



# Together in Hope and Witness

## *"You shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8)*

## CEC Strategy 2019-2023

In its 60<sup>th</sup> year, the Conference of European Churches (CEC) aims to fulfil its vocation to promote Christian engagement in the changing life of our Continent. Bringing 114 churches together in common mission and witness, CEC's strategy for the next four years engages with the challenges and opportunities of contemporary Europe.

CEC's strategy is structured around three aims.

### Aim 1

#### **CEC promotes peace, justice and reconciliation in Europe**

Europe is facing a number of social and political challenges that threaten the cohesion and stability of the European project. Attacks on pluralism, increased dissatisfaction with political institutions, fear of migration, and the worries about climate change, to name but a few, characterise the political debate. The Charta Œcumenica constitutes the ecumenical commitment to a reconciled Europe and engages churches to contribute actively to peace and justice. CEC's mission is to bear witness to an ecumenical vision of unity in reconciled diversity and to promote churches' work for justice and peace in Europe and beyond. The basis for CEC's commitment is the Gospel, and theological discernment permeates all of its work. This includes engaging in dialogue with the world religions and moral convictions, according to the commitments of the Charta Œcumenica. The objective of AIM 1 is to assist the CEC Member Churches to reach an informed understanding of the European processes and to increase their influence in the European political debate.

#### Specific goals:

- Promoting peace and reconciliation
- Contributing to the future of Europe
- Working on education on democracy, diversity, and pluralism
- Supporting interreligious dialogue

### Aim 2

#### **CEC strengthens ecumenical fellowship and promotes the mission of the Church**

Communion has been the hermeneutical framework for comprehending the nature and mission of the Church. Despite differences in understanding and applying the concept, and divisions over a number of theological questions, the churches subscribing to it have developed a common theological language and share considerable common ground, as demonstrated in the agreements of more than fifty years of official dialogues. Increased migration in Europe has been changing the ecclesial landscape: European churches with historical longevity have spread into new contexts, vibrant Evangelical and Pentecostal churches have grown, charismatic movements have emerged,

and Oriental Orthodox churches are present in European societies. In view of the current reality, CEC is called to provide a forum for its Member Churches to examine their understanding of Church unity and witness in relationship with the 'migrant' and 'minority ethnic' churches in Europe.

#### Specific goals:

- Working on ecclesiology and mission
- Organising a study on baptism
- Strengthening ecumenical partnerships in Europe and with WCC

### Aim 3

#### **CEC raises churches' voice in Europe and the European Institutions**

CEC has a participatory status as a member of the Conference of International NGOs in the Council of Europe, Strasbourg. CEC engages with European institutions, notably in Brussels and Strasbourg, in its advocacy work, which covers various sectoral policies eg ecology, economic justice and sustainability, human rights, social justice and education. CEC regularly receives many requests for advocacy from its member churches and organisations in partnership. Art. 17 of TFEU creates an opportunity for open, transparent and regular dialogue between the European Union and churches. At the same time, member churches contribute their own rich experience, concerns and concrete proposals to CEC. CEC will closely monitor developments in European institutions, inviting its members to engage and act.

#### Specific goals:

- Promoting economic and ecological justice and sustainable future
- Monitoring and reflecting theologically on science, bioethics and technology
- Defending the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- Promoting human rights education and advocacy
- Promoting social justice

The Governing Board further commits itself to

- Develop CEC's communication strategy
- Increase the involvement of members churches in CEC's work
- Work toward increased youth participation (20 percent in different groups)
- Secure gender and denomination balance according to CEC Constitution/Standing Orders
- Continue to work with and through CCME