

Conference of European Churches  
Governing Board

Brussels, 20 – 22 November 2019

<u>Doc N°:</u>	2GB2019_Doc15c
<u>Topic:</u>	The hope of Communion: International Conference on Church Unity
<b><u>Agenda Item:</u></b>	15
Staff in charge:	Katerina Pekridou
<u>Recommendation:</u>	For approval
<u>Annex:</u>	Not applicable
<u>Earlier docs:</u>	Not applicable

# Conference of European Churches

## Project Description

### 1. Title

The hope of Communion: International Conference on Church Unity

### 2. Kind of project

Academic Conference

### 3. Responsible staff

Executive Secretary for Theological Dialogue

### 4. Introduction

Following the Great War European Christianity became increasingly aware of the need for unity among nations and churches. In 1920 most Christian communions welcomed the project of the movement on Faith and Order to call a world conference on divisive doctrinal and ecclesiastical matters. The time seemed suitable for churches to move from mobilisation around the internationalist vision of visible Christian unity to its realisation. Despite their different priorities, emerging ecumenical initiatives were interrelated, as they shared their common concern for Christian unity.<sup>1</sup>

After the fall of the Ottoman, Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, Orthodox churches found themselves in a new historical situation. In January 1920 the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate addressed an encyclical letter to “the Churches of Christ everywhere”<sup>2</sup> which was primarily concerned with the quality of inter-church relations. The encyclical was the culmination of a reflection on the dialogue of the Orthodox Church with the Catholic, Old Catholic, and Protestant Churches that had been initiated by Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim III with his 1902 encyclical. It focused on practical proposals for the improvement of inter-church relations and urged for the abolition of mistrust and bitterness and the rapprochement and fellowship (*koinonia*) between churches.

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview on the interconnectedness of the 1920 ecumenical movements, see Odair Pedroso Mateus, *Faith and Order 1920: The Life and Times of an Ecumenical Conference*, unpublished academic paper.

<sup>2</sup> “A New Translation of the 1920 Message of the Ecumenical Patriarchate,” *The Ecumenical Review*, XII (1), October 1959, 79-82.

In July-August 1920 the bishops of the Anglican Communion gathered in the frame of the Lambeth Conference addressed an “Appeal to all Christian people,”<sup>3</sup> as they reflected on the “reunion of Christendom.” They noted that “men never prized the fellowship of mankind as they did when the Great War has for the time destroyed it” and they sought to examine “how the bands of its own fellowship are loosened and broken.” Further, they acknowledged that those who believe in Christ and had been baptised into the name of the Trinity share with them “membership in universal Church of Christ which is His Body.”

Both texts emerged in the context of a wide range of interrelated ecumenical initiatives and movements. They both played a decisive role in the ensuing ecumenical engagement of Orthodox and Anglicans respectively. 2020 will be the hundredth anniversary of the two documents that encouraged and inspired ecumenical engagement. CEC is going to organise an academic conference to commemorate the Patriarchal Encyclical addressed to ‘the Churches of Christ everywhere’ and the 1920 Lambeth Appeal to all Christian People, bringing together Church leaders and scholars from its Member Churches to reflect on the historic significance of both texts, and the ecumenical achievements that followed, but also their relevance for the current challenges to Christian unity.

## 5. Aim(s) of the project

The conference will draw on the tremendous sense of hope demonstrated in both texts. It will explore the role of the two texts in fostering unity and discuss hopes for communion in terms of present relationships among Christians.

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## 6. Objectives

- To increase awareness of one another’s history in seeking unity.
- To animate hopes for communion today that are grounded in theology, ecumenical dialogue and a realistic analysis of the current socio-political context.
- To encourage reflection on ecclesial communion and socio-political reconciliation.
- To make relevant resources within the Member Churches known.

## 7. Outcome

- Participants will have reflected on ecclesial communion and its relation to socio-political reconciliation.
- They will have identified current examples and models of what it means to be a reconciled community.

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<sup>3</sup> “Reunion of Christendom – An appeal to all Christian People from the Bishops Assembled in the Lambeth Conference of 1920,” in Faith and Order Continuation Committee, *A Compilation of Proposals for Christian Unity*, Faith and Order Paper 34 (First series). Also: <http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1920>, resolution 9.

## **8. Output**

A concrete output of the conference could be an 'Appeal' or a 'Letter' from CEC to Member Churches and other Christians on the current understanding of unity in the European continent.

## **9. Gender-related issues**

Attention will be given to inviting female speakers.

## **10. Target group**

Church leaders, ecumenical leaders, persons responsible for theological formation and leadership, seminarians, and emerging male and female leaders.

## **11. Timing and venue**

October-November 2020, Grand Hyatt Istanbul.

## **12. Partners**

Church of England, Ecumenical Patriarchate, and Renovabis.

## **13. Press and Communication aspects**

There will be a press release and interviews with church leaders. Other communication aspects will be discussed with CEC Communications.

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## **14. Follow-up**

Publication of the proceedings of the Conference.

## **15. Budget**

*See next page*

Draft Budget for 30 participants

<b>Board &amp; Lodging</b>	30 x 3 nights x 150 Euro = 13,500 Euro
Self-paying participants	15 x 3 nights x 150 Euro = 6,750 Euro
Subsidies for Board& Lodging for participants	15 x 3 nights x 150 Euro = <b>6,750 Euro (to be raised)</b>
<b>Travel expenses</b>	30 x 300 Euro = 9,000 Euro
Self-paying participants	15 x 300 Euro = 4,500 Euro
Subsidies for Travel	15 x 300 Euro = <b>4, 500 Euro (to be raised)</b>
<b>Conference Facilities</b>	<b>2,000 Euro</b>
<b>Local transportation</b>	<b>1,000 Euro</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>1,000 Euro</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,500 Euro</b>
<b>Amount to be raised</b>	<b>15, 250 Euro</b>