



Gemeinschaft Evangelischer Kirchen in Europa (GEKE)
Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE)
Communion d'Eglises Protestantes en Europe (CEPE)

CPCE-GEKE-CEPE, Severin-Schreiber-Gasse 3, 1180 Wien-AUSTRIA

To the Patriarchs, Metropolitans, Archbishops
and Bishops gathered at the first Pan-Orthodox
Council of the modern era

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Vienna, 15 June 2016

Az: GEKE 01-2 GS

Your Holinesses,
Your Eminences and your Graces,
Dear brothers in Christ,

With great joy we – representing the Protestant Churches in Europe – have heard that the Pan-Orthodox Council is convening in Crete. After careful preparation, the long awaited time has come in which you are meeting to express your unity in faith and life, and to deal with important current issues. When sister churches hold such an important event our churches too have cause to rejoice. In common praise and thanksgiving, we pray to the Lord of the Church for the accompaniment and fullness of the Holy Spirit at your meeting.

This gathering stands out an ecumenical milestone, in our view. The Orthodox Churches assume their responsibility for the unity of humankind and the community of all Christians on earth in multiple ways. As we can see from the documents for discussion, the representatives of the fourteen autocephalous Orthodox Churches will not only respond to pastoral challenges and deal with questions of relations with each other – they will also define their common position in the ecumenical movement.

Presidium:
Council President Dr Gottfried Locher, Bern
Dr Klára Tarr Cselovszky, Budapest
Prof em Dr Dr hc Michael Weinrich, Paderborn

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The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe likewise pursues its continuing mandate not only of strengthening the communion of its member churches in sacrament, witness and service, as grounded in the Leuenberg Agreement of 1973, but also of seeking deeper fellowship with other Christian churches. In many European countries the members of our churches live in good neighbourly relations with Orthodox parishes; in a number of places they have developed deep spiritual ties. Protestant and Orthodox Christians cooperate with all people of good will in working for peace, justice and care for creation, which is also on your agenda.

Your deliberations will therefore be followed with great sympathy and interest. We see ourselves as being in fellowship with our brothers and sisters from the Orthodox Churches in our endeavours to achieve the unity that has already been bestowed on us in faith, and given the fervent plea for this 'oneness' in the high priestly prayer of our Lord and Saviour. It is particularly appropriate that you have chosen to meet on the Feast of the Holy Spirit, who in Jerusalem overcame the barriers of languages and nations. We accompany your deliberations with our prayers, wish you fruitful discussions and good results, and hope for a deepening of our present fellowship.

With every good wish

and with fraternal greetings

Bishop Dr Michael Bünker
General Secretary