



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

lutheranworld.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ECUMENICAL ORGANIZATIONS DISCUSS SWISS IMMIGRATION VOTE WITH GENEVA AUTHORITIES

GENEVA, 27 March 2014 - François Longchamp, president of the state council of Geneva, received heads of three international ecumenical organizations in a meeting on 25 March. With concerns being expressed over the 9 February Swiss referendum that recommended new restrictions on immigration, implications of the referendum were discussed in the meeting.

The three ecumenical organizations are the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the ACT Alliance. All are based in the Ecumenical Centre, Geneva.

Longchamp met with the WCC General Secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, the LWF General Secretary Rev. Martin Junge and the ACT Alliance General Secretary John Nduna. He assured the three ecumenical leaders that the Swiss government is addressing the matter seriously.

Longchamp said that it will take time for the referendum to have an impact, and matters related to the cantons of Geneva and Vaud will be given special attention. Longchamp assured them of his support for their organizations, especially in relation to work permits for incoming international staff.

The WCC General Secretary invited Longchamp to the upcoming WCC Central Committee meeting, which will be held from 2 to 9 July in Geneva. "We deeply appreciate the opportunity of meeting with Mr. François Longchamp to discuss the implications of the Swiss referendum," said Tveit.

"This support from Swiss officials is essential for international ecumenical organizations like the WCC, the LWF and the ACT Alliance to carry out their mission and work effectively while based in Switzerland," he added.

Rev. Martin Junge, General Secretary of the LWF, said, "We were grateful to be received and listened to and encouraged by our discussions with Mr Longchamp and his awareness about potential implications of the immigration vote for international organizations including ecumenical organizations."

“The political authorities of Geneva are fully aware of the potential impact of the Swiss vote concerning immigrations on international organizations, and are assuring us that they have these organizations and their interests in mind as they engage in negotiations at a federal level on how to implement the outcome of the referendum,” said Junge.

For further information please contact:

Ms Heidi Martinussen
Director of Communications
E-mail: hpm@lutheranworld.org
Phone: +41 22 791 6367