



CHANGES IN EUROPE

Europe today faces unprecedented challenges. The euphoria of 1990 and the end of the Cold War gave way to new problems: unemployment, threats to the environment, narrow nationalism, vast numbers of displaced people and new restrictive asylum legislation.

Enlargement of the European Union brings its own dilemmas - more countries and diverse cultures means compromise and consensus.

- How open will the E.U. be, as it expands and deepens?
- Will monetary union bring growing prosperity?
- Will there be safeguards to ensure fair trade for all, rich and poor alike?

The search for new patterns of freedom and justice means a tremendous challenge for the churches, too. Can they help to create and maintain a truly democratic society?

The Churches' East-West European Relations Network (CEWERN) seeks to respond to this shifting scene in imaginative and flexible ways. It provides a forum for information sharing, co-ordinating new initiatives in East-West relations as Europe expands and changes.

CEWERN's aim is to keep the churches in Britain and Ireland in touch with current developments. It encourages listening to and learning from others in Central and Eastern Europe. It promotes study and a deeper understanding of the situation in churches of many traditions in differing local and national settings.

CHANGES IN BRITAIN

The Channel Tunnel has provided a unique link between Britain and mainland Europe. A three-hour train journey can transport us

to Paris or Brussels, and beyond. More and more people are learning what it means to be fellow-Europeans, to work and travel and experience the impact of other cultures. Political changes become practical realities.

The beginning of the 1990s saw changes on the ecumenical scene, too. The Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland (CCBI) was formed, and its Coordinating Secretaries work closely with churches and associated bodies to establish priorities for Christian service and witness, and how best they can be met.

The Churches' East-West European Relations Network (CEWERN) works in cooperation with the Coordinating Secretary for International Affairs, as a "body in association" with CCBI. It also collaborates with the other ecumenical bodies, and is particularly involved in the CCBI Balkans Working Group.

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