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Zurich. The SPCCE: that's short for the "Support Programme for Church Construction in Europe", which is the moniker of an aid programme worth 25 million euros. The objective: financially stronger District Churches provide support for financially weaker District Churches in the form of grants, in order to aid in the construction of church buildings.

Solidarity and cooperation—two important agreements for the future of the Church. The close co-operation among the District Churches in Europe and their mutual solidarity with one another are particularly evident in the building sector—the European District Apostles are in unanimous agreement on this. Financial equalisation between financially strong and financially weaker District Churches already has a long tradition in the New Apostolic Church. And this also applies in Europe when it comes to the construction of new church buildings and the renovation of older ones.

## A clear bow wave

In the District Church of Berlin-Brandenburg, for example, there are numerous renovations, conversions, and new buildings on the support programme's project plan. A significant financial "bow wave" is in store over the next few years: many renovations and refurbishments have not yet been implemented because the necessary funds were not available. With the considerable injection of 7.35 million euros resulting from the combined contributing budgets of the District Churches of Northern and Eastern Germany, Western Germany, Southern Germany, and

Switzerland, a number of new buildings have been included in the funding list, namely Zepernick, Falkensee, and Lübben/Spreewald. The renovation of the church in Berlin-Wilmersdorf is still in progress.

New church buildings in the former District Church of Central Germany are also included in the funding programme. The total support for this region amounts to some 17.65 million euros. From these funds, new church buildings in Hermsdorf, Annaberg-Buchholz, Dessau, and Auerbach, as well as a conversion in Seesen, have already been completed to date. A new church building in Dresden-South is still in the planning phase, as are another four to five renovations or new construction projects. However, these are still in the project development stages.

## **Half of the grants disbursed**

Overall, the disbursement plan shows that a good half of the approved funding pool of 25 million euros has so far been disbursed. This [support programme](#) was set up in April 2014. At that time, the European District Apostles agreed on a grant of 25 million euros for construction work in Berlin-Brandenburg and Central Germany. The very first such support programme—which amounted to five million euros—was successfully launched in 2008, and it resulted in the construction of four new churches.

## **Second support programme**

The second support programme of 25 million euros is intended to help reduce the investment backlog caused by an above-average need for renovations and new buildings in Berlin-Brandenburg and Central Germany. At the same time, the relevant guidelines are also being adapted. In addition to submitting the mandatory anticipated site plans, community and site development plan up to 2030, and a property strategy per building—which factors in the building's remaining useful life, the quality of the building materials, and compliance with regulations—it is also necessary to comply with various other provisions, including proposed minimum loads, and benchmarks for seating costs and spatial standards, in order to apply for the required support from the funding pot. The SPCCE Service Group reviews incoming applications and reports regularly to the District Apostle Meeting.

The European District Apostles are very pleased with the success of the two funding programmes from 2008 and 2015. District Apostle Rainer Stork, who is responsible for assessing the progress of the programme on behalf of the European District Apostle Meeting, relates: "We are happy when one project after the other can gradually be completed and our local brothers and sisters can move into their new or freshly renovated building and come to love it. That makes all the effort worthwhile."

20 January 2021

