

**Joint Working Group
between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches**

Executive Meeting, Bossey, Switzerland, 4-5 November 2021

Communiqué

After several meetings held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Committee of the Joint Working Group (JWG) between the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Catholic Church met in-person in Bossey, Switzerland from 4–5 November 2021, under the leadership of two Co-Moderators His Eminence Archbishop and Metropolitan Nifon of Târgoviște (Romanian Orthodox Church) and His Excellency Diarmuid Martin, Catholic Archbishop Emeritus of Dublin. Meeting at the Ecumenical Institute, the group was welcomed by its Director and former member of the JWG, Reverend Professor Ioan Sauca, Acting General Secretary of the WCC who introduced the participants to the challenges and opportunities of leading this ecumenical organisation as it prepares its 11th Assembly scheduled for September 2022 in Karlsruhe, Germany.

After an opening prayer by Archbishop Martin, time was given to sharing about recent activities of the WCC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU).

Speaking on behalf of the PCPCU, among other topics, Bishop Brian Farrell, the Secretary of the PCPCU, focused on a meeting of religious leaders and eminent scientists from all over the world “Faith and Science: Towards COP26”, which took place in the Vatican on October 4th. The participants of the event delivered an appeal to encourage world governments for greater responsibility for necessary change and for responsible care for the planet. He also spoke of the synodal process that was recently initiated by Pope Francis and its diverse dimensions. In particular, he introduced the participants to a joint letter of the Cardinal Mario Grech, General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, and Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the PCPCU in which they offer practical suggestions aimed at implementing the ecumenical dimension of the synodal process in Dioceses, Episcopal Conferences, and Synods of the Eastern Catholic Churches.

In the first part of his sharing, Reverend Professor Odair Pedroso Mateus, Deputy General Secretary of the WCC, focused on the impact of the pandemic on the life and governance of the WCC including the postponement of the election of its General Secretary and the Assembly, the highest governing body of the WCC. Despite the unexpected circumstances, the WCC fellowship and ecumenical partners remain committed to the search for Christian unity and look with hope to the upcoming Assembly. Then, relating to the current state of the ecumenical movement, he identified some trends in world Christianity that call for a sound sociological, pastoral and theological analysis. In particular, he pointed to a need for reflection on the future of the ecumenical movement in facing two current challenges: the growing fragmentation of world Christianity and the lessening of the will for visible unity, while remaining faithful to the traditional vision of the ecumenical goal which is full visible unity expressed in Eucharistic fellowship.

The Executive Committee revised the text of the Tenth Report of the JWG, developed under the title “*Walking, Praying and Working Together*”, and two study documents with recommendations to the churches: *Peace is a Treasure for All. An Ecumenical Reflection on Peacebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Violence* and *Migrants and Refugees – Ecumenical Challenges and Opportunities*. The meeting ended with a time of prayer led by Metropolitan Nifon.

The JWG Executive expressed its gratitude to the Bossey Ecumenical Institute for its generous hospitality.