

# CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS

## CICT – COCTI

### *Refounding Act*

The refounding process of COCTI, decided at the 9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of Lisbon in 2004, was carried out under the presidency of Nilo Agostini, dean of the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical University of Rio de Janeiro, which hosted the General Assembly of 2006. It was decided there to partly renew the Administrative Board and call for a refounding General Assembly in Paris in 2008. Philippe Bordeyne, dean of the Faculty of theology of the Institut Catholique de Paris, was mandated to elaborate new statutes that established COCTI as a sectorial group of IFCU and that could be submitted to the vote of the General Assembly. On the morning of 30 January 2008, the new statutes were unanimously adopted, following the integration of several amendments.

Professor Philippe Bordeyne, dean of the Faculty of Theology of the Institut Catholique de Paris, was elected president of the Conference of Catholic Theological Institutions. A new Board was also elected. It is made up of the following members:

## ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD OF COCTI

### Executive Committee

#### President

Philippe Bordeyne (Europe)  
Faculté de Théologie et de Sciences Religieuses  
Institut Catholique de Paris

#### Vice-President

Alexander Zatyryka (Latin America)  
Department of Religious Sciences  
Iberoamerican University, Mexico

#### Secretary-Treasurer

Joao Marques Eleuterio (Europe)  
Faculdade de teologia  
Universidade Catolica Portuguesa

### Councillors

Léonard Santedi (Africa)  
Facultés Catholiques de Kinshasa (D.R. Congo)

Neil Ormerod (Asia-Oceania)  
Institute of Theology, Australian Catholic University

Marcel Viau (North America)  
Faculté de Théologie et de Sciences Religieuses, Université de Laval (Canada)

### *Lines of action*

COCTI is a *professional association of deans/directors of institutions that serve university theology* and are mainly part of Catholic universities.

- 1) The main activity of COCTI consists in *building and maintaining a world network*, to disseminate information of common use, to encourage the elaboration of concerted projects, to find funds for these activities, especially those that are orientated towards research.

The first way of reaching these aims will be through *a central activity* conducted by the executive Bureau. It will put various means at the disposal of the members thanks to the logistic support of IFCU:

- Information of general interest available on the COCTI pages of the IFCU website;
- Constitution of a mailing-list to enable the circulation of spontaneous information amongst the members;
- Contacts with institutions that could join COCTI and make their activities known, in order to extend the network.

The second way of reaching these aims will be through *priority action* carried out under the leadership of the executive Bureau: *stimulate the international mobility of young teachers and the search for postdoctoral research grants*.

For the benefit of the Catholic Church and for the insertion of theology in the diversity of cultures, our institutions seek to encourage high level exchanges between professional theologians. They make sure that the young researchers can benefit from the resources of university theology worldwide. In order to develop the capacity of the Christian faith to solve the challenging problems of the world to be, it is vital for tomorrow's theologians to learn how to know each other better and appreciate other ways of doing theology, to be able to forge true intellectual friendships in different contexts.

COCTI wants to contribute to the exchange of young teachers between our institutions through:

- Better identifying the poles that are able to host young teachers to carry out post-doctoral research;
- Creating synergies that encourage such poles at the regional or intercontinental level;
- Concerted fund-seeking that is based on the international dimension of COCTI.

In concrete terms, the executive Bureau will draw up a scientific committee to allocate post-doctoral grants that meet public selection criteria. It will organise calls for candidacies from the member institutions, both for young teachers who are available for a semester or a year of research and for host institutions highlighting excellence proposals. This would aim to encourage the creation of networks of institutions that are able to host post-doctoral research on specific themes. It must help to gradually create concerted research poles and to increase their visibility at

the international level. Each grant will be jointly allocated to a young researcher and to the institution (or institutions) they will have chosen for their post-doctoral research.

The third way of reaching these objectives is through *decentralised* workshops led by competent and motivated members. According to the expectations and needs expressed during the General Assembly in Paris, the following workshops are foreseen:

- *Reforms and innovations*
  - Sharing of ideas, projects and experiences concerning the reforms achieved (LMD in Europe...) or under study: courses via Internet, E-learning, B-learning.
  - *Classification of scientific journals*
  - *Survey on the professional outlets for graduates in theology, including in jobs where theology is still not greatly represented.* This supposes a reflection on the competences acquired during theological training in terms of problematisation, analysis of historical files, interpretation of the texts and practices, production of syntheses, systematic and speculative reflection, practice of interdisciplinarity, attention to the practical impact of convictions.
- 2) The activities of COCTI also consist in *encouraging and supporting the development of regional and linguistic ties* so that the world network may develop through links of proximity and common interests.

Such initiatives often take the form of regional meetings. The Brazilian institutions have already made public the meeting they are organising in Pernambuco in August 2008.

It is hoped that these regional initiatives will lead to wider communication, especially through the COCTI pages of the IFCU website. It is also to be hoped that they will contribute to the preparation of the triennial General Assemblies.

- 3) Last, the activities of COCTI consist in *supporting the preparation of the next statutory General Assembly*. A precious heritage of COCTI since its foundation in 1974, the general assemblies allow for the heads of the member institutions to better know each other and to perceive the common needs and transversal opportunities. They also allow to experiment together the convergences and differences in the ways of doing theology, not to be satisfied with them, but to serve a spirit of concord, communion and concerted search for truth, in an active dialogue with cultures, Churches, the other religions and spaces for spiritual quest.

The executive Bureau intends to put online all the communications of the Paris General Assembly that was devoted to *the means of action of university theology in our societies in transformation* on the COCTI pages of the IFCU website.

In conformity with the *Statutes*, the Paris General Assembly voted where it would take place in 2011. Five candidacies were submitted, showing the vitality of our newly refounded association: Tilburg (the two faculties/departments), Lebanon (the four faculties together), Nairobi, Ottawa, Pune. At the fourth ballot, the votes went to Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, the Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion of Pune in India, which received 18 votes to 17 for the Université St Paul d'Ottawa. As soon as the results were known, president Bordeyne congratulated the heads

of Pune and thanked them for their hospitality, whilst paying tribute to St Paul d'Ottawa for being fair play. He hoped that by choosing India, this would associate many institutions from India, Asia and Oceania in the refounding dynamic and the preparation of the assembly of 2011.

Since then, Noel Sheth, a member of the former Board, told us of the tragic death of Peter Arockiadoss, dean of the faculty of theology of Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, on 19 March 2008. Suddenly carried away by cancer, he had taken an active part in the Paris Assembly, had presented a communication there and had rejoiced at the choice of his faculty. COCTI shares the grief and hope of its students, colleagues and Jesuit fellows.