



# EUROPEAN CONTINENTAL ASSEMBLY

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

14 February 1986

Dear GBC member,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the minutes of the second European Continental Assembly meeting, held in Krishnaville, Paris, from January 31 to February 2, 1986.

The purpose of this meeting was threefold:

- a. To complete the agenda of the first ECA meeting, held in November 1985, the minutes of which you have received.
- b. To present substantial and detailed proposals to the GBC body, to be discussed at the 1986 Mayapur GBC meetings.
- c. To try to achieve world-wide consensus, by inviting official representatives from all continents, particularly from North America.

As far as the second point is concerned, we feel that both ECA meetings have produced some substantial proposals, and we humbly request the GBC body to consider them at this year's general meeting.

In relation to the third point, I would like to point out that considerable progress was made. Although at the New Vrindaban meetings the stage was set for worldwide polarization and confrontation (especially after the first ECA meeting, the resolutions of which were supported by leaders from Australia, South America, India and Africa, as well as North America), the second ECA meeting was directly aimed at defusing such a confrontation. The mood of the discussions was mature and objective; and the North American ISKCON representatives, particularly Ravindra Svarupa, Bahudak and Rocana, were given ample opportunity to explain their points of view. As a result, the understanding on the part of the ECA of the situation and problems faced by the North American ISKCON leaders, as well as their philosophical outlook, was increased. The ECA members expressed sympathy towards many of the ideas presented by the North American ISKCON representatives. Similarly, the North American ISKCON leaders stated that their understanding of the concerns and philosophical viewpoints of the European ISKCON leaders had significantly increased and that they were impressed with the level of maturity and frankness of the discussions.

Nonetheless there were still differences of opinion in relation to the analysis of the problems, and in particular in relation to the solutions of the problems. Yet, both parties also felt, that such differences had been heightened and pronounced by a lack of communication and open, philosophical discussions. In order to overcome the lack of communication and confrontational attitudes, as well as help



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reestablish the unity of ISKCON, representatives of North America and Europe issued a statement of intent:

After intense and constructive discussion, representatives of both the North American and European ISKCON leaders firmly resolved to carry on discussions and exchanges on a basis of mutual respect and openness for each other's viewpoints. Furthermore, it was felt that such discussions would eventually lead to a consensus in many areas, since present discussions revealed significant common ground.

I must also point out that the mood of reconciliation on the part of the ECA is based on the perception that on the one hand we must learn from past mistakes, notably, in our opinion, the organization and conducting of the New Vrindaban meeting held in September of last year, as well as the extremely liberal policy of guru expansion that came out of that meeting. The consensus among the ECA members is that the GBC body as a whole has the responsibility of maintaining the purity and sanctity of the sampradaya, and that it must ensure that those who occupy the post of representing and continuing the sampradaya (in many ways the highest post in our society) are eminently qualified to do so. In this light the ECA does not consider it sensible that, under current GBC rules, it is easier to become a guru than a sannyasi.

We strongly feel that these mistakes need to be analyzed and reviewed. Furthermore, we have to understand how they came about, and how we can avoid making similar mistakes in the future.

On the other hand, the ECA is of the opinion that there is no need to keep harping on them. Learning from mistakes does not preclude making a new fresh start. Besides that, the ECA certainly does not consider itself infallible, and is aware of its own limitations. As such, this all applies to the ECA as well.

Enclosed you will also find two letters from Srila Prabhupada, to which we referred in our November 1985 resolutions, as well as in our sub-committee proposals quoted in the present resolutions. We feel these letters are very significant, and ought to serve as a guideline for organizing special GBC meetings.

It would be appreciated by us if you would be willing to give us your comments on our resolutions, if further discussions on these important issues could take place, and if you would review them during this year's GBC meetings.

Your humble servant,

Hari Krishna dasa  
Chairman of the ECA