



20th anniversary of Charta Oecumenica

Joint Statement by the Presidents of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) and of the Conferences of European Churches (CEC)

12 April 2021

For the past twenty years the European continent has experienced a relatively peaceful period, along with an improvement of ecumenical relations. This was demonstrated in areas of daily life such as joint witness and action in local ecumenism, as well as inter-church marriages. Several theological agreements have been reached and a new generation of theologians has been ecumenically trained and formed. Several interfaith initiatives have flourished. Churches have strengthened their work towards a just and peaceful world, not least because of the increased movement of people from other continents, and have increased their efforts towards the care for creation. The message of the *Charta Oecumenica* has contributed and given new vigour to all of this growth and transformation. For the peace we have experienced and the achievements of the global ecumenical movement, we rejoice and give thanks to God our Creator!

As we strive towards the Reign of God, our societies and churches continue to be challenged by our human sin and all kinds of division. Old and new church divisions are in need of healing, societal and economic inequalities call for the transformation of our attitudes and structures. The continued threats to democracy and the natural environment demand a renewed attention to the wholeness of life. The resurgence of armed conflicts and terrorist attacks in some parts of the continent in recent years require repentance, forgiveness and justice. In the face of these realities, as churches redefine their ministry in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, we reaffirm together and in a spirit of unity our commitment to witness to Christ as our Saviour and to his promise of a transformed life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Following the testament of our Lord expressed in *John 17* and the *Charta Oecumenica* “*that they may all be one*”, we are aware that the unity of Christians does not result only from our human efforts. At the same time this unity, for which Jesus has prayed and suffered, must be perceptible in this world. In this sense we desire to be instruments for this unity and commit ourselves anew to the strengthening of church fellowship through common prayer and action, whilst offering our service to the world in promotion of justice and peace.

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