

Conference of European Churches  
Governing Board  
Brussels, 20-22 November 2019

DRAFT STATEMENT

**Call for political engagement, prayer and unity amidst “Brexit” developments**

The Governing Board of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) meeting from 20 to 22 November 2019 in Brussels, Belgium, responds over the recent developments related to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union with deep concern, affirmation of Christian unity, and need for political engagement and prayers.

Amidst rising forms of nationalism threatening the common values of Europe and the emerging divides, churches cannot only confine themselves to the spiritual realm and stay out of politics. Politics is about human life, the right order of society and the common good. As Christians we cannot avoid interfering in politics, but this is our great calling to accompanying the churches and peoples of Europe to work “Together in Hope and Witness” in this new landscape.

As Christians we have a responsibility to speak the truth, to cast a clear light on political activities and culture, and to look out through a Gospel lens. We must challenge the lack of shame in political behaviour and the seeming acceptance of lying in the political discourse, which present moral threats to our common future.

We must recognise that Britain may leave the European Union, but it will not leave Europe. Our strong links throughout Europe will become even more important in the years to come.

Today in the West we are experiencing a great conflict between liberalism and other powers. Liberalism will not be a matter of course in the future. The churches, therefore, must be places of encounter, debate and of finding the truth, when the world leaders negotiate.

Our brothers and sisters at the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) have emphasised recently very well how important it is for churches in Europe to hold together as borders and divisions are being created between states. A statement from them reminds us:

“Thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ending of the communist regimes of central and eastern Europe, the Council recalls that that the Iron Curtain starkly divided the continent. In 1973, the year that the Protestant churches declared Church Fellowship after centuries of schism, the links between East and West were few and far between.”

“We lament the emergence of an increasingly divided and divisive political culture, and the use of antagonistic language and policies to deliberately stoke division. The Gospel proclaims that Jesus Christ comes to us full of grace and truth. We call upon all people to seek after truth in public discourse, and to respond with grace to those with whom they disagree.”

CEC since 1959 has pursued the vocation of being a peacebuilder following the World War II. Honouring this vision, we continue with our commitment to build bridges, when divisions and divides threaten our communities, offering opportunities for encounter and dialogue.

Therefore, as a regional expression of the ecumenical movement, we affirm that we continue to play our special role to promote Christian unity despite all political challenges. We must work together to enhance efforts that realises original vision of our common European home. We must engage actively and remind our politicians the priorities of much needed common goodness, as well as the significance of united and inclusive communities.

We echo the biblical calling reminded to us by CPCE in this context, *“Right now, three things remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”* 1 Corinthians 13:13.