

**Statement of the Orthodox Fellowship in Western Europe
5th of June 2016**

Since the origin of the pre-conciliar conferences, the Orthodox Fellowship in Western Europe has contributed to the preparation of the Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church, organising events and sending experts to the official Church delegations. Today, in June 2016, we rejoice in the next gathering of the Council, as the founders of our Movement anticipated it.

Among the decisions that our Church will take at the Council is that of Orthodoxy's dialogue with other Christians. The preparatory document we have had access to seems to adequately respond to the experience and aspiration of numerous Orthodox faithful and communities in Western Europe, who are in particularly close contact with other Christians.

It was with surprise and sorrow that we received the news that some Autecephalous Churches question the essential ecumenical involvement of our Orthodox Church, and deny the ecclesial nature of Oriental Orthodox, Catholics, Anglicans and Protestants.

We call on our Fathers in faith – the bishops of the Church – to consider the positive experience of our proximity with other Christians in the West. Ecclesiological thought, largely described in 20th century theology, highlights that our Oriental Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant brothers and sisters are members of the One Church of Christ, the borders of which cannot be traced by History alone: decades of daily exchange and brotherhood have allowed us to experience this.

Our hope is especially turned to the President of the Council, His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, that he will encourage his peers to continue on the path that he himself has followed since the beginning of his episcopacy.

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