



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
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Communique of Orthodox Churches' Representatives to the European Union

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Communique

Re: Article 17(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) entry into force

The Committee of Orthodox Churches' Representatives to the EU met on March 17, 2010, in Brussels. The meeting was held at the office of His Eminence Emmanuel, Metropolitan of France, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the EU. The task of the meeting was to discuss the participation of Orthodox Churches in dialogue with the EU institutions in view of the implementation of Article 17(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which reads: *Recognizing their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches...*".

The Committee's work was moderated by His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel of France. The meeting was attended by Archpriest Antony Ilyin (Moscow Patriarchate), Archpriest Patriciu Vlaicu (Romanian Patriarchate), the Right Rev. Porphyrios, Bishop of Naples (Church of Cyprus) and the Most Rev. Athanasios, Metropolitan of Achaia.

The Committee emphasizes the commitment of Orthodox Churches to dialogue between Churches of various denominations and religious communities sharing common values, on one hand, and the European institutions, on the other. This dialogue is seen as a service of human persons whose dignity is rooted in the conviction that they are created in the image of God – the persons who encounter serious challenges in various aspects of Europe today. The Orthodox Church has a considerable experience of dialogue which is inseparable from her ethos (nature). Especially the dialogue between

the political community and Churches referred to in Article 17 (3) deserves to be encouraged in all possible ways as a manifestation of mutual respect and a sign of hope for a better Europe and sustainable world order.

The Committee sees the dialogue in view of the implementation of Article 17(3) as a challenge and opportunity for promoting the fundamental values and principles on which the European culture is based and thanks to which it has developed. Among these values are justice, peace, environmental protection, response to poverty and suffering, sensible distribution of financial resources, condemnation of all kinds of violence, protection of children and women, universal access to education, manifestation of solidarity, freedom of communication and self-expression, defense of religious freedoms for both minorities and majorities, as well as supremacy of law. The importance of common values and principles for maintaining an adequate level of social life in Europe and the world calls for the need to ensure dialogue between the EU institutions and Churches in a clear framework to be given a serious reflection and improved.

Brussels, 17 March 2010

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