



Saksbehandler: Beate Fagerli

Saksdokumenter:

Final Paper - Nordic-Baltic Networks and Co-operation

## Saker i de økumeniske organisasjonene

### Økumenisk samarbeid i Norden

Ekumenik i Norden (EIN) er organisert som et program under Sveriges Kristne Råd (SKR), og bærer videre arven fra det Nordiske Økumeniske Instituttet, senere Nordisk Økumenisk Råd. Etter pådriv fra Norge og Danmark ble rådet nedlagt i 2004 på grunn av en noe dyr og tung struktur. EIN ble opprettet med svensk og finsk støtte for å videreføre arbeidet.

I dag fungerer EIN som koordinator for noe av det nordiske kirkesamarbeidet. En rekke økumeniske fag- og interessenettverk er tilknyttet instituttet, selv om mange i hovedsak driver seg selv. Fra Norge er alle de større teologiske fakulteter med i Nettverket for teologisk utdanning i Norden. Liturgisk senter har hatt deltakere i Leitourgia-nettverket. Mellomkirkelig råd og Norges Kristne Råd har deltatt i det nordiske Faith and Order-nettverket, samt i Økumenisk Idéforum. Kirkerådet er representert i styret for Nordisk Økumenisk Kvinnekomité, og deltar dessuten i det nordiske nettverket for kirkerett. Den katolske kirke i Norge deltar i nettverksarbeid og har uttrykt ønske om et nærmere samarbeid. Det finnes tilsvarende deltakelse i noen av nettverkene også fra Danmark og Island.

Nettverket støttes økonomisk av anglikanerne i Norden, Den evangelisk lutherske kirke i Finland, Den ortodokse kirke i Finland, Svenska Kyrkan, Svenska Missionskyrkan, Stockholms katolske stift og Sigtunastiftelsen. Svenska kyrkan og Den evangelisk lutherske kirke i Finland har bidratt med godt over en halv million kroner hver i året.

På grunn av nye økonomiske utfordringer har organiseringen av nettverket vært oppe til ny vurdering. Det har fra norsk og dansk side vært behov for å holde nordisk økumenisk samarbeid på et lett strukturelt nivå. Nettverkene har egne styregrupper og driver i noen grad seg selv. Dette letter også de økonomiske kravene. Samtidig handler EIN i første rekke om deltakelse og eierskap i forhold til nordisk samarbeid, ikke bare om økonomisk forpliktelse.

Generalsekretærene i de Kristen rådene i Norden har på denne bakgrunn utformet forslag til en omorganisering av det nordiske økumeniske samarbeidet.

## **Forslag til vedtak**

Mellomkirkelig råd støtter forslaget til omorganisering av det nordiske økumeniske samarbeidet.

## **Økonomiske/administrative konsekvenser**

Mellomkirkelig råd ber sekretariatet om å inkludere forslag til økonomisk bidrag i budsjettet for 2013.

## **Nordic-Baltic Networks and the Role of EIN**

*More synergy – less institution?*

*By Ørnulf Steen (NCC Norway), Lennart Molin (NCC Sweden), Heikki Huttunen (NCC Finland), Bishop Christian Alsted (The United Methodist Church) and Mads Christoffersen (NCC Denmark).*

The Nordic General Secretaries of the ecumenical councils have met in Copenhagen 21-22 June 2011 to follow up on the situation of the Nordic-Baltic ecumenical networks. The General Secretaries were asked by the Nordisk Idéforum in Sigtuna (April 2011) to reflect upon and to suggest a way forward for the ecumenical network. The suggestions from this meeting was discussed further in Finland (October 2011) by the Nordic Churches, the NCCs and by the Ekumenik i Norden-program. The result and proposals from the meeting in Finland was discussed by the Nordic General Secretaries and Bishop Alsted at a meeting in Copenhagen 14 December 2012 with the purpose to reformulate a proposal for a model of Nordic ecumenical cooperation after the cutting of the EIN budget (2011). This proposal will be presented at the Nordic-Baltic secretaries' meeting in January 2012 for approval.

*Hereafter the Steering Group of EIN will send the proposal to churches, church councils, Sigtuna Stiftelsen and other relevant networks/institution.*

### **Vision**

We believe that we are renewed in our spirituality, theology and Christian life when we are challenged, encouraged and blessed by each other. In order to be true to our own identity, the holy tradition and our own task, we need each other.

### **Aim**

It is the aim for the ecumenical Nordic-Baltic network to deepen and broaden church relations across national borders and denominations in our region in order to share lessons learned and visions for the ecumenical work nationally and regionally. This includes relations between majority and minority churches.

There is a need for continuing renewal of networks and partnerships in order to benefit from the synergy among initiatives and from the added value of such networks.

In a time of financial crisis in general and the budget cutting of EIN specifically, it is the aim to see how we can benefit the most of EIN with smaller budgets than before.

### **Background**

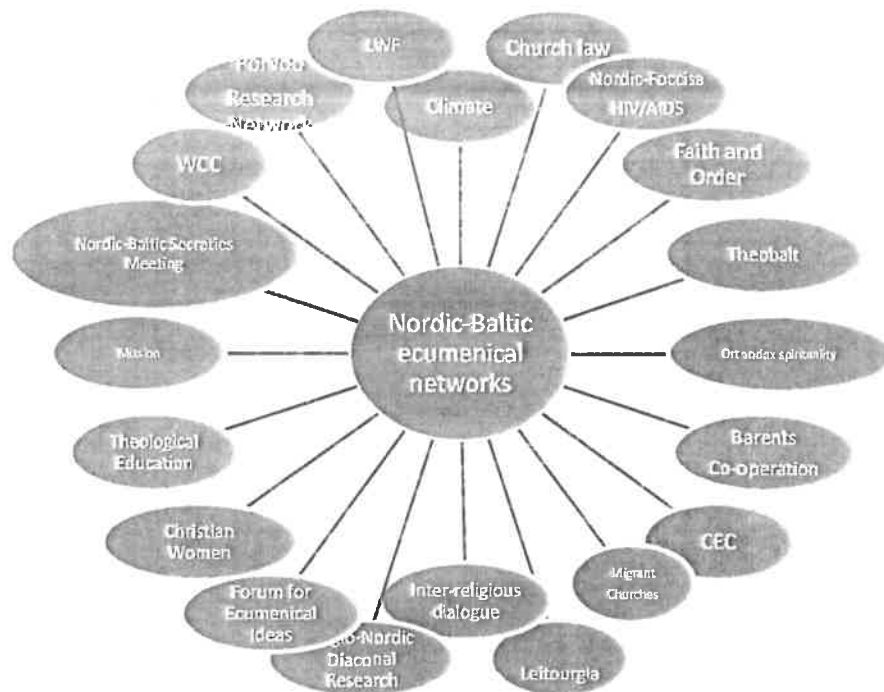
The ecumenical cooperation has a long and inspiring history through the Nordic Ecumenical Institute, the Nordic Ecumenical Council and the Ekumenik i Norden-program (EIN). For decades, churches and ecumenical councils have worked together in the Nordic region in a fruitful partnership. The leaderships provided by these institutions are highly appreciated for the benefit of the ecumenical work and cooperation in the region.

However, this cooperation has been challenged due to organizational and financial concerns over the years. Despite of this, there is a will and a positive atmosphere for the renewal of ecumenical

partnership in the region. Today, the financial situation in the churches and ecumenical councils requires a downsizing of our institutional structures. Especially, the Ekumenik i Norden program has been downsized. Therefore, we need to look at the new situation and how we benefit from a Nordic secretariat of coordination and information with only few resources.

A number of ecumenical networks have been developed focusing on specific topics. It is the general impression that the members find these networks fruitful and benefitting also for the national work done in the different countries. Furthermore, we witness how the annual Nordic-Baltic meetings for the ecumenical secretariats are now consolidated for the benefit of the partnership in the region as well as for the inspiration for the national ecumenism in the different countries.

The Nordic General Secretaries have discussed how these networks and the Nordic ecumenical partnership can develop most fruitfully in cooperation with ELN when finances are very limited. Looking at each network, their function, members and present cooperation with ELN, the Nordic General Secretaries give their recommendations as follows.



Existing Nordic-Baltic ecumenical networks (see appendix)

### A possible way forward

Due to the change in the societal and financial situation and the need for reshaping combined with a positive development of ecumenical networks in the region, we need to see how we can improve the benefits of our networks with smaller budgets. We need to look at existing structures and to work for more flexibility and a higher level of transparency, information and sharing. We need to support, develop and share information in the different networks.

#### **Recommendations to EIN**

Looking at all networks mentioned in the figure above, the Nordic General Secretaries find that EIN now plays a role as an organizer or co-organizer of events and meetings related to the networks of Forum for Ecumenical Ideas (Økumenisk Ideforum), Theological Education, Church Law, Christian Women, Faith and Order, Migration and Porvoo. EIN do not play a role (or only very little) as organizer for the other networks.

#### *EIN as co-organizer of meetings and events*

It is suggested that EIN, in the future, should primarily be a co-organizer of the Faith and Order-network meetings – organized together with national churches in the host country. All other networks could possibly organize their own activities. A procedure of changing hosts in a network should be rather easily organized. If a network wants EIN to organize their events and meetings, they should cover financially themselves. That could be relevant e.g. to the network of theological education.

It is suggested that the Forum for Ecumenical Ideas (Økumenisk Ideforum) should be a part of the Sigtuna Stiftelsen instead of EIN. EIN should then be a partner and be responsible for the information to all Nordic-Baltic countries.

#### *EIN as responsible for the sharing of information*

It is recommended that the main function of EIN is the sharing of information among countries, networks and National Council of Churches. All networks should make procedures for announcements of events, seminars and meetings together with press releases or minutes to send to EIN so that information could be sent forward to all ecumenical partners. EIN should send out news (digitally) regularly with information of the work of the ecumenical networks.

A web site could also be made with information from the ecumenical networks. This web site should be a resource for the national councils and others to get knowledge of the ecumenical work in the Nordic-Baltic region.

#### *EIN and staff*

From January 2012 EIN will only cover 30% of a full time employment. For the moment, this staff is attached to the Christian Council in Sweden. Also for the future, it is recommended that it would be relevant to organize a person who already works for one of the Christian Councils so that he/she works for the council as a full time employed of which 30 % is for the EIN. It is suggested – not necessarily recommended – that staff could move from one National Council to the other after a period of 5 years. Alternatively, the staff could be a part of the Sigtuna Stiftelsen in Sweden.

Today EIN is funded by Finland and Sweden. Other national churches/councils of churches could be asked to support the funding of staff – *in regard to their financial capability*. It is recommended that the work at EIN should not be more than 30% of a full time employment.

#### *Steering group of EIN*

It is suggested that the Nordic General Secretaries form the steering group of EIN. The daily leading of the staff of EIN will however be a task for the National Council of Churches (c.g. Finland) or the Sigtuna Stiftelsen hosting the EIN staff.

#### *A new name for EIN?*

It is suggested that EIN changes its name. Due to the present situation and the change of working areas from organizing seminars and meeting to sharing information, it is relevant to find a new name. It is suggested that the name of EIN is attached to the past and not so much to the new reality.

#### *Membership of EIN*

It has been discussed if it should be possible to organize this cooperation as a network of members. Not as a strong organization but more as a network. The members should pay a member fee. Members should/could be the National Council of Churches and/or churches from the different countries.

#### **Nordic-Baltic Secretariat meetings as a point of sharing**

The annual meetings for ecumenical secretariats in the Nordic-Baltic region gathers centrally placed persons (ecumenical secretaries, General Secretaries and other resource persons) from the national ecumenical work. Therefore, it is highly relevant to use this platform for sharing of knowledge, visions, strategies and concrete work in progress. This forum will have the opportunity to be informed on the work done in the different networks and to reflect upon them. The different networks should *not* be coordinated by this forum, but work independently as mentioned above.

The Nordic-Baltic meetings for the ecumenical secretariats will be a platform to share information about the work of the different networks – if needed. Representatives from some of the networks could be invited to give short presentations for reflections and discussions among participants. A presentation on issues in CEC and WCC should always be on the agenda

The preparations of these meetings should be done by the General Secretaries of the national ecumenical councils. However, the main host and organizer will be the inviting national council or church.

*Approved by the Nordic-Baltic Secretaries meeting, Marielund in Stockholm, 30 January 2012.*

*January 2012*