

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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BQ 522 – Nr. 05/2018

WEA introduces new ambassador to the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Orthodox Church community

(Bonn, 19.03.2018) On the occasion of a meeting of the heads of all major churches and confessions of Turkey at the Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul, the Associate Secretary General Bishop Thomas Schirmmacher introduced Dr Nikolay (Nik) Nedelchev personally to Bartholomew I, who as Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch is the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide.

The Ecumenical Patriarch heartily welcomed Bishop Dr Nikolay Nedelchev as the Ambassador of WEA to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and all of the Orthodox Church.

“I am glad that the WEA will be represented to the Orthodox Churches by such an experienced Evangelical statesman as Nik Nedelchev, who is highly respected by many Orthodox leaders,” said Bishop Efraim Tenderso, the WEA’s Secretary General. “We are interested in good and harmonious relations with all Orthodox churches and will show practical solidarity with the many Orthodox Christians living under persecution and discrimination.”

Beside the Ecumenical Patriarch himself the following leaders were present: Archbishop Karekin Bekciyan, surrogate of the Patriarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church; Patriarchal Surrogate Metropolitan Yusuf Çetin of the Syriac Orthodox Church; Monsignor Ruben Tuerrablanca, the highest-ranking Catholic in Turkey; and Dr Behnan Konutgan of the Turkish Protestant Churches, the Turkish member body of the WEA, who is also president of the board of Martin Bucer Seminary Turkey.

The Patriarch expressed appreciation for the substantial support for persecuted Orthodox Christians that the WEA has provided for decades, and for the WEA’s effort to further strengthen evangelical-Orthodox relationships through the appointment of a special ambassador.



Bishop Thomas Schirmmacher, WEA Associate Secretary General for Theological Concerns, introduces Bishop Nik Nedelchev to the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I © BQ/Warnecke

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After a search process, Nedelchev was nominated by Thomas Schirmmacher and then accepted and appointed by the Secretary General of WEA, Bishop Efraim Tendero from the Philippines.

The Office for Intrafaith and Interfaith Relations (OIIR), which is within part of the Theological Concerns department headed by Schirmmacher and is moderated by Schirmmacher and Bishop Dr Cesar Vicente P. Punzalan, III, from Manila.

The OIIR is seeking to identify leaders from Evangelical Alliances around the globe who have the requisite skills to represent the WEA in its dealings with global Christian world communions like the Anglicans, or world religions, like the Jewish faith or Hinduism.

Bishop Dr Nikolay Nedelchev

Bishop Dr Nikolay (Nik) Nedelchev, current president and previously director of the Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance, also served as president and former longterm director of the same and was President of the European Evangelical Alliance from 1999 to 2007.

Nedelchev was born in the small town of Petrich (Bulgaria), very close to the Greek border, in 1949. He became a follower of Christ at age 21, was ordained in the Baptist Union of Bulgaria, and served as a traveling preacher and teacher, and then as senior pastor of the Baptist Church in Sofia. He also took responsibility for the Baptist Union of Bulgaria.

Prior to the fall of Communism in November 1989, Nedelchev secretly disciples, mentored and trained young leaders through small groups, home Bible studies, and personal training in partnership with Biblical Education by Extension (now Entrust). In 1990, he helped to found the Bulgarian Biblical Academy, later United Theological Faculty/Bulgarian Evangelical Theological Institute and now Saint Trivelii Bible Seminary, and served as its executive director until 2006.

Nedelchev has travelled frequently to Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries to train emerging church leaders. In 2000 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Philadelphia Biblical University. He is a board member of the National Council of Religious Communities in Bulgaria (NCRCB).



The first discussion of the Bishop Nik Nedelchev with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew; Bishop Thomas Schirmmacher is at right
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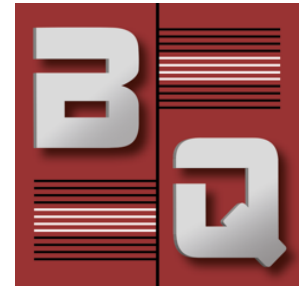
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Downloads and Links:

- The speech by Thomas Schirmmacher: "[Speech in Honour of the Launch of 'Christianity: Fundamental Teachings'](#)"
- [Photo 1](#): Bishop Thomas Schirmmacher, WEA Associate Secretary General for Theological Concerns, introduces Bishop Nik Nedelchev to the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I © BQ/Warnecke
- [Photo 2](#): The first discussion of the Bishop Nik Nedelchev with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew; Bishop Thomas Schirmmacher is at right © BQ/Warnecke
- [Photo 3](#): Bishops Nedelchev and Schirmmacher (left) at the meeting in Istanbul © BQ/Warnecke
- [Photo 4](#): Bishop Thomas Schirmmacher addressing Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the heads of the major Turkish churches (from left: Monsignor Ruben Tuerrablanca of the Catholic Church; Archbishop Karekin Bekciyan, surrogate of the Patriarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church; the Ecumenical Patriarch; the Patriarchal Surrogate Metropolitan Yusuf Çetin of the Syriac Orthodox Church; Dr. Behnan Konutgan of the Turkish Protestant Churches, the Turkish member of the WEA, also President of the board of Martin Bucer Seminary Turkey) © BQ/Warnecke
- [Photo 5](#): Bishop Nik Nedelchev speaks with Metropolitan Karekin Bekciyan, surrogate of the Patriarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church; Bishop Thomas Schirmmacher is at right © BQ/Warnecke
- [Photo 6](#): The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I at the event © BQ/Warnecke
- Lectures on leadership by Nik Nedelchev: <http://foclonline.org/users/nick-nedelchev>
- Wikipedia-entry on Bartholomew I: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartholomew_I_of_Constantinople
- Earlier WEA visits to the Ecumenical Patriarch:
 - 2010: <https://www.bucer.de/ressource/details/bonner-querschnitte-082010-ausgabe-130-eng-1.html>
 - 2016: <https://www.bucer.org/resources/resources/details/bonner-querschnitte-352016-ausgabe-430-eng.html>
 - 2016: <https://www.bucer.org/en/resources/resources/details/bonner-querschnitte-222016-ausgabe-417-eng.html>
 - 2017: <https://www.bucer.de/ressource/details/bonner-querschnitte-382016-ausgabe-433-eng.html>

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