

Conference of European Churches  
Governing Board

Strasbourg, 15 – 18 May 2019

<u>Doc N°:</u>	8a
<u>Topic:</u>	The local impact of <i>Charta Œcumonica</i>
<b><u>Agenda Item:</u></b>	<b>7</b>
Staff in charge:	Katerina Pekridou
<u>Recommendation:</u>	For decision
<u>Annex:</u>	Not applicable
<u>Earlier docs:</u>	Not applicable

## *Charta Æcumenica* Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe CEC-CCEE, 2001

### The local impact of the ecumenical guidelines

In spring 2017 the Conference of European Churches (CEC) initiated a new research process on the reception of the guidelines for growing cooperation among churches in Europe. A clear analysis and evaluation of the impact of the guidelines was among the programmatic goals for the period 2013-2018. The evaluation process has been twofold. On the one hand, CEC addressed its members and partners concerning the reception of the guidelines. On the other hand, it explored online and printed material on the *Charta Æcumenica* in order to enhance its understanding of the reception of the document by its members and dialogue partners. The findings of this process are presented in the paper prepared for the 2018 Novi Sad General Assembly of CEC,<sup>1</sup> although it did not feature in any substantial way on the programme of the General Assembly.

The first part of the paper provides a summary of the responses to the questions addressed to Member Churches, National Councils of Churches as well as Organisations in Partnership in September 2017: 1. How have the 'guidelines for the growing cooperation among churches in Europe' been used by Churches, National Councils of Churches, and dialogue partners? a. Please name projects and events that were inspired by the *Charta Æcumenica*. b. Please indicate how the guidelines have been applied or developed in your context by councils of churches, by churches bilaterally, by ecumenical fellowships, or in the academic context. c. Has the *Charta Æcumenica* been used as the solemn ecumenical reference with regard to establishing ecumenical partnerships or agreements, e.g. a church solemnly signing the document when joining a Council of Churches? d. Has the *Charta Æcumenica* influenced the mutual recognition of baptism among churches multilaterally or bilaterally in your context? 2. What are the reasons why the document is found useful or not useful in the different local context? 3. Are the recommendations of the document still valid today in the European context? Are there aspects that are missing? 4. With regard to interreligious dialogue, please indicate projects in which your church/organisation is engaged and resource persons. The second part of the document illustrates a list of online sources that demonstrate how the guidelines were received in different parts of Europe, including a list of important publications on the document.

By September 2018 CEC received **27 responses** to the questionnaire on the reception of the ecumenical guidelines: **19 responses from Member Churches, 6 responses from**

---

<sup>1</sup> Available on [http://www.ceceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/The-local-impact-of-Charta-%C5%92cumenica\\_GA-1.pdf](http://www.ceceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/The-local-impact-of-Charta-%C5%92cumenica_GA-1.pdf).

**National Councils of Churches, 1 response from an Organisation in Partnership, and 1 response from an Institution of Higher Theological Education.**

As the *Charta Œcumenica* is a document owned by both CEC and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE), CEC has been cooperating with the Council in order to provide a clear analysis of the impact of the *Charta Œcumenica* on churches and church-related bodies. At the meeting of the CCEE-CEC Joint Committee held in Brussels from 9-10 March 2018, the members of the Committee were consulted on the reception of the document and decided to look at how the guidelines could be further strengthened with input from the churches, National Councils of Churches and Bishop Conferences around Europe. The Council of European Bishops' Conferences shared feedback on the reception of the document based on 14 responses from its members received by mid-February.

In April 2018 CEC approached CCEE with the question of working on a joint publication, as a sign of common commitment to the spirit of *Charta Oecumenica*. The publication would include the findings of the evaluation process and inspirational and visionary reflections by selected individual authors. There has not been a positive response to this request mainly because of changes in CCEE staff.

The CEC Governing Board is kindly requested to reflect on whether it is still relevant to inquire further input from the churches in Europe, and decide the next steps with regard to the internal evaluation process as well as cooperation with CCEE on this matter.