

ENInews to shut down in its current form

News

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Geneva, December 17 (ENInews)--ENInews is to suspend publication of its news service from 21 December while a new editorial team is assembled during a restructuring process needed to sustain the ecumenical news agency.

The 50 correspondents who work for ENInews were told on 15 December by the agency's editor-in-chief, Peter Kenny, "Unfortunately, increasing financial constraints on the operations of ENInews means that it is impossible for the agency to continue as it has done in the past.

"The governing body of ENInews has taken the decision to close the current editorial office based at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva as from the end of 2010. Its hope is that a new operation with new staff will be able to start work on a new basis in 2011."

The correspondents were told that neither Kenny, nor the managing editor, Stephen Brown, nor the other staff members currently working at ENInews would be on the staff as of 1 January.

A process to restructure ENInews began earlier in the year after its main financial contributor, the World Council of Churches, more than halved its contribution for 2011. The restructuring process eventually triggered the resignation of the agency's president and its treasurer on 8 December with effect from 1 January.

The outgoing president is the Rev. Anders Gadegaard, the Dean of Copenhagen Cathedral, while the treasurer is Marianne Ejdersten, who is the deputy head of communications for the Church of Sweden.

On 16 December a formal farewell was offered to outgoing staff members at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva.

In October the main governing body of ENInews, its executive committee, set up an ad hoc business committee to prepare proposals for restructuring. The business committee recommended that the full time posts of Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor be replaced by one 80 percent post of Editor/General Manager.

The disagreement in the ENInews executive committee primarily concerned the involvement of present staff in the restructuring process and was triggered by the sudden proposal by the business committee to create an unpaid position of Publisher to oversee the new position of Editor/General Manager.

The executive committee decision is to begin 2011 with an entirely new staff.

The outgoing president Gadegaard said, "I do not wish to take responsibility for a restructuring process without ensuring that the experiences and achievements of the past are brought forward into the new structures. Transformation and renewal should always build on the achievements of the past. To begin once again from zero is a waste of investments, resources and great human qualifications."

Since 1994 from Geneva, where ENInews has its headquarters, news has gone to other news agencies, radio, television and newspapers, church media and leaders as well as to research institutions in at least 50 countries and to individual subscribers.

As of 21 December the news service of ENInews will be suspended until a new team can be assembled to use the same network of correspondents that the agency currently has.

ENInews was founded by four organizations based at Geneva's Ecumenical Centre: the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Conference of European Churches.

The financial instability for ENInews began on 6 May when the WCC wrote to ENInews president Gadegaard announcing a cutback in its financial support for the agency in 2011.

Two days later in Washington DC, ENInews won an award for being the best news agency covering religion, and another top award for courageous reporting related to the WCC, as well as two other awards for feature stories published.

ENInews has published news via its daily electronic service, a monthly printed bulletin, and on its Web site www.eni.ch. It began in 1994 and has been producing around 1000 news stories each year.