



The Buddhist Cooperation Council of Sweden (SBS)

A summary of the Activity report for the year 2017

The Buddhist Cooperation Council of Sweden comprises today of 25 members organisations, serving more than 10 000 persons, among them 14 ethnical Asian groups.

One of the main activities of SBS is Buddhist spiritual care and crisis management. Two spiritual care coordinators were employed 40% each by state grants. When required they arranged for spiritual support by Buddhist representatives. Moreover, they visited hospitals and local Buddhist communities, and organized seminars for the Buddhist representatives. The coordinators are also in the last phase of publishing a booklet about Buddhism and the Buddhist view related to health, sickness and death. And about various practices and customs specific for Buddhist spiritual care. This will be a complement to the folder distributed in 2016.

New fields within Buddhist spiritual care and crises management have been initiated during this year. A coordinator and a project group for spiritual care in prisons has been appointed in cooperation with The Swedish Prison and Probation Service. The purpose is to provide spiritual support to the inmates by ordained Sangha visiting them for personal guidance, arrange sessions on reflection and meditation and spread Buddhist books. The other initiated field is a Youth Project to contribute to prevention work in Swedish high schools against various expressions of violence, including violent extremism, by arranging reflection groups and including a short meditation practise.

At the occasion of the terror attack in Stockholm SBS has written a statement and taken the initiative to arranging a memorial ceremony in cooperation with the Swedish Interfaith Council. The SBS Chair was also invited to take part in the official ceremony at the Stockholm Municipality Hall.

Regarding the situation on violence in Myanmar the Board has written a statement regarding the SBS and EBU standpoint in this matter. The statement has been published on the SBS website. It was also distributed by mail to Buddhist groups in Sweden and to all related networks and social media.

The Chair of SBS has been taking part in the EBU's AGM, the General meeting and the meeting of the presidents of the National unions of the EBU, with a 3 days study visit to the Council of Europe (CoE). She also represented the SBS and EBU at the CoE with a talk about the refugee situation at the Conference on the interreligious aspect of the intercultural dialogue. The topic was 'From reception to integration'.

The SBS Council decided on reorganising SBS from being a standard association to becoming a registered religious community. The reason for this is the expected forthcoming changes regarding the state grants to faith communities.

SBS has been closely cooperating with the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities (SST) in all kind of matters, including different short educations for the members. The Chair has been invited at the opening ceremonies of the Swedish parliament and the 500 years celebration of the Lutheran Reformation.

We were also represented in interfaith consultations and networking in other institutions like The Government's Council for contact with faith communities, The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, The Swedish Migration Office, The Swedish Interreligious Council and other relevant institutions. SBS representatives were also participating in several local interreligious networks with a variety of activities. More and more municipalities and other institutions are inviting SBS and other religious representatives at the establishing of interfaith councils. The main reason is to counteract the increasing xenophobia, different expressions of violence and extremism in society.

SST state grants to the SBS were 56 514 Euro for 2017, which is 20 669 Euro more than the previous year. The grant was based on the reported 7 091 members and other participators to SBS member organisations 2016. 10% of the grants (5 651 Euro) were allocated to the SBS central office and 90% (50 863 Euro) to 13 members organisations with totally 7538 served members 2017. Moreover, five members organisations received an 'establishing' grant of 3 000 Euro each.