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Athens, 25 July 2022

- The President of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences
of the European Union (COMECE)

H. Em. Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich

- The President of the Conference of European Churches

Rev. Christian Krieger

Your Eminences,

I hereby wish to express the awkwardness caused by the Joint Press Release you published in the aftermath of the meeting you held with the President of the European Parliament, Mrs. Roberta Metsola, on July 1st. Particularly since we came upon the fact that, unfortunately, no dialogue was held between the Churches, the Religious Communities, the institutions of interest and the European organizations on the Future of Europe.

The EU states its satisfaction on the "Dialogue on the Future of Europe," which resulted in the final report with numerous recommendations. However, we are deeply distressed by the fact that in this text, it is crystal clear (which aspires to influence the future course of Europe), the complete absence of even the word 'religion' or 'Christian' and any derivatives of these words.

The Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (I.A.O.), from the very beginning of this project, tried to integrate the Churches into the Dialogue for the Future as an essential partner. Even during the I.A.O. General Assembly in Crete in 2021, the main subject discussed, was dedicated to the Future of Europe and the World, inviting representatives of the Churches to express and state their perspectives.

Additionally, at every opportunity, we emphasized that the reference to the Christian roots of the European peoples cannot be absent from the EU's terminology.

We also believe that the constant reference to Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty on the European Union's Operation has only a declaratory nature and renders the provision tedious, since it is not accompanied by substantive conclusions and results. Because "an open, transparent and regular dialogue of the EU with the Churches" does not mean exclusively social meetings, which in themselves are not elements of a constructive dialogue.

Nevertheless, the publication of a study on the religious dimension of Russia's war against Ukraine (Russia's war against Ukraine: the religious dimension)¹, published by the European Parliament Research Service (EPRS), shows that, for the first time, the existence of a religious issue in the wider European region is recognized (at least at a research level).

However, the general picture is that the EU has been consumed in an extremely secularized planning of Europe's future, in the absence of institutions, which are expressing European citizens for 2000 years, and constitute an integral part of European history and culture throughout time. This attitude, however, leads the European peoples to great disappointment and strengthens Euroscepticism. Precisely based on this realization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) decided, in cooperation with the I.A.O., to publish a *"Handbook on the role of parliamentarians in intercultural and interfaith dialogue."*

With the certainty that our views correspond to your personal concerns as well, we anticipate your intervention in this matter.

With these thoughts, please accept my assurances of high consideration

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Kostas Mygdalis
I.A.O. Advisor

¹[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/729355/EPRS_ATAG\(2022\)729355_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2022/729355/EPRS_ATAG(2022)729355_EN.pdf)