



European
Methodist
Council



Fund for Mission in Europe
Project List 2021

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Cover picture: Encounter in front of the Miss Stone Centre, Strumica, North Macedonia (Project MK-103)

Keep connected across national borders

Solidarity among Methodist churches in Europe

Dear friends,

The Fund for Mission in Europe supports Methodist churches in their diverse activities with local people. The political, economic and social situation in Europe is still very different today. The context in various European countries is different, as are Methodist churches and their opportunities to stand up for the disadvantaged.

In this document you will find brief descriptions of Methodist church ministries and projects in fifteen European countries. All activities have at least one thing in common: They give people hope and help for a good life. Thus we seek to be faithful to the mission that God has entrusted to us – to share the love of God by words and deeds.

To allow „Diaconal work“ to be done effectively, constant openness to changed situations, ongoing learning and sustainable structures are required. The Fund for Mission in Europe therefore also supports projects that focus on these issues: „Being a learning church“, „Education and leadership training“ and „Working towards sustainability“. You can find explanations of these fund priorities on the next page.

It is a privilege for Methodists to be connected through their churches with fellow believers all over the world. This facilitates an exchange of experiences as well as solidarity with one another. Regardless of different views and theological understanding in the various countries, the Fund for Mission in Europe has been promoting and enabling this mutual support for more than 30 years and will do so in future.

We ask you to use this document as a resource to raise awareness of the work of Methodist churches in various European countries. If required, you will receive detailed project information and additional pictures from the Fund's office or directly from the offices of the churches responsible for the projects. (See Web-Links in the sections „Country information“ and „Addresses“). Please share this information on your own channels in your churches and countries.

Thank you for your commitment to the Methodist church and the people it serves in Europe and around the world.

May God continue to bless you and the people with whom you are connected.



Harald Rückert

Bishop Harald Rückert
Chairperson
Fund for Mission in Europe



Andreas Stämpfli

Andreas Stämpfli
Executive Secretary
Fund for Mission in Europe

P.S. Please send your contributions to the Fund for Mission in Europe either through the Central Church Office of the Methodist Church in your country or directly to the bank account listed at the end of this document.

Priorities of the Fund

When Methodist church leaders in various parts of Europe were asked about their priorities, they stated repeatedly the following areas:

Working towards sustainability (WTS)

- We would like to increasingly stand on our own feet in terms of personnel and content, as well as financially. Additionally, we would like to bring ourselves, as giving communities, complete with our own identities and the wealth of our faith experiences, into the worldwide Methodist family.

Education and Leadership Training (ELT)

- In a time of tremendous social changes, we would like to engage in our mission tasks in creative, believable ways and be „the Church for others“. In order to achieve this aim, we need well educated pastors and lay leaders.

Being a learning church (BLC)

- We are not called to do today, what has always been done, while using those instruments, which have always been used. Rather, we aim to forge a reliable connection to new ideas and experiences, to learn from one another, and to find new activities, which bring the timeless message of God's love to the people of today and tomorrow.

Diaconal work (DW)

- We cannot be a credible church without hearing the voices of those who cry out because of their needs. Without seeing those who already suffer silently. Without helping people regardless of their background. Without awakening a new hope for a better future. However, we do not desire to be engaged in ministry for the poor but in ministry with them.

This is why the Fund for Mission in Europe primarily supports programs and projects related to one of these four priorities. In the following list of project summaries you find indications about the main priority of each project (**WTS, ELT, BLC, or DW**).

Cooperation with „Otto per Mille“

Italian taxpayers have the possibility to designate 8‰ from their annual income tax to a religious organisation recognised by the Italian State or, alternatively, to a social assistance scheme run by the Italian State itself. Thanks to these designated funds, the Union of the Methodist and Waldensian Churches is able to support more than 1000 projects in Italy and abroad.

In order to be eligible for Otto Per Mille funding, the projects need to relate to one of the following areas: *Fighting malnutrition; Promotion of the role of women and gender equality; Access to water and hygiene; Participation, dialogue, governance and human rights; Child protection; Education; Vocational training and income-generating activities; Protecting the environment; Rural development and food safety; Health interventions and health protection; Humanitarian emergency aid.*

In 2014 the Fund for Mission in Europe set up an official cooperation with Otto per Mille. As a result, projects selected and approved by the Fund for Mission in Europe receive contributions from Otto Per Mille of total about 50'000 Euro per year.

In the following list of project summaries you find indications if a project is co-supported by Otto per Mille (**OPM**).

Covid-19 pandemic

Projects and ministries are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in very different ways. Therefore, in the following project list, contributions that have been approved for 2020 but will not be needed until 2021 due to the pandemic are marked with (**Covid 2020/21**).

Allocation of funds

The committee of the Fund for Mission in Europe (FMiE) is responsible for the allocation of funds and the review of their use. The committee decides in September / October on the project contributions for the following year based on the funds available at that time.

If FMiE has received more designated donations than are needed for a specific project, the unneeded money will be used for similar purposes or withheld for the following year. **FMiE is also grateful for un-designated donations, which can be used where the need is greatest.**



Project Summaries

All of Europe

EUR-102 Doing Mission Together with the „emk-mobil“ € 13'000 (Covid 2020/21)

For many local churches who are active in mission work throughout Europe, the „emk-mobil“, the „emk-spiel-mobil“, the „mobile church“, and the tents of the „Tent Mission“ are helpful tools. These tools are used when no church space is available and attractive. The „Evangelisationswerk“ of the UMC in Germany does not only provide the infrastructure to successfully do outreach but also runs seminars for pastors and lay people in which they can learn the basics of evangelism, church planting, and church growth. FMiE supports this work in East and Central Europe, the Baltics, and the Balkans, where local churches are not able to fully cover the expenses related to mission events and seminars. [For more Info click here](#) (BLC)

EUR-105 European Seminar for Lay Workers € 2'000 (Covid 2020/21)

The European Seminar for Lay Workers, which takes place every 2 or 3 years, aims to gather key persons from Methodist Churches all over Europe in order to provide them with an opportunity to learn from others and to share experiences in regard to their faith journey and their church activities. The participants can establish and further develop relationships with others, they can get new inspiration for their spiritual life, and they are encouraged in their faith-sharing and social serving ministries in their respective countries. (ELT)

EUR-211 Roma Consultation € 4'500

Pastors and lay leaders in the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe have been working with Roma communities for many years. Regularly held Roma Consultations give them the opportunity to exchange ideas and best practices, and to learn from and support each other to constantly improve the work with Roma communities. These Consultations have also been attended by people from beyond the Central Conference of Central and Southern Europe. Throughout Europe, the Roma people endure discrimination and suffer from economic and social exclusion. This leads to poverty and poverty-related problems like unemployment, drug abuse, child pregnancies, etc. The project leaders have built strong relationships with Roma communities by listening to their concerns and helping them to improve their livelihoods. (BLC)

Northern Europe and the Baltic States

Regional Project

NEB-101 Baltic Pastors' Salary and Pension Support Fund € 10'000

In 2008, a „Baltic Pastors' Salary and Pension Support Fund“ was established. The local churches are working hard on teaching their members what responsibility they have in financial terms – the salary support from the Fund will therefore decline by 10 % every year starting in 2023. However, the Fund still remains a very important instrument of solidarity – to enable the pastors' families to be able to live on their salaries, but also to make sure that ministries can be carried on, which include far more than worship services, pastoral care, and Christian education in the local churches. (WTS)

Lithuania

LT-112 Jesus Pilgrims from Lithuania to Estonia € 1'620 (Covid 2020/21)

A group of active young lay people who are involved in church life, and who have great potential for leadership in the local church and on national level, will make a pilgrimage from Kaunas, Lithuania, to Tallinn, Estonia. The event will help them to connect with Methodists from abroad, to develop better relationships, and to see a broader picture of Methodism for those who are present and future leaders. The pilgrimage project aims are: to grow as a group; to be exposed to Baltic Methodism; to make a commitment; and to explore a calling for ministry. (ELT)

LT-212 Children activity school "Run with God" € 3'500

This project, which is at an early stage of development, aims to encourage parents to be involved in their children's education by participating with their children in activities. Every activity has its own theme and tasks where children are taught important life skills and values according to their age. The ministry provides many varied activities so that children with a variety of different needs can find their place in a welcoming environment. Parents are equipped to take materials and knowledge back to their homes. This project and ministry is unique because the involvement of parents in childcare is so important. In addition, this project is an example of ecumenically sharing experience and best educational practices. Two of the teachers are Methodists and two are Roman Catholic. (ELT)

LT-213 Adult ministry development "Save a soul"**€ 1'370**

In Kaunas Church we strive to serve both those who are in need and those who seek God's presence in their life. We are planning to start work on an adult ministry that will combine strengthening the Christian faith and Wesleyan identity of participants with social commitments in their own life and in their context. This ministry will be a place for Spiritual maturity, growth and relationship development with the aim of encouraging participants to become local missionaries in their own social circles and to bring about change in their context. (ELT)

Latvia**LV-104 Hope Centre for young mothers € 10'000 (OPM)**

The Hope Centre provides a refuge to young single mothers or soon to be mothers - a place, where they can live until their child is born and they have gained enough experience and knowledge to live independently. There are a lot of learning opportunities and the centre provides counselling and mentoring. A particular emphasis is placed on encouraging the women to finish their education or to attend a professional training school, so that they do not only have the self-esteem and knowledge to raise their children independently, but that they also are able to live independently in financial terms. (DW)

**Eurasia****Regional Projects****EA-119 Youth Working Camp in Voronezh, Russia € 5'000**

Following the very positive experience of previous years, up to 40 young people from different regions of Eurasia will once again participate in a youth working camp at Camp „Crystal“ in Voronezh, Russia. The program will combine renovation work and worship, devotions, and lectures. The camp will therefore not only be about hands-on ministry but also about exchange, spiritual growth, and encouragement to be involved in a local voluntary ministry and to start their own missionary projects. (WTS)

EA-121 Trinity Program for People with Special Needs (Eurasia)**€ 12'000**

In the contemporary reality of Eurasia, there is a great problem with socialisation for people with special needs. Life in society is organised in a way, which creates even more difficulties for the disabled people. The ministry has undergone a major restructure in 2019/2020 but even in the pandemic it has continued. It was possible and safe enough to have a camp for people with special needs in August 2020 in Crystal Centre, Voronezh, Russia. [For info and video click here](#). Two programs are planned for summer 2021: a camp for kids with Down's syndrome and another for people with Cerebral palsy. (DW)

EA-123 Youth Festival „When God Calls“ in St. Petersburg**€ 4'000**

In 2005, the first Annual Student Forum „You are the light of the world“ was held in St. Petersburg. Since then, more than 500 participants from different countries in the Baltics, Eurasia, and Central Asia were inspired for ministry. The Youth Festival „When God Calls“ is a next step. (Potential) young lay leaders get together, pray, and learn how to share and show God's love in this world. They are challenged to find what their call is – and they are encouraged and provided with practical ideas and knowledge so that they can form mission teams for the Eurasia Area in 2020 and beyond. [For Youth Festival video click here](#) (ELT)

EA-124 Men's seminar „Be Strong and of Good Courage“**€ 3'000 (Covid 2020/21)**

The UMC in Eurasia aims to educate leaders among men who want to deepen their faith and fulfil their role in their families, in the church and in society as a whole. In 2020 respectively 2021, the seminar will take place in St. Petersburg, while in 2018 it took place in Samara and in 2019 in Central Asia. The seminar encourages the participants to take responsibility in their faith and in many areas of their lives, including in church ministry. It is important for the participants to be united in common worship and prayer. These times also give them an opportunity to think about how they can serve together in their respective regions. [For more info and video click here](#). (ELT)

EA-130 Discipleship Resources for Eurasia**€ 3'000 (Covid 2020/21)**

During a three-year period, a set of books and brochures for Eurasia wide use will be published. The materials will provide valuable and helpful tools for strengthening and equipping both ordained and lay ministers in the three of the Eurasia priority areas: Methodist identity, Brave and humble leaders, and Mission and missionary movement. The publications cover the following areas: Christian education, worship, evangelism, new church development, children, youth and family ministries, small-group ministries, devotional life, spiritual formation and other areas related to the life of people and the ministries of congregations. (ELT)

EA-211 Social Justice Education and Leadership Training € 4'000

The project is a series of seminars and workshops in four Eurasia Area conferences to promote a Wesleyan understanding of social justice and social engagement consistent with the local, ethnic and political situations. The focus lies on practical experience with successful ministries in the field of social justice, economics, public policy and environmental justice issues. The aim is to make the participants aware of the social principles of the Methodist Church and motivate them to act according to these principles in their daily life, to resist social injustice in society and to get involved in social projects of their churches. (ELT)

EA-212 Winter youth evangelical camp € 3'000

The Winter youth evangelical camp in Central Asia is an annual event that helps about 60-70 young people to hear about Jesus, learn about faith and church and enjoy Christian fellowship. The camp is held as a follow up event after summer evangelical tent camp where young people meet and get acquainted with young Christian believers for the first time. Every church invites non-believers to the camp. They enjoy entertainment like games, hiking, gifts, and competitions and also have Bible messages and small group discussions. The winter gathering helps to continue the work with young people to further share faith and fellowship with them, to help them to get rooted in their distinction to follow Christ. (WTS)

Central and Southern Europe

Albania

AL-103 Early Intervention Centre in Tirana € 8'500 (OPM)

In 2018, the UMC in Albania started an Early Intervention Centre in the city of Tirana. This Centre aims to develop educational programs for children with special needs, establish parent-child relationships, run parenting courses, and establish partnerships with organisations and public schools for their integration. The ministry, which is led by a multidisciplinary group of specialists, is not solely about caring for children but specifically about encouraging and empowering them and their parents. (DW)

AL-211 Development of New Churches in Durrës and Librazhd € 8'000

The two youngest United Methodist congregations in Albania – Durrës and Librazhd – have been established in 2017 and 2019. As growing churches, they do not want to exist for themselves only, but they aim to be socially relevant and to contribute towards a positive transformation of society by their witness and service. Their work includes, for instance, worship services, Bible studies, ministry with children and language and music courses. Since the earthquake in autumn 2019, there have also been regular visits to the village of Romanat (20km from Durrës) in order to provide people living there with help. (WTS)

Bulgaria

BG-109 Prison Ministry in Bulgaria € 3'000 (OPM)

The UMC in Bulgaria is working in four prisons (Varna, Razdelna, Lovech, and Troyan). This faithful and highly appreciated ministry led by three local pastors includes weekly worship services, Bible studies, pastoral counselling, financial support for the needs of the prisoners not covered by the prison authorities, and also family assistance. This is particularly in regards to solving different social and administrative problems and the education of the children of prisoners. The pastors are trusted and highly respected by the prison administration. (DW)



Hungary

HU-104 Ministries with Roma € 10'000 (OPM)

Through the Ministry with Roma, people belonging to the poorest minority group of Hungarian society are provided with social and educational assistance. The aim is to empower them to be more integrated into society and to be better able to earn their own living. The activities include a social wash-ministry, a social kitchen, educational support for students of elementary and secondary schools, a farm program, preparing Roma leaders, and offering material help like firewood, clothes, or groceries. (DW)

HU-107 Programs at two Methodist Secondary Schools € 2'000

The United Methodist Church in Hungary has been successfully running the Forrai Secondary School in Budapest with about 450 students since 2013. This opened up many new opportunities for the UMC to work with both youth and adults (teachers) from outside the church. The activities include weekly Bible and religion classes, community and spiritual programs for the students, English camps, spiritual programs/retreats for the teachers, and pastoral care. In 2018, the UMC in Hungary positively responded to the request to take over responsibility for a second school: the Schola Europa High School in Budapest. (BLC)

HU-110 Family Camp in Hungary**€ 7'000 (Covid 2020/21)**

The Family Camp is a long-term project of the UMC in Hungary which has been carried out for more than twenty years. In 2018, the Family Camp had 310 participants, about 70 of them with a Roma background. The 2020 Camp had to be postponed because of Covid-19 and will hopefully take place in summer 2021. The basic goal is to provide fellowship and to deepen Christian faith as well as Methodist identity in a familiar community. Since many of the participants are poor, local churches help these people to visit this big Methodist event because for many of them it is a really important and sometimes life-changing experience. For many of the participants the Family Camp is their only vacation in the whole year. (BLC)

North Macedonia**MK-103 Diakonia North Macedonia „Miss Stone Centre - Strumica“****€ 6'000 (OPM)**

About 170 elderly or disabled people receive a hot meal (soup, main course, and dessert) delivered to their houses five times a week. In case of urgent need, they also receive practical help (clothes, medicines, fire-wood). This program improves the living conditions of the beneficiaries and awakens new hope. In addition to this unique ministry, the „Miss Stone“ Centre delivers 50 hot meals to people in poverty who live in the town of Radovich. A home care program that responds to the needs of elderly and disabled people has also been successfully launched. (DW)

MK-107 Diakonia North Macedonia „Home Care Ministry“**€ 23'750 (OPM)**

The demand for medical or nursing care for elderly people living alone in the city of Strumica is steadily increasing as an enormous number of young relatives migrate to economically better developed countries. The ministry offers such kind of help to lonely people and thereby improves their quality of life and recovers their self-sustainability. The most important activities include wound dressing, physiotherapeutic massages, personal hygiene and room hygiene. This not only improves their physical condition, but also their ability to take care of themselves and live in dignified conditions, despite their age and health situation. (DW)

Poland**PL-120 Therapeutic Camp for Addicted Adults****€ 4'700 (OPM)**

Countless people in rural and urban areas of Poland suffer from alcoholism and substance abuse. In a two-week camp organized by the Social Committee of the UMC in Poland, addicted adults learn to analyse their situation, understand addiction and learn about alternatives. They are encouraged and, as far as possible, empowered to lead a transformed life without alcohol and drug abuse. (DW)

Romania**RO-101 Church Development in Cluj and Micești****€ 2'890**

The members of Cluj and Micești UMC have a burning heart for God's mission and aim to reach out to people in the neighbourhood. In addition, they have the vision to establish new churches in other places in Romania. Besides worship services, prayer meetings and Bible studies, the activities include women's conferences, events for couples, sports and English camps, literature ministry, etc. Outreach ministries in nearby villages include diaconal activities and provide, together with a ministry with kids from three orphanages, many opportunities to preach the Gospel and to put love into action. (WTS)

RO-102 Church Planting in Roma Communities**€ 2'600**

Roma people are often confronted with social exclusion, poverty, and prejudices. What is true for many countries is a reality in Romania, too. By visiting villages around Cluj on a weekly basis, committed members of the UMC in Cluj have gained the trust of Roma living there. They try to relieve their distress and to help them spiritually by providing pastoral care, organising special programs for children, sharing the Gospel, implementing discipleship programs, and organising home groups. In Comșești, the plans to establish a new congregation and to build a community centre have advanced the furthest. (BLC)

RO-103 New Church Development in Sibiu**€ 4'370**

In June 2013, a young man from Cluj UMC was sent to the city of Sibiu. Aiming to establish the second urban United Methodist church in Romania, he started a Bible study group, organised evangelistic events, and became involved in one-to-one discipleship. From the very beginning, he also tried to build ecumenical relationships. Today, there is a hopeful church with many different activities including ministries with women, evangelism events, concerts, and ministries with children (including the responsibility for the operation of an orphanage), camps for teens, and the Lighthouse - a place to meet for small groups. (WTS)

Serbia

RS-104 Kindergarten „KORAB“ in Pivnice € 5'000 (OPM)

The kindergarten KORAB serves children from the village Pivnice and impacts their families as well. KORAB has existed now for more than 15 years and is run by four members of the local UMC congregation. The kindergarten is located in a rural area where there is only one other kindergarten, with a small capacity for children, that is run by the State. Therefore, KORAB, with its additional 20 places for children, is still very much needed. It does not only offer a safe place for children to develop but also helps the parents with education and nurtures and support healthy family relationships. (DW)

RS-110 Weekend Soup Kitchen in Vrbas € 3'700 (OPM)

In Vrbas, there are many poor people who depend on help for getting food. There is a public soup kitchen in the city, but it is only open from Monday to Friday. On the weekends, people in need cannot get anything there. That is why the local UMC congregation started a weekend kitchen, offering a tasty and warm meal every Saturday from November to April. There is also space where people can warm up. Here, members of the congregation come into contact with the people in need, are there for them and show them God's love by helping them. (DW)



Slovakia

SK-135 Leadership Training for Pastors and Lay Leaders € 4'150 (Covid 2020/21)

This training helps to improve essential skills of pastors, lay preachers and lay leaders and their spouses in regard to communication, conflict resolution, and cooperation. The training starts with an event that takes place over a few days and has about 20 - 30 participants. There is time for relaxation and team building and it includes worship time, work in groups and training with a professional Christian therapist. Follow-up activities will include bi-monthly regional meetings focusing on prayer, training, sharing, and supporting one another. (ELT)

Italy, Portugal and Spain

Italy

IT-101 Salary Support for Pastors in International Ministry € 10'000

Many Methodist congregations in Italy are very multicultural and international. Its members are often poor of material resources but rich in faith, culture, personal gifts, etc. Pastors of these congregations accompany people of all generation on their journey of discipleship, provide assistance in a variety of forms and empower these people so that they can take responsibility both for themselves and for others. (BLC)

Portugal

PT-101 Salary Support for Pastors in Portugal € 10'000

The Methodist Church in Portugal is, in addition to the local church activities, very actively involved in social service ministries. Examples of this are the care centres for the elderly, for children, and for students who in some cases are immigrants. There are also solidarity initiatives to support families in need, including migrant families. The Church is also engaged in ecumenical work. In spite of making great efforts in order to become financially autonomous to be able to fully pay the salary and pension subsidy costs for Pastors, the Church is not yet able to do that without support from the FMiE. (WTS)

Spain

SP-107 Discovering New Realities in Catalonia € 2'500 (Covid 2020/21)

The Spanish Evangelical Church in Catalonia has prepared a special course for teenagers. This course aims to make the teenagers aware of different realities and situations that can be found in their cities, in their country, and in Europe. The programme includes visits of associations working with homeless people, with elderly people, and with families at risk of social inclusion, meeting with an expert in the reality of Roma in Spain, and a special focus on the situation of migrants and refugees coming to Europe over the Mediterranean. The awareness raised through this programme will help the teenagers to link diaconal work to faith in Jesus Christ. (BLC)

SP-108 Diaconal Service for Migrants in Madrid

€ 3'000 (OPM)

The Protestant Social Action is a branch of the Spanish Evangelical Church that focuses on diaconal work. A team of about 40 volunteers help around 450 beneficiaries per month – mostly migrants, women and LGTB people. During this pandemic there are many job-related needs and that is why this project was launched. It should help people to find work alternatives. To do this, two different work areas are combined: First, the skills of each person are identified and then we work individually on each profile in order to find appropriate market niches. The aim of the project is to help people find a job according to their abilities and that suits the various active markets of today. (DW)

SP-211 Online Children's Sunday School

€ 1'000

During the months of the coronavirus lockdown the preventive sanitary measures taken not only have made it impossible to hold and attend worship services, but it also has prevented the younger members of our congregations attending Children's Sunday school. Therefore, we prepared several Sunday school virtual classes that have been shown on YouTube every Sunday morning following PCUSA learning materials "Así creemos" (So We Believe). Additionally, children were assigned several tasks (drawings and crafts, among other things) to be done at home with the help of their parents. This titanic endeavour has been possible thanks to the volunteer teachers of Sunday School in our communities who, affected by the reduction of working hours and lockdown, could devote more time to this task. (ELT)

SP-212 Rediscovering community: embracing the fringes and nurturing those on the margins

€ 1'000

This project is a key part of our mission plan as a local church. The focus of the project is on developing stronger relational links with those on the fringes of our community, by offering a yearly programme of activities that are inclusive, attractive and accessible. This essentially missional project contains elements of "fresh expressions" of church, exploring new ways of being community and the intersections between the arts, ecology and Christian discipleship and spirituality. (BLC)



SP-107 Discovering new Realities in Catalonia: Course for young people to make them aware of different realities and situations that can be found in their cities, in their country and in Europe.

Country Information and links

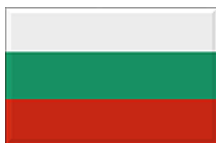
Albania



Capital:	Tirana	UMC Churches:	6
Population:	2.8 million	Professing Members:	195
Religion:	Muslim/Sunni (55%), Others (20%), Orthodox (10%), Rom.-Cath. (10%)	Active Clergy:	3
		Origin:	1889/1998
		Website:	www.kbm.al

In 1889, an active mission work began in Albania. Besides preaching the Gospel and practical everyday help, the focal point and primary work was that of providing basic education for the population. Then, Methodist work was inactive for several decades until 1992, when Christians from Germany began to be involved by bringing help to Albania. In the following years the work was extended: educational, medical, agricultural, and forestry projects were established, and in 1998, the UMC in Albania could be established when the first men and women were admitted as professing members. Since then the situation has changed. Many people have left the mountain villages and have, together with their families, moved to urban areas in order to find a job or better life conditions. The UMC has spread with the people into other parts of the country. Four promising and growing churches have been established in Tirana (2008), Pogradec (2008), Elbasan (2014), and Durrës (2017). The UMC continues to work for the people in Albania and the development of a free and democratic society. This includes serving people on the margins of society, which finds its expression, for instance, in projects focusing on people with disabilities and their integration in society. There is a strong commitment of lay people as the churches try to combine sharing the Gospel and addressing the challenges of today's society both appropriately and effectively. Leadership development, spiritual growth, and discovering the social aspect of faith are some of the priorities of the current work in Albania.

Bulgaria



Capital:	Sofia	UMC Churches:	30
Population:	7.3 million	Professing Members:	1137
Religion:	Orthodox (76%) Unaffiliated (12%)	Active Clergy:	18
		Origin:	1857
		Website:	www.methodist.bg

The UMC in Bulgaria has more than 160 years of history behind it. As a minority denomination, it often struggled to survive — especially in the 40 years after the Second World War when almost all church activities were forbidden. By 1989, only three of the original 16 local churches had survived. But as a result of a huge commitment, the church was structurally re-organised and filled with life. At the centre of this growth process, the founding of new churches exists side by side with the consolidation and stabilisation of the existing ones. Many local churches and individuals have recognised that in a society going through a radical transition they are only credible when the proclamation of the Gospel goes hand in hand with practical help. Their current activities therefore combine both words and deeds in many different ways (e.g. ministry with prison inmates, educational programs, ministry with homeless people, etc.). Children and youth as well as people from the margins of society — particularly members from minority groups (Roma, Armenians, Turks) — are given special attention. In so doing, the UMC in Bulgaria has succeeded in becoming a model of peaceful coexistence and collaboration of people belonging to various ethnic groups — and this is a very important Christian witness in a region still challenged by ethnic and religious tensions.

Eurasia



Countries:	Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine	UMC Churches:	97
Religion:	predominantly Orthodox or Muslim (depending on the individual country)	Members:	1714 (including baptized members and children)
		Active Clergy:	107
		Origin:	1889
		Website:	www.umc-eurasia.ru

The history of the People called Methodists in Eurasia started 130 years ago, when Finnish mission unfolded its work in Saint-Petersburg. Later, Methodists started the ministry in the Far East. Political pressure after the revolution of 1917 and World War II erased most signs of the Methodist presence in the Soviet Union, and church property was confiscated. The UMC returned with its mission in the early 1990-ies after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Today, the Eurasia Area is a huge territory of nine time zones that consists of five annual conferences. The Methodist churches do social ministry, serving people with special needs, working with Roma kids, feeding the hungry and helping families to build relationships that bring God's love to their lives. Since 2013 three Church Leadership Centres have been developed to strengthen and spread theological training and continuing education for lay and clergy.

During the 20 years of the new Methodist history, the UMC has been gradually moving towards self-sufficiency. Several churches in Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Samara, and Bishkek, have made a breakthrough and manage to provide for their church ministries and full-time pastors. Mission and evangelism are the most challenging and most inspiring tasks of ministry. Pastors and leaders bring the light of the Gospel to

the people who have been deprived of faith, church, and God for many years. They are called to be part of the Spirit movement and invite you to join them in the work and prayers for the People called Methodists in Eurasia.

Hungary



Capital:	Budapest	UMC Churches:	28
Population:	9.8 million	Professing Members:	498
Religion:	Roman-Catholic (52%)	Active Clergy:	12
	Unaffiliated (25%)	Origin:	1898
	Reformed (16%)	Website:	www.metodista.hu

More than 120 years ago, as part of an Evangelical growth in the country, Methodist missionaries established the first Methodist churches in Hungary, firstly among German-speaking and later among Hungarian-speaking people. These churches grew fast but suffered heavy setbacks for political reasons until the end of the Second World War and Communism. Yet, God always created something new. Today, focal points of church activities include family, children and youth ministries (summer camp, work in schools, radio and television ministries), as well as various social services, e.g. for the elderly, the Roma, drug dependent persons, and prisoners. The church is also strongly engaged in ecumenical work. The local churches are growing slowly but continuously, and they are trying with great commitment to raise the level of their financial independence. However, there are many obstacles to achieving this aim. Popular camps and educational activities as well as urgent building projects at various locations could and can only be carried out with help from outside of the country.

Italy



Capital:	Rome	Churches (OPCEMI):	54
Population:	60.5 million	Professing Members:	5'000
Religion:	Roman-Catholic (74.4%)	Active Clergy:	18 Methodist Pastors
	Orthodox (2.9%)		34 Methodist Lay Preachers
	Protestant (1.1%)	Origin:	1861
	Muslim (3.3%)	Website:	www.metodisti.it

Methodism established itself in Italy with the arrival of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (England) and the Episcopal Methodist Church (USA). Both branches of Methodism agreed that they would always work in a complimentary way in the establishment of new congregations and social ministries. When the war ended in 1946, it was united as the „Chiesa Evangelica Metodista d'Italia“, and held under the jurisdiction of the British Methodist Conference until 1962, when it became an autonomous Church. Since 1975, Methodist churches in Italy are united in a „Covenant of Integration“ (Patto d'Integrazione) with the Waldensian Churches. The Covenant unites both churches into one order, united by one Synod, shared regional organisations, and common order of pastors and deacons, thus maintaining its differences in denomination and regulations on the local church level, some particularities for Methodist churches on the circuit level, and some areas of autonomous governance for real estate and administration and for ecumenism and relations with Methodist churches all over the world through the OPCEMI and its National Board (Comitato Permanente).

Latvia



Capital:	Riga	UMC Churches:	11
Population:	1.92 million	Professing Members:	557
Religion:	Lutheran (36.3%)	Active Clergy:	9
	Unaffiliated (23.7%)	Origin:	1921
	Roman-Catholic (19.5%)	Website:	www.umc.lv
	Orthodox (19.0%)		

The missionary efforts of German Methodists in Lithuania led to the introduction of the Methodist Church in Latvia in 1921. Shortly before the occupation of the country by Soviet troops, there were 30 local churches with approximately 3000 members. Then, however, the church buildings were nationalized and church work was systematically destroyed. By 1948, the Methodist Church no longer existed in Latvia. The break-up of the Soviet Union gave way to a new beginning for Methodism in Latvia. It was re-established in 1991. Shortly thereafter, it recovered some of its buildings from the state. Today there are 12 local churches. In most of them there are Sunday Schools and youth groups.

Lithuania



Capital:	Vilnius	UMC Churches:	7
Population:	2.73 million	Professing Members:	461
Religion:	Roman-Catholic (77.3%)	Active Clergy:	3
	Unaffiliated (16.1%)	Origin:	1901
	Orthodox (4.1%)	Website:	www.metodistai.lt

The initial contact between a local group of people in Lithuania and Methodists in Germany started in 1900. One year later, the first Methodist congregation was established in Kaunas. During the following years, Methodism spread its light over Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In 1940, the Baltic States were occupied by Soviet troops. Methodism in Lithuania did not survive this period. It was only in August of 1995 that the

first Methodist church re-opened in Kaunas. Several months later, another church was opened in Siauliai. And so, the UMC grew continuously, through its credible witness in word and deed. Today, there are seven local churches with 461 members led by three pastors. The UMC in Lithuania is still small, and finds itself in the middle of further development. Support from the international connection is therefore needed and very much appreciated.

North Macedonia



Capital:	Skopje	UMC Churches:	11
Population:	2.08 million	Constituency:	2004
Religion:	Orthodox (65%) Muslim (33%)	Active Clergy:	4
		Origin:	1873
		Website:	www.emc.mk

In the 19th century, US-missionaries led the cornerstone for Protestant work in the territory of what is now North Macedonia. Of enormous significance for the further growth and development of the work and its large social effects was the committed service of the „Biblewomen“, who, in the face of great difficulties, visited remote villages and shared the Gospel in word and deed. However, the United Methodist work in North Macedonia also went through times of war, repression, and isolation. Today, outreach ministries among people facing difficult situations (e.g. elderly people, people with special needs, or people belonging to the Roma minority) are important parts of the church’s work. The Miss Stone Centre with the „Meals on Wheels“ program, the Home Care Ministry, and education programs is a far-reaching ministry operated by people from the UMC. A project of particular significance for the peaceful future of North Macedonia is the endeavour to promote interfaith contacts and understanding. Other priorities include the production of Christian literature, programs for children and youth, activities for women, and the education of new lay and clergy leaders in order to help with the challenge of building a church for future generations with an impact on society. Despite political and ethnic tensions on the Balkans, the local churches in North Macedonia, Albania, and Serbia still belong to the same Annual Conference.

Poland



Capital:	Warsaw	UMC Churches:	37
Population:	37.9 million	Professing Members:	1895
Religion:	Roman-Catholic (95%)	Active Clergy:	25
		Origin:	1895/1920
		Website:	www.metodysci.pl

The UMC in Poland was established in 1920, as a result of missionary and humanitarian activities planned by The Episcopal Methodist Church, South (USA). During the years of Nazism (1939-1945) and Communism (1945-1989), the attitude of both regimes towards the UMC was ambivalent, which at least allowed its continued existence. Even so, the UMC was hit hard with the nationalisation of church buildings. Today, great importance is placed upon ministries with children, youth, and women. A far-reaching radio and television ministry is another priority for the UMC. At various places social service ministries have been established (e.g. a program focusing on addicted people and their families as well as on people affected by domestic violence). A theological seminary contributes to the education of the leaders of these ministries. On the other hand, the church is challenged by migration (many young and well-educated people leave the country) and by the fact that a number of church buildings are in urgent need of renovation and improvement. The UMC in Poland is working hard on building bridges and on developing a common Christian witness with many other churches in Poland. Thanks to this credible service in society and in interdenominational relations, the UMC is – at least in most of the larger cities – a recognized and appreciated church.

Portugal



Capital:	Lisbon	Methodist Churches:	11
Population:	10.28 million	Mission places	2
Religion:	Roman-Catholic (77.3%) Unaffiliated (14.2%) Protestant (2.8%) Other religions (5.7%)	Small groups in homes of families	8
		Constituency:	2000
		Active Clergy:	11 (2 vol + 1 missionary)
		Origin:	1854
		Website:	www.igrejametodista.pt

The origin of the Portuguese Methodist Church arose from the work of two English laymen in 1854. While the growth of Methodism in Portugal was evident, the appeals to the Methodist Missionary Society in London to send a missionary were answered in 1871 only. In the following years, the church launched a great educational crusade against a high rate of illiteracy by opening primary schools. Between 1920 and 1940, the church experienced its most fruitful period of expansion. However, this time was followed by years of painful isolation and a serious shortage of preachers. After 1954, the work grew again, and new areas of work thrived. The church became involved in the ecumenical movement and, in view of the fact that it was forced to close down its primary schools, redirected its social programs to concentrate on other types of community services including projects in support of children and the aged. In 1996, the church, which was an Overseas District of the Methodist Church in Britain until then, became autonomous. The main aim of the church is to share the love of God that became very much clear in Jesus, through words and actions,

and by making disciples that will make disciples themselves, within the local churches, but also among all the people that daily need to know about the One who loves us all.

Romania



Capital:	Bucharest	UMC Churches:	3
Population:	21.9 million	Professing Members:	32
Religion:	Orthodox (87%)	Active Clergy:	3
	Roman-Catholic (5%)	Origin:	2011
		Website:	www.bisericametodista.ro

After the political changes of 1989/1990, various mission activities led to the birth of many independent churches. Some of them even called themselves Methodists. But this Methodist work was discontinued almost everywhere. The roots of the current UMC go back to 1995, when an independent missionary from the USA with United Methodist background went to Cluj-Napoca. Together with his wife, he ministered to the people in this area, set up homegroups, distributed medicines and food, while sharing the good news by doing all this. The Romanian leaders of the churches in Micești and in Cluj kept in touch with him after his return to the USA in 2006. It then became obvious that for sustainability and future growth the churches should look for a church home. After visits, conversations, and prayerful consideration they decided in 2011 to join the UMC. In 2014 a third church was established in the city of Sibiu. The village ministry around Cluj-Napoca, including diaconal activities, ministries in orphanages and humanitarian aid, is still a very important part of the work and provides many opportunities to preach the Gospel and to put love into action.

Serbia



Capital:	Belgrade	UMC Churches:	14
Population:	7.5 million	Professing Members:	416
Religion:	Orthodox (85%)	Active Clergy:	11
	Roman-Catholic (5%)	Origin:	1898
		Website:	www.emc.org.rs

The Methodist work in Vojvodina (the northern part of what is now Serbia) was started more than 120 years ago. German missionaries established local churches among German emigrants – and this was the reason why the churches were exclusively German-speaking until 1904. In the following years, the work grew, and thriving new churches were born among other population groups, as well. But there was not only joy and growth. The church experienced persecution, suffering, isolation and setbacks, as well – mostly because of political reasons. Today a varied children's and youth ministry, Christian outreach programs, local and regional activities for women and men, as well as practical help for people in need are some of the priorities of the local churches, which combine both the proclamation of the Gospel and love in action. In a country still falling on hard times while looking for a future, they aim to help people to discover God's love – beyond any border of ethnicity. The fact that a new generation has accepted the calling into the ministry of the church and is taking the lead regarding this aim is an important sign and a source of hope. Despite political and ethnic tensions on the Balkans, the local churches in Serbia, Albania, and North Macedonia still belong to the same Annual Conference.



RS-104 Kindergarten KORAB in Pivnice, Serbia

Slovakia



Capital:	Bratislava	UMC Churches:	13
Population:	5.4 million	Professing Members:	222
Religion:	Roman-Catholic (62%) Unaffiliated (24%) Lutheran (6%)	Active Clergy:	9
		Origin:	1924
		Website:	www.umc.sk

In 1920, US Methodist missionaries began their work in the then combined state of Czechoslovakia. They organized revival meetings, distributed Bibles, and helped people still suffering from the consequences of the First World War. In the following years, many local churches were established – first in what is now the Czech Republic, later in what is now Slovakia. The church grew rapidly but also experienced politically and financially difficult times. Today, the UMC is very mission-oriented. This is clearly seen in its evangelistic programs, its youth ministry, and its work in the communications media. The social services for people on the margins of society (particularly people belonging to the Roma minority in eastern Slovakia) are another priority of the church work. The UMC is also very engaged in ecumenical activities (not least in regard to theological education) and stands for a common Christian witness. The UMC in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic is organized in a cross-border Annual Conference with two districts.

Spain



Capital:	Madrid	Evangelical Churches:	35
Population:	47.4 million	Members:	3000
Religion:	Roman-Catholic (94%)	Origin:	1869
		Website:	www.iee-protestante.org

Missionaries from England started the Methodist work in Spain 150 years ago. However, with just very few and short exceptions, the life and witness of the local churches was limited by intolerance and lack of liberty for more than 100 years. There was no religious freedom in the country until 1978, when a new constitution, establishing a clear separation between church and state and total religious freedom, was approved. In 1955, the Methodist churches were integrated in the already existing Spanish Evangelical Church, which was formed by congregations with Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Lutheran traditions. The Spanish Evangelical Church was received as a member of the World Methodist Council in 1981.

The Fund for Mission in Europe is an opportunity to be encouraged and inspired - and make a difference.

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