

## **Comments on amendments**

Overall, we observe that the part on historical reflection has been lost compared to the original version: we ask for it to be restored, as it is essential for a correct self-understanding and positioning of European Churches.

We also observe that there is a lack of concreteness: commitments are often generic and do not identify the actual possibilities of converting the Churches to the Gospel: we tried to suggest tangible and targeted commitments.

Although we would not wish for it to be necessary, we must note that a chapter on women, who continue to be discriminated against, in civil society and in the Churches, is missing. We suggest a possible draft.

### **2. Listening to the Word of God and Praying Together**

The lack of Eucharistic hospitality is not a complaint, but rather a particularly painful sign of the scandalous division between the Churches. Efforts made have been insufficient. Jesus's command: "Do this in remembrance of me" has a universal value, it cannot be confined to the theological understandings and liturgical ritual of individual Churches. There are basic experiences of practising Eucharistic hospitality, which point to a path that church institutions cannot continue to resist.

We consider it important to reinsert the part on hymns from the original *Charta Oecumenica*, because music and hymnody are a qualifying component of the liturgy and prayer: they can be a vehicle for ecumenism in our assemblies or already represent an experience of lived ecumenism.

### **3. Moving towards Common Witness**

Churches cannot forget the conflictual past that has characterised them; only by maintaining this memory is it possible to aspire to reconciliation 'at a high price', not with an easy do-gooder attitude.

The mutual recognition of the Churches is fundamental. It should be based on the Grace that acts in the Churches and their ministries, as a free gift from God that cannot be ignored. This mutual recognition is the precondition for ecumenism not to be reduced to ecclesiastical etiquette.

The history of the Churches tells us that absolutizations, later belied by reality, took place even leading to armed conflicts; the misuse of the term 'relativism' can turn into a denial of the plurality that characterises the one Church of Christ.

#### **4. Proclaiming the Gospel Together**

We have preferred to keep the previous text because it seems consistent with the title of the chapter to maintain the focus on the gospel, that must be proclaimed together. The responsibility for social and political commitment, which is the way to communicate the gospel in the public space, is explicitly mentioned.

#### **5. Continuing in Dialogue and Working Together**

We have retrieved the historical part of former Chapter 6, which highlights how historical circumstances and cultural background contributed to the divisions between Churches in addition to theological motivations.

On Eucharistic hospitality, we refer to the considerations in Chapter 2. We add that the separation of the Eucharist in the family sphere is a scandal which the Churches must account for.

We wonder why in the new version there is no mention of continuing the European Ecumenical Assemblies, which can instead represent, as it was the case in the past, moments of popular participation in the ecumenical movement, beyond the specialist circle.

We feel it is important to remember that only the prior recognition of legitimate diversity allows for true ecumenical dialogue.

It is not enough to 'help reduce misunderstandings and prejudices between majority and minority Churches': the rights of minority Churches must definitely be defended, especially since prejudices are often the effect of the overwhelming power of the majority Churches.

It is misleading to think that disputes arising from the contemporary situation can be resolved by resorting to the gospel as a handbook of ethics: it is a matter of creatively discerning together the 'signs of the times' (Mt 16:3). When disputes cannot be solved, one can only exercise mutual respect between sister Churches and continue cooperation in other areas.

## **6. Participating in the Building of Europe**

It is important to emphasise the historical responsibility of Christians in Europe and ask for forgiveness to God and to other human beings.

Europe's multiple traditions must be recognised. Secularism must be preserved, because it is a democratic guarantee of the peaceful and egalitarian coexistence of different traditions and religions.

Alongside the violence suffered by women, Churches must also condemn violence against LGBTQ+ people, who in many countries do not see their civil rights recognised.

The scandal of ecclesiastical child abuse, a crime against innocents that undermines the credibility of the Churches and requires them to undertake structural reforms, cannot be silenced.

It is not possible to speak of values by referring to marriage and family in the singular: there is a plurality of structured bonds that must be recognised and appreciated.

It must be acknowledged that Eurocentrism has done enormous damage not only in the geopolitical field, but also in the religious field, by imposing only Western interpretations of Christianity.

We believe that in everything that contributes to humanising life there is the penetrating, though often unknown, action of God.

The term 'integrity' is ambiguous: we prefer to speak of the 'unity' of Europe, to be guaranteed while, at the same time, respecting the varieties that are present.

Ecumenical agreements can be a contribution to European secular institutions.

It is recommended that non-binary people also be taken into account. Just as ecumenism requires individual Churches to introduce themselves, so people must be given a voice to speak about themselves, respecting their identities.

In times of new nationalisms and sovereigntisms, it is important that Churches do not lend themselves to be used for political ends.

## **7. Strengthening Community with Judaism**

"They have never been replaced but fulfilled": the statement, applied to the Jewish people, the Hebrew Bible and the first Covenant, is not tenable and

contradicts what was stated above. In particular, the Church cannot be said to bring Jewish people fulfilment, otherwise we fall back into the supersessionism from which we want to free ourselves. The only fulfilment occurs, for us Christians, in the person of the Jew Jesus, crucified and risen.

The interpretation of Rom 11:18 according to which the root would be the Jews is untenable on an exegetical level; as a consequence, the word 'parents' is also misplaced. Christianity and coeval Judaism come from a common root: there is no precedence of one over the other.

It is not true that the Christian understanding of Scripture is the same as the Jewish one.

## **8. Cultivating Relations with Islam**

The Churches' commitments in regards to Islam in the proposed version are weak: there is a clear need to start with respect, and to promote greater knowledge, including through participation in their rituals. It is important to support their request for places of worship, and to promote interfaith meetings on common topics.

## **9. Engaging Other Religions and World Views**

Concerning the relationship with other religions and worldviews, it is important to be willing to share the testimony of others, in an equal relationship.

## **10. Striving for Peace in Europe**

We have reintroduced the sentence from the previous version because it emphasises the need for social justice for a just peace: in particular, it focuses on the excessive economic inequality, with the rich/poor gap widening as well as on the problem of unemployment. Such a situation demands awareness on the part of the Churches and action in favour of equity.

If the sentence 'Furthermore, our Christian faith does not allow us to despair of our opponents. Inspired by faith, we do not equate our opponents with their error and do not lose hope for them' was meant to translate the Gospel commandment "Love your enemies", we believe it is inadequate. If, on the other hand, it was meant to be a formula for solving international disputes, it is not functional, because it only contemplates the error of the adversary, hoping that they will change, with inactive hope.

The goal is non-violent conflict resolution, but when diplomacy fails, how do we protect aggressed peoples?

## **11. Safeguarding Creation**

We think it is better to use the older version, because the new one seems to be characterised by an anthropocentric view, speaking only of 'God's original vision for humanity' and losing sight of 'the love of the Creator God' for all creation. Moreover, the focus on welfare, and indeed on the survival of future generations is missing.

It is necessary to highlight how the anthropocentric, and even more androcentric Christian view has failed to stem the devastating human abuse of the planet.

We feel the need to draw attention to the JPIC (Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation) conciliar process, which has strongly characterised the European Ecumenical Assemblies and the collaboration between CEC and CCEE, and the urgency of the holistic vision required for effective action.

The wording is too vague: what is needed is a precise commitment of the Churches, even in ordinary pastoral work.

In the 'We commit ourselves' section, we have added points to give tangibility to the necessary action on the part of the Churches.

## **12. Migration and People on the Move**

It seems important to us to provide a framework for understanding migration on a general level, before analysing its ecclesial impact.

In the 'We commit ourselves' section, we have added points to broaden the Churches' awareness on an issue that sets conflicts in motion, including on a political level. The Churches must be able to take a clear stance on such conflicts in favour of migrants and their rights.

## **13. New Technologies and Digitalisation**

The quotation from Exodus does not seem relevant to us, because it refers to a single individual: it seems excessive to think that it can be extended to all 'human beings'.

We highlight two areas where the use of AI is already critical today: warfare and the media.

#### **14. Europe and the World**

We urge not to consider the Christian tradition pre-eminent, but to relate it to other religious traditions.

We add the value of witnessing unity in the diversity of the Churches, as a model for civil coexistence in Europe.

#### **15. Women**

We suggest including a chapter dedicated to women.