction”. Secondly, we consider the website as an instrument of communication, and even though the old website was not used as fully as expected, we still believe that it can support our (among national and between national and European level) communication, and, therefore relationship and at the same time serve as a public presentation of our organization, our work, our priorities, our thinking to any visitors.

We want the website to be more accessible and more updated (and for this we need to share the responsibility of sharing the news/information) and we hope to develop new features including social media (please join us on facebook and twitter), email notification for news, etc.

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## **Neighbourhood meetings**

**“In Deeper Waters”, 20-24 May 2015, Kirkkonummi, Finland**

By Marianne Milde CJ (CC)

We were 15 women from 7 countries: Estonia, Germany, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Finland, and of course from several churches. The venue, Hvittorp, helped us to both study the problems and to relax between the sessions at the lakeside.



Five powerful women speakers helped us to understand the different issues. At first Laura Riuttanen told us how water is changing climate (more in [IPPC](#)'s Assessment Report). Then Tuija Kaunisto (Vesi Instituuti) spoke on the "Quality of Water" at an academic level. In the afternoon Yvonne Terlinden (theologian and psychotherapist) touched our hearts with the bible verses Gen. 21, 8-21 – the story of Sarah and Hagar! On Friday morning a young Lutheran pastor introduced us in the theme "Realizing and accepting shadows- Reflections from the margins". We got new insights and understanding of shadows and margins in our own story of life, while she spoke about her parish and how to bring people to trust somebody or themselves again. It was like a freshening wind to listen to her.



Two other highlights were: the guided tour and the dinner in [Pokrova Orthodox Center](#); and the meditative excursion in the [Nuksio national park](#) with [Riitta Wahlström](#).

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**“How do the life and the practice in our Churches fit in with the present changing societies? Individuals-Identities-Solidarities”**

**13th-15th March 2015, Angers, France,**

By Michelle Lefevre

We were 24 women in Angers, from Greece, Italy, Switzerland, the Rhineland, the Netherlands, as well as Paris, Strasbourg and Angers. The theme, both sociological and religious, allowed us to work on current aspects of Individualism, Identity and Solidarity in our societies and churches.

Dominican father H. Legrand showed how Pope Francis uses relations between the Catholic church and the countries towards greater openness to the social realities of our time, and rejects the hierarchical relationships with states. We spent a lot of time sharing

expressions of solidarity experienced in our countries. We were particularly impressed by the dedication of some local people. The sharing of friendship became very sensitive during the celebration of Sunday morning, by the music and the homily given by friends of Angers. We have shared the communion in prayer and intercessions for the Forum and for Europe. Let us not forget, finally, the visit to the castle of Angers and in specific the Apocalypse Tapestry, which was a great moment of discovery for many enthusiastic participants.

We hope and wish that such living encounters help us to know better the European Forum in her richness and diversity as means to energise the organisation!

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## **Jacqueline Stuyt Legacy Fund 2015**

The following projects were funded in 2015:

- *Who Touched My Clothes? (Mk 5,30)*, EFECW Serbia
- *In deeper waters – Sharing our traditions*, Baltic neighbourhood meeting, Hvittorp, Kirkkonummi, Finland
- *"Convivencia - How to Learn to Live Together"*, IKETH conference, Berlin, Germany
- *Timothy Leadership Training for Women*, Ecumenical Forum of Romanian Christian Women, Stejeris, Mures, Romania
- *Egeria Pilgrimage – Closing Seminar*, Jerusalem, EFECW Germany
- *„Expressions of our faith: logos, music, icon"*, EFECW Greece
- *Pop Up Monastery Project* - training for the PUM Committee members, Mariansee Germany

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## **Information**

- Next Coordinating Committee meeting, Svati Jur, Slovakia, 15-18 October 2015
- Next National Coordinators' meeting, Cyprus, 1<sup>st</sup> week of September 2016 (exact dates to be confirmed soon)

*Please support the:*

**The Fellowship of the Least Coin** (<http://www.flc.net.ph> )

and the **Ruth-Epting Fund** ([www.efecw.net](http://www.efecw.net))

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