The EU's impact on the Orthodox Church of Greece

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Abstract[1]

This paper explores the linkage between church activity and Europeanisation (that is the EU's impact) with particular attention set on the Orthodox Church of Greece, one of the new religious actors of the European scene. As this is a relatively new area of study, the main aim of the paper is to provide further insights to a more systematic research on the EU's impact on the Orthodox Church of Greece by presenting a basic framework for analysis. Specifically, the paper explores EU-related changes and adaptation of the Orthodox Church in Greece, at the following levels: structure of organization, transnational activities, church policies, and church discourse.

(Work in progress. Please do not quote without permission. Comments very much welcome.)

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Introduction

The rapport between the Orthodox Church of Greece (hereafter OCG[2]) and the European integration process is the focus of several existing (older and recent) studies on the OCG. The overwhelming majority of these studies though, are influenced by the broader academic interest in the role of religion *in creating European identity* and the role of churches as *factors of integration* towards the EU and tend to focus on the role of both orthodoxy and OCG in the integration process of Greece - most of them arguing that orthodox Christianity and the OCG in particular, function as barriers between Greece and the EU[3]. Thus, they tend to report only half of the story failing to capture the complex impact of the EU on the OCG -especially in the recent years. This paper proposes to explore the OCG in relation to European integration process from a fuller perspective. The aim here is to explore the EU's impact (Europeanisation) on the OCG itself.

Since, the election of Christodoulos, in May 1998, as the new Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, OCG launched a new phase of activism not framed solely to the domestic/national sphere of church activities[4]. Actually, in the post-Christodoulos era, the OCG seems to be increasingly determined 'to come in terms with the exigencies of the (post)modern world, including the project of European integration', demonstrating a escalating interest to participate 'in European debates on the process of European integration' - a fact that is reflected in the establishment of representation office in Brussels (Makrides and Molokotos-Liederman 2004: 464).

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[2] Other authors, for instance Anastassiadis (2003), prefer to use the acronym GOC, standing for the Greek Orthodox Church. However, whilst the use of a national name is appropriate for defining other Orthodox churches (e.g. Russian Orthodox Church, Bulgarian Orthodox Church etc.) the use of the adjective 'Greek' is problematic. Actually, the term 'Greek Orthodox Church' is also used to refer to the Eastern Orthodox Church as a whole (Simpson and Weiner 1989: 808). It is for this reason, for avoiding such confusion, that is used here the acronym OCG, standing for the 'Orthodox Church of Greece'.

[3] For a review of different schools of thought that portray orthodoxy and the OCG as 'barriers between Greece and the EU' see, Fokas (2000).

[4] Alivizatos (1999) notes that since the election of the new archbishop, the OCG has entered to a new phase of activism within the Greek society, which very often leads to involvement of the OCG in purely secular, if not political issues. The same stand takes also Stavrakakis (2003) who argues on the current politicization of the OCG. In overall, the post-Christodoulos era has been characterised by the increasing attempts of the new ecclesiastical leadership to 'de-privatize Greek Orthodoxy by rendering it a more active factor' (Makrides and Molokotos-Liederman 2004: 464) within the Greek but also within the European public space.

As Jansen[5] (2000: 108) points out, the churches in our days are 'major partners and actors in numerous fields where the *(European)* Commission itself is involved in framing policies and projects'. This a reality to which the churches, including the OCG, are not indifferent. In fact, the OCG sees in the EU a *new structure of opportunities*. As Ioakimides notes (2002) the OCG is among the domestic actors that see in the EU structures 'greater opportunities and better channels of influencing policy both at national and supranational levels' and the setting up of representation office 'close to EU organs' gives evidence of this new reality. Therefore, although the recent decision of the OCG to get more actively involved in the European integration project is linked to the new phase of OCG's activism that began since the election of Archbishop Christodoulos it should not be attributed solely to it. One should see the new experience of the OCG as a religious actors of the European scene in relation to the broader framework of relationship between the EU on the one hand, and the churches and other religious and humanist actors on the other, that provides to the latter the appropriate structures and opportunities for interaction at the European institutional arena.

The paper focuses on the recent decision of the OCG to get more deeply engaged in the European integration process and attempts to measure the impact of this participation on the OCG's profile. Thus, the focus is on the OCG's recent change and adaptation to the European integration process. The main hypothesis here is as follows: if there is an impact of the EU on the OCG, as this paper argues, this should become evident in the OCG's EU-related adjustments at least in the following areas[6]: structure of organization, policy, transnational activities and church discourse. The reasons for focusing on these particular indicators for assessing the impact of the European integration on the OCG are explained below.

The presence of the OCG at the European framework of action entails expansion of its activities beyond the domestic/national level, which used to be until recently its only space of action. The new operating environment though, the supranational European Community context, is structured in different ways than the national one. Therefore, the presence of the OCG at this new framework of supranational action necessitates certain changes and adaptation at the institutional level that would allow to the OCG to 'fit' in it. A minimum

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[5] Thomas Jansen was member of the Forward Studies Unit and responsible for the relations between churches and the European Commission during the period 1996-2000 (Massignon 2003: 40).

[6] The study draws on a analytical framework initially offered by Ladrech (2002) and further developed by Bomberg (2002), which originally emerged for detecting and analysing the Europeanisation modifications of political parties. Nevertheless, many of the methodological suggestions used for measuring the EU impact on the political parties are particularly helpful for exploring EU-related change and adaptation of the OCG.

requirement is to set up liaison structures with the European Community and to develop appropriate organizational structures through which the OCG would be able to follow European developments related to church interests, and therefore able to respond to them (monitoring and lobbying the European institutions)[7]. At the same time, the participation in the European debates and developments entails not only a certain familiarization and engagement to the European agenda but also the development of European-focused church policies. In this view, monitoring and lobbying the European institutions should start to become part of the programmatic commitments and policies of the OCG. In addition, the presence of the OCG in the European *enlarged public space*[8], necessitates a deeper engagement in European religious actors forums and networks of communication and participation. This engagement is necessary for the work of the OCG at the European level for at least two reasons. The first is that the OCG is relatively a new-comer[9] in the European space of church action and therefore the experience of other religious actors that deal for some years now with European institutions is precious to the OCG for gaining effective EU know-how. Also, in terms of actual power and influence the OCG is not in position to have

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[7] A necessity for all the religious, humanitarian actors and churches, who deal with European institutions, is the development of appropriate organizational structures that enable the leadership and decision-making bodies of the former to monitor European processes and policies, to be informed on them and therefore to be in position to influence them by designing appropriate strategies (Jansen 2000: 104; Massignon 2002: 23). The emergence of these new organizational structures, which are very similar in terms of objectives, brought about a certain 'homogenization' in the way that churches, religious and humanist actors are organized at the European level (Jansen 2000: 103; Massignon 2002: 27).

[8] Jansen (2000: 103) refers to the 'enlarged public space' (i.e. the EU) as the new emerging context to which the churches and other religious actors need to adapt and harmonize their forms of organization. However, the European public space is not only a framework of organizational adaptation for the religious actors but also a context that frames their transnational activities and trans-confessional collaboration (Massignon 2002: 24; Willaime 2002: 84).

[9] Whilst, for the OCG, the European environment is a new space of action, this is not the case for other religious organisations that have been exposed at this environment for decades now, accumulating an important experience in dealing with European institutions and European issues. For instance, the COMECE (Commissio Episcopatuum Communitatis Europensis/Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community), which is the main body that represents the Roman Catholic Church in the EU, was created in 1980 (Willaime 2004: 78; Foret and Schlesinger 2004). Since then, the COMECE, whose aim is to create liaison structures between the Roman Catholic Church with the European Community, had started to monitor European developments and promote to the European institutions the pre-occupations, questions and points of views of the Roman Catholic Church.

significant impact on European developments –if it acts alone. Comparing to other churches and religious actors (the Roman Catholic Church for instance[10]) the OCG is less competent to influence European developments, a fact that enforce collaboration for policy-making purposes with other religious actors of the European scene. Finally, the participation of the OCG to the European debates should have an influence also on the overall discourse of the church on Europe and the EU particular.

Therefore, the paper monitors the following: the adjustment of the OCG organizational structure so as to facilitate its communicative and lobbying activities within the EU structures; the reorientation of its policy-making that takes now into account the European public space; the network of communication and co-operation with other religious actors at the level of EU institutions; and the shaping of an official discourse on Europe, which has started to be less hostile towards the EU than it used to be in the past. Furthermore, the aim of this study is to monitor: a) the response of the OCG to the altered conditions generated by the development of the EU and b) the attempts of the OCG to have an effect on the EU integration process. The central argument here is that the OCG has been recently going, since late 1998[11], through an intensive period of Europeanisation which is manifested in differential way through the dimensions mentioned above.

By exploring the impact of the EU on the OCG, the paper attempts to bring some useful insights on the overall relation of the latter with the European integration process, indicating that there is an important EU-influence on the OCG. At the same time, by measuring the EU's impact on a well-established state church of an EU member-state, the paper attempts to contribute, by means of providing empirical findings, to a relatively neglected area of the European studies: the study of the impact of the EU (i.e. Europeanisation) on the churches.

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[10] Among the religious actors at the European level the Roman Catholic church is by far the most active and most influential (Foret 2003: 3). The Roman Catholic Church has shown an early interest in following European developments: the oldest confessional organisation presented at the European level is the Office Catholique d' Initiative pour l'Europe[10] (OCIPE, Catholic European Study and Information Centre in English), a Jesuit organisation of information on European issues, presented since 1956 in Strasbourg and since 1963 in Brussels since (Massignon 2003: 164, footnote 104). Both, its status of state, unique among other churches, and its strong diplomatic channels were beneficial for the position of the Roman Catholic Church within the European construction allowing the development of (privileged) relations with the EC since 1962 (Willaime 1991: 172 footnote 3, Massignon 2002: 27).

[11] Since the election of Christodoulos as Archbishop of Athens and All Greece.

The paper is divided into three parts. The first one sets the basic framework on the relationship between the EU and the religious actors (in an effort to support the argument that this relationship justifies the exploration of the EU's impact on the churches), and it also provides the basic theoretical framework in which the concept of Europeanisation is used in the context of this paper. The second part explores the impact of the EU on the OCG. Finally, the third part, the conclusion, summarizes the findings of the paper and discusses on the uneven impact of the EU on the OCG.

PART I

A. EU and religious actors

While the process of European integration and its linkage with domestic actors' adaptation and change has been extensively studied in the recent years, nevertheless there is less effort, in exploring systematically its link with church adaptation and change[12]. Yet, the churches are set recently in a dialectic relationship, in an interplay with the EU. On the one hand, they respond to the impact of the EU by adapting their own structures to the changing European context (Jansen 2000: 103, 109; Massignon 2002: 23) whilst on the other hand, they try to influence EU policies and processes as far as church-related issues and interests are concerned, by developing strategies at the European level and establishing a network of communicative and participatory ties not only with EU institutions but also amongst themselves. A recent example is the lobbying of the Churches during the drafting of the Constitutional Treaty of the European Union, proposed by the EU Convention on the Future of Europe.

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[12] Several scholars bring into the light the impact that the EU has, as a new space of action, on churches and other religious and humanist organizations, although they perceive this impact in different manner. Ioakimidis (2000), for instance, suggests that the religious actors are attracted by Brussels due to the greater opportunities that the EU provides to domestic actors to influence policy; whilst Jansen (2000) and Massignon (2002) argue in favour of the adaptation pressure that the churches feel to adapt to the new institutional framework of the EU. Nevertheless, only few studies offer a *systematic analysis* on the adaptation process of the religious actors. Massignon's work (2002) that links Europeanisation with church activity is one of the few exceptions. However, in her study, the exploration of religious and humanist organizations 'dynamics of Europeanisation', is limited in tracing the Europeanisation of religious actors exclusively at the supranational level. Her work documents institutional adaptation at the EU level and development of transnational and trans-confessional collaboration of the religious actors, leaving aside the domestic impact of the EU.

Today, the churches has shown an increased interest to coordinate their actions at the European level, to be represented at the European institutions (Vincent and Willaime 1993: 283), in other words, to follow and participate in the European developments. The adoption of the Single European Act in 1986, which reduced the policy-making influence of national governments and formalized and strengthened the European Commission's powers to initiate Community policies in areas such as social policies (Mazey and Richardson 1993: 191-193), was a catalyst in reinforcing their interest in European Commission policies and legislation in the period that followed[13]. On the other hand, the European Commission has shown an increased interest in creating liaison structures with churches, religious and humanist actors and engaging them in the European construction process[14]. Initially, during Delors administration, the perceived importance of churches' contribution to the European integration process was framed by their capacities as spiritual forces: the churches had been asked to give 'a soul to Europe', to give 'spirituality and meaning' to the European integration process'[15] (Foret: 2004: 4). A few years later, in 2001, the churches and religious actors were

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[13] The expansion of the scope of European Commission jurisdiction especially over social made obvious to religious actors that the European Community legislation could affect onwards their own interests, in the same way or even more than the national legislation did so far. The European Commission became now, for the religious actors, a new important factor, which they ought to take forwards into account in the core of their policy-making designs. In the view of these developments (the shift in power to Brussels) the religious organisations started to develop an increased interest in getting closer to European Union so as to monitor European developments and make their voices heard in the EU decision-making structure. As a result, the religious institutions was among the new actors that poured into Brussels since the adoption of the Single European Act (Lenders 1993: 298).

[14] The European Commission, since 1982, during Thorn's presidency (1981-1985), has officially expressed a certain interest in setting up 'a system of liaison with churches and religious institutions' (Jansen 2000: 111, footnote 5). The institutionalisation of these relationship between the European Commission and religious actors that started in 90s (Massignon 2002: 29-30) was further developed and structured throughout Delors (1985-1995) and Santers (1995-1999) presidency years by the Forward Studies Unit (Cellule de prospective) (Jansen 2000: 105, 111, footnote 5; Massignon 2002: 30), which had the mission to engage actively the churches in the reflection on the European problems (Willaime 2002: 88). During Prodi's administration (1999-2004) the Forward Studies Unit was replaced by the Group of Policy Advisers of the President of the European Union (GOPA), which in turn was replaced, under Barosso's administration, by the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA) -the new body charged with the responsibility to maintain a dialogue between churches, religions and humanisms on the one hand and the European Commission on the other.

[15] In 1992, Delors stated in an address to the churches that "if in the next ten years ahead of us we do not succeed in giving Europe its soul, a spiritual dimension, true significance, then we will have been wasting our time. That is the lesson of my experience; Europe cannot live by legal argument and economic know-how alone. The

recognised, by the European Commission, (through the White Paper on European Governance), as partners in the good governance of Europe. In the context of building the gap between citizens and European Union, the above mentioned actors were welcomed together with other civil society actors to get involved in a more democratic and efficient European governance[16] (Commission 2001: 19). The White Paper on Governance[17] provides evidence that, in the future, the churches together with other religious actors are likely to play a more concrete role in the European integration project or at least that they will have less difficulties to access the doorstep of the European Commission.

Notwithstanding future developments however, the existing system of relations and interaction between the EU and the religious bodies, especially the direct relationship with the European Commission which is formed in parallel with the pre-existing state-church relationship at the national level, along with the rising church activity at the EU level, suggests that the study of churches and other religious organizations should not be seen in isolation from the impact that European structures and policies have on them.

B. Conceptualising Europeanisation

Before moving to the exploration of EU impact on OCG, it would prove important to present the way in which the concept Europeanisation is understood and used in the context of this paper. In its broadest meaning, the term of Europeanisation is used here to refer to a process of change that is related to responses by actors to the impact of European integration (Ladrech 2002: 389). More specifically though, Europeanisation is defined here as 'a complex process whereby national actors adapt to, but also seek to shape, the trajectory of European integration

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potential of the Maastricht Treaty will not be realized without some form of inspiration', (cited in Belopopsky, Grange and Noll 2002: 26).

[16] According to the White Paper on European Governance, 'churches and religious communities have a particular contribution to make', in giving voice to the concerns of citizens and delivering services that meet peoples needs (Commission 2001: 17).

[17] EU officials had already voiced similar views regarding the role of religion as contributor to the governance before the publication of the White Paper on European Governance. In 1998 for instance, during Santer's Commission, and three years before the White Paper on European Governance, a Forward Studies Unit working paper (Cleveland and Luyckx 1998: 11-25) argued that religion 'defined as organised spirituality' is likely to perform 'a weightier role in governance', participating in the policy-making and implementation of public policy.

in general, and EU policies and processes in particular'[18] (Bomberg 2002: 32). In terms of domestic impacts, Europeanisation is seen as related to structural, policy changes but also to the shaping of the discourse and identity of domestic actors (Dyson 2000a; 200b; Checkel 2001; Olsen 2002: 935). The EU institutional framework is understood here to provide to domestic actors new 'structure of opportunities' (Hix and Goetz 2001: 12) whilst the European scene is viewed as the arena in which domestic actors are likely to drawn new boundaries of solidarity with other actors (Dølvik 1997; Mazey 1998; Olsen 2002: 936) in the context of developing strategies in response to EU inputs[19]. Finally, the study holds that the Europeanisation is not a linear or homogeneous process; the course of Europeanisation is unique for each actor. This uniqueness is related to the particular characteristics of each domestic actor and to the setting, to the context in which this actor is placed at the national/domestic level. The specific ways in which an actor responses to the impact of the EU are affected by these factors[20]. Outcomes of Europeanisation are shaped by national features leading to 'domestic adaptation with national colors' (Risse, Cowles and Caporaso 2001: 1).

PART II. Exploring the impact of the EU on the Orthodox Church of Greece

What follows is not by any means a detailed presentation of the OCG response to the impact of the European integration. Due to space limitations, the paper elaborates on some aspects.

A. Programmatic change and Europeanisation of policy discourse

A way of detecting Europeanisation modifications at the policy and programmatic level of a given institution or organization is to examine the development of its policy or programmatic

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[18] Bomberg's definition is particularly helpful for exploring the impact of the EU on the OCG, because it can be used to explore not only the adaptation of the OCG to the altered conditions generated by the development of the EU but also the attempts of the former to have an effect on the EU integration process.

[19] The concept of the EU as a new structure of opportunities is particularly helpful for explaining the decision of the OCG to become religious actor at the European level while the relations of the OCG beyond the national/domestic context could be examined and explained in the context of the new boundaries of solidarity drawn at the European arena between the OCG and other religious actors.

[20] Ladrech (1994: 71) observes that what differentiates Europeanization from terms such as internationalisation or globalization is obviously the geographical delimitation but also the 'distinct nature of the pre-existing national framework which mediated this process of adjustment in both formal and informal ways'.

content. The hypothesis is that Europeanisation could be viewed in the reorientation of policy-making and platforms of actions (through inclusion of the European dimension in the guidelines of work) and also in the references to the EU as an additional factor in the pursuit of church policies. In order to detect policy change resulting from European integration and politics the study examines the programmatic content of the OCG, as this is set in the written public notice on the aims and the plan of church's activities. This is presented at the beginning of every Synodal Period in the context of the first annual meeting of the Holy Synod of the Hierarchy of the OCG[21]. During this meeting, the OCG takes its final decisions on its course of policy for the following year.

An eloquent indication of the effect of the EU on the OCG's policy, which is easily traced in its the policy plans, is the launching of a new strategy that aimed to integrate the OCG in Europe. Since the enthronement of Christodoulos, the participation of the OCG in the process of European integration is defined as a key target for OCG's guidelines of work bringing about a considerable break with precedent policy lines of the OCG[22]. The integration of the OCG to Europe is for the new Archbishop 'the major issue'[23]. A new programmatic commitment is set: that of 'making known' the OCG to Europe, of putting the OCG in a dialogue with Europe (Christodoulos 2000a: 79). The new programmatic commitment is to establish liaison structures with European Community, to lobby the EU and other European institutions, to make known to the European institutions the pre-occupations, questions and points of views of the OCG. For the very first time, the *European orientation* of the OCG becomes a manifesto, a programmatic aim for the new church administration that fixed as priority the autonomous presentation of the OCG to the European institutions[24]:

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[21] The annual meeting of the Holy Synod takes place at the beginning of October every year (Dimitropoulos 2001: 88).

[22] It is characteristic that high rank members of the OCG perceived the election of Christodoulos as a new period of openness to Europe. In the words of the President of the OCG's Synodal committee for Inter-Orthodox and Inter-Christian Relations, Metropolitan Ambrosios of Kalavryta and Aegialeia 'the elevation of His Beatitude, Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens and All Greece, to the Archiepiscopal Throne marked a new opening of the Church of Athens and All Greece towards Europe. A long period of introversion has already come to an end! The Church gazes at the world both within and beyond the borders of our country, converses with all and participates in the events of contemporary society on all-European level' (Ambrosios 2003: 204).

[23] See, the speech of His Beatitude Archbishop of Athens and All Greece during the opening of the Holy Synod of the Hierarchy of the Church of Greece (07.10.2002) in Church of Greece 2002.

[24] See for instance, the first opening speech of Christodoulos to the Holy Synod (Christodoulos 1998) and also the second annual speech to the Holy Synod of the Hierarchy of the OCG (Christodoulos 2000: 79-83) in which

Beyond, the well-manifested Europeanisation orientation of the OCG, the Europeanisation of the policy agenda of the COG (i.e. the integration of the European dimension in the OCG' policy-making) is also evident[25] through its new EU-focused normative dimension. See, for example, where the OCG has stated that 'bioethical issues, the problem of exclusion, the demographic problem, religious education, the issue of abortion are examined from now with the view to the EU laws and proposals to the people of Europe' (Holy Synod, Press Office 2002a: 197).

Another element which reflects the EU's impact on the policy agenda of the OCG is also the instrumental use of the EU in order to justify OCG policies and courses of action at the national and transnational level. The *EU* (or *Europe* and *European people*) are used onwards in various ways for justifying several of the OCG policies and programmes of action. For instance, in the name of the OCG's responsibility to the Christians people of Europe are justified: the participation in the ecumenical dialogue (Christodoulos 2003: 422-426); the collaboration of the OCG with other religious actors so as to 'find a way of positive influence to the developments in the European continent' (Holy Synod, Press Office 2002a: 197) and the re-organisation of the Synodal structure and other services of the OCG so as to be informed on EU developments and participate (even indirectly) to the decisive processes of the organs of the European Union and to EU programmes (Christodoulos 1998; Tsaousis 1998a).

Therefore, if one defines 'discourse' in the way Schmidt and Radaelli (2002: 7) do: 'as both policy ideas that speak to the soundness and appropriateness of policy programs and the interactive processes of policy construction and communication focusing on generating and legitimating those policy ideas', then the justification of OCG policy programs by using EU-related and European related source of legitimating these policies is evidence for a change in the policy language of the OCG, originated by the EU developments.

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the new Archbishop exposed his personal views and proposals of action for the OCG and argued in favour of the European orientation of the OCG and the need of autonomous presence of the OCG at the EU level. Actually, the European orientation of the Orthodox church of Greece is reaffirmed, and defended by the new ecclesiastic leadership as a realistic response to the new conditions 'as these are shaped in our surroundings' (Christodoulos 2000a: 79).

[25] The increased centrality of the EU developments in OCG policy-making and discourse, is also reflected in the appearance, since March 2003, of a new special section in the official bulletin of the OCG (*Ecclesia*) under the title 'Church and the EU' (see Church of Greece 2003: 206-209). In this new section all the EU-related issues, are reported, as well as statements, speeches, official opinions on the EU and EU developments.

B. Europeanisation and institutional adaptation

From the moment that the European orientation of the OCG has been manifested as a programmatic aim, new organisational structures have emerged to enable the presence of the OCG in Europe. In order to gain access to resources (i.e. exploit EU financial sources available to churches and religious social actors); develop vertical links (that is the links with institutions of the EU) and also horizontal links (that is the links with other religious actors active at the European level); communicate and participate effectively at the European supranational level, the OCG had to create the appropriate structures which would allow it to go beyond the domestic framework and networks of policy making and widen its horizons of action at the European level. The new objective was to organise the ecclesiastical apparatus in the best possible way so as to be able to intervene at the European level on social and other issues (Christodoulos 1998). This process of renegotiating its structure of organisation, is in many aspects, part of a 'process of detachment' of the OCG from the national state as the exclusive territorial framing of the structure and networks in which the OCG used until now to operate as policy actor[26] and at the same time a process of *fitting* the OCG within the European space of action. In other words, it is a process that reflects the change in the logic of OCG's policy making (participation in the European political process and incorporation of a European dimension in the policy making of the OCG).

Since 1998, and within a short period of time, new Synodal committees became established, new legal entities and NGOs were formed, the activities of which were related to the effort of the OCG to enter into the European arena of action. Some of the institutional changes of the OCG are directly linked to the European orientation of the OCG, while other are indirectly related to it. As directly linked are understood here the new committees or other services of the OCG that have been designed with the main objective to establish and develop participation and communication at the European level (to establish direct links with the EU and religious actors active at the European level) and facilitate co-ordination of action at the European level. As indirectly linked are understood those committees or other services which

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[26] The *process of detachment* is a term introduced by Ladrech (1994: 79) in his analysis on the Europeanization of the French domestic politics and institutions. Ladrech applies the above mentioned term to describe the Europeanization of French policy-making system as a change in the logic of French policy-making, as a process of disconnection that occurs 'in the territorial exclusiveness of the national state in framing the structure and networks of policy actors'.

even if they might have not seemed, at first instance as EU related, they still play an important role in enabling the OCG to :

a) get closer to the European policy-making developments related to churches
b) establish and promote cross-sectional cooperation and participation links (horizontal links) with other religious actors active at the European level and finally
c) absorb EU-funds for church projects.

In the present framework of OCG's organisational structures, the task of developing EU-related activities is not entrusted exclusively to one special OCG committee but it is assigned in several committees or services, that are responsible for developing EU activities alongside the domestic ones. In other words, the European dimension of policy-making is broadly integrated into the domestic organisational structure. In this context, it is reasonable to assume that that the EU's impact at the organisational structure of the OCG is not negligible, since the whole apparatus of the OCG organisation is engaged in actions aiming to facilitate communicative and lobbying activities at the European level. The section that follows elaborate on some of the recent EU-related institutional changes that occurred since the manifestation of the European orientation of the OCG.

I. Institutional changes at the national level directly linked with the European orientation of the OCG.

i) **The Special Synodal Committee for the Pursuit of European Issues**

The new Special Synodal Committee was formed with the Regulation 99/1998 of the Holy Synod (Ignatios 2001a: 23) and along with the Office of Representation in Brussels reflects the newly acquired interest of the OCG to get more actively involved in the European integration project and establish the presence of the OCG in the European community.

The objectives of the Committee are to [27]:
- communicate with the institutional members of the EU.
- cooperate with the EU and the European Parliament on educational, cultural and social events
- contribute in the formulation and implementation of various EU-programmes
- coordinate various churches activities and proposals to the EU

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[27] See, Regulation 99/1998 (Ignatios 2001a: 23).

- cooperate with the office of the OCG in Brussels

The mandate of the committee is to handle issues that pertains to the relationship of the OCG with the EU and in this context it has the overall responsibility for the coordination of the transnational activities of the OCG at several fields (Ignatios 2001a: 24), and supervises the permanent OCG delegation in Brussels. The Synodal Committee for the Pursuit of European Issues has the overall responsible for developing communication and cooperation networks with other national and transnational church committees that work on issues of European integration. In this framework, the committee participates in most of the meetings aiming to define modes of more systematic cooperation and communication at the European level between the OCG and other churches[28] or ecumenical church organisations[29]; whist it is also responsible for organising the visits of OCG delegations in Brussels (Ignatios 2001b: 701).

The Sub-committee for the Development of Human resources

With the view to organise its work more effectively the Special Synodal Committee for the Pursuit of European Issues appointed a sub-committee for the Development of Human resources. The main aim of this sub-committee is to implement and materialise several European programmes (Ignatios 2001a: 23). More precisely, the task of this sub-committee is: to monitor EU financial resources; identify those that the OCG and its satellite organisations (such as the NGO's of the OCG's) could use for financing several of their projects; and subsequently organise the absorption of these funds by the OCG. Along with the limited liability companies[30] of the OCG, are the main channels through which the OCG absorbs EU-funding to support its social work at the national arena.

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[28] Members of the committee participated in the delegation of the OCG that visited Vatican, from 8 until 12 March 2002 (Theodorou 2002: 252) and in the second meeting between the Catholic Church and the OCG that took place in Athens, on 10-14 February 2003 (Ambrosios 2003: 201). Both of these meeting aimed to define modes of collaboration between the Roman Catholic Church and the OCG at the European level.

[29] For instance, the special Synodal committee for the Pursuit of European Issues participated in the meeting between the COMECE delegation and the OCG on 26 and 27 January 2000 in Athens (see Ignatios 2001a: 24); and in the meeting with the CEC in Athens, on 8-10 April 2002 (CEC 2002b). The aim of both meetings was to develop further collaboration and communication at the EU level.

[30] In order to meet the requirements for EU-funds the OCG had to create limited liability companies. As the Standing Holy Synod of the Church of Greece stated (Press Office of the Holy Synod 2002c: 282), the

II. **Institutional change at the supranational (European) level directly linked with the European orientation of the OCG**

The emergence of an official office, the 'Representation of the Church of Greece' to the European Union, is a crucial landmark in the Europeanization process of the OCG, which reflects the aspiration of the latter to participate in the European process. It is a service abroad of the Holy Synod designed to represent the OCG in the EU[31]. In Bishop Athanasios word's, director of the representation office in Brussels, it is a 'sort of bridge between the OCG and the European institutions' (Siniakov 2003). The ultimate goal of the representation office in Brussels is to cooperate with the centres of decision-making in Brussels, as Christodoulos notes (2001a: 6). Indeed, several of its objectives clearly targeting in facilitating lobbying at the EU level. More precisely, the aim of the permanent delegation of the OCG in Brussels is to monitor EU policies and keep the ecclesiastic leadership of the OCG informed about issues at stake at the European level that fall within the immediate interests of the OCG, so as to facilitate the expression of remarks and proposals to the appropriate authorities[32]. The permanent representation in Brussels is also a key-service of the OCG in maintaining and advancing its horizontal and vertical network of communication and collaboration in the EU. According to its regulation[33], the permanent delegation of the OCG in Brussels is entrusted with the task to maintain and advance relations not only with the representatives of Churches, religious communities, NGOs and other partners of the European civil society (horizontal links) but also with several EU institutions[34] (vertical links). Of special concern, is the maintenance of permanent contacts European Parliament and particularly with its Greek deputies, and the establishment of regular contacts primarily with the European Commission (Siniakov 2003). In brief, the task of the permanent OCG delegation in Brussels is to make

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establishment of limited liability companies has been emanated from the EU regulations with the aim to absorb funds of the European Union.

[31] According to its internal regulation, the OCG office in Brussels represents the former not only to the EU but also to the Council of Europe and the UNESCO (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece 2002a). However, as its director notes (Siniakov 2003), the priority is given on the contact with the European Commission. A fact that is also reflect in the title of the permanent delegation of the OCG.

[32] See, article 5, paragraph ζ of the Regulation No 149/2002 (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece 2002a) and also Siniakov (2003).

[33] See, article 5, paragraph ε of the Regulation No 149/2002 (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece 2002a).

[34] See, article 5, paragraph δ of the Regulation No 149/2002 (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece 2002a).

the voice of the Church of Greece heard at the debates upon the future of Europe (Siniakov 2003).

However, while the grafting of new committees in the existing Synodal system was not a difficult process, the formation of the representation office in Brussels was problematic. In fact, the initiative of the OCG to be independently represented at the European level put in question the role of the Liaison Office of the Orthodox Church in Brussels of the EP as ecumenical representative of the orthodox religion in the European context. Indeed, until the formation of the OCG's office in Brussels, in August 1998, the only representation office of an orthodox church at EU level was that of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Established since January 1995 in Brussels soon after the pastoral visit of the Patriarchate Bartholomew to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, on 18 April 1994, the Liaison Office of the Orthodox Church to the EU had the aim to ensure ecumenical representation of the orthodox churches in the EU: to represent the orthodox cult, to speak in the EU on behalf of the orthodox churches as a whole[35].

In this context, it was inevitable that Christodoulos' decision to establish an autonomous representation for the OCG in Brussels, assessing that the OCG 'has both a role and a word' in the EU (Christodoulos 2001b: 40) would have perceived as a threat from the EP, and therefore faced by sharp reaction. In order to solve the problem that emerged by the initiative of the OCG to appoint its own representation in Brussels the two churches decided to hold bilateral talks, in June and September 1998 (Christodoulos 2000a: 80). It is not in the scope of this paper to expand the discussion to the negotiations between the OCG and the EP, however what is important to note here is that the formation of autonomous direct links with the EU was not an easy-going process for the OCG. The aim to obtain its own independent organised structure at European level, its own direct and official links with the EU institution will become a focal point of the OCG policy in the post 1998 period, a fact that reflects the centrality that the European Union has acquired for the Orthodox Church of Greece.

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[35] However, the other orthodox churches did not participate in equal terms within the structures of the Liaison Office of Orthodox Church. According to the regulations of operation of the office each church, including the OCG, holds only one vote in the general assembly (in spite of the number of Metropolises) whilst the Ecumenical Patriarchate has the right to have 23 votes in total based on the number of its Metropolises in Europe, Dodecanese Islands and Crete (Tsaousis 1998b). Therefore, the office of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Brussels was providing structures of representation to the other orthodox churches, but not in equal terms, on the whole it was a common representation under the aegis and supremacy of the EP.

III. Institutional changes indirectly linked with the European orientation of the OCG

i)   Special Synodal Committee on Women Issues

At first sight, the Special Synodal Committee on Women Issues, which was created on 22 October 2002 (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece 2002c: 809) does not seems to be EU-related. Nevertheless, according its mandate[36] the committee is entrusted with the task to notify the Holy Synod on decisions taken by other Churches or the EU or other national or international organisations on women issues and to draft appropriate proposals for dealing with the above mentioned decisions. Therefore, the committee is entrusted with the task to monitor and analyse EU policy and legislation on women issues and to inform the leadership of the OCG so as to facilitate the expression of proposals to the competent European authorities and actors. Likewise, the committee is also responsible for promoting cooperation with similar committees or representatives of other religions or other national and international organisations that work in the domain of women rights[37]. Therefore, it is responsible for advancing cross-sectional relations of the OCG on women issues in the European context.

ii)   Special Synodal Committee for Bioethics

The Committee was appointed on 8 December 1998 and acts as the channel through which the OCG expresses its official position on domestic but above all on the European developments related to bioethics, biotechnology and euthanasia issues, participating in this way in the recent dialogue on bioethical problems in Europe[38].

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[36] Article 2 paragraph γ of the Regulation No. 153/2002 (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece 2002c : 810).

[37] Article 2, paragraphs ζ and η of the Regulation No. 153/2002 (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece 2002c: 810).

[38] From a brief look at the Press Releases of the Synodal Committee for Bioethics, it turns out, that one of the main objectives of the Committee is to express the pre-occupations and points of views of the OCG merely on recent European developments on the bioethics and biotechnology field. Indeed, in the period 2000-2003, the Committee expressed the opinion of the OCG on several bioethics developments that took place either in the EU (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, Bioethics Committee 2003a; 2003b), or in other European countries e.g. in Denmark (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, Bioethics Committee 2000b) or in UK (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, Bioethics Committee 2000a), whilst only ones it expressed opinion on a domestic/national policy issue (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, Bioethics Committee 2002).

The Committee is engaged in transnational activities at the European level and is used by the OCG as a channel through which it broadens its European network of communication and participation[39], encompassing both horizontal and vertical dimensions of participation. Working in partnership with church-related bioethics committees at the EU[40], the Synodal Committee for Bioethics functions as a bridge of communication and collaboration with transnational churches organizations while at the same time it interacts with EU institutions aiming to impact EU policies on bioethical problems. For instance, through the participation of its Synodal Committee for Bioethics to the Public Hearing with the Civil Society that took place in the European Parliament, in Brussels, on 9 and 10 July 2001, the OCG expressed its general skepticism on the recent scientific developments in the domain of bioethics (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, Bioethics Committee, 2001).

iii)   Bureau for Mutual Assistance and Relations with Other Churches

The Bureau for Mutual Assistance and Relations with Other Churches offers another example. This service of the OCG has under its direction two Synodal services: a) the Centre of Support to Repatriated Emigrants (KSPM) and b) the Ecumenical Program for Refugees (ERP) [41]. Both these services are engaged in cross-sectional activities transnational and national with the financial support from the EU. The most important of these activities[42] is the participation of the Centre for Support to Repatriated Emigrants (KSPM), in the first

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[39] For instance, during the second meeting between the Vatican and OCG, that took place in Athens, on 10-14 February 2003, the OCG proposed the establishment of direct contacts between the OGC's Synodal Committee for Bioethics and that of the Special Synodal Committee for the Pursuit of European Issues with competent Committees of COMECE as a measure of strengthen the cooperation and communication between the COMECE and the OCG (see Ambrosios 2003: 204).

[40] For example, the Working Group on Bioethics of the Church and Society Commission of CEC.

[41] See, http://www.ecclesia.gr/greek/holysynod/committees/relations/metanaston.htm.

[42] The Centre of Support to Repatriated Emigrants (KSPM) participates also jointly with 25 other partners the KEM.M.ME.PAP-Ifestos project which is co-funded by the EU (European Social Fund) and the Greek Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Implemented in the framework of the Equal Initiative for the Combat of Discrimination and Inequalities in Relation to the Labour Market, the KEM.M.ME.PAP-Ifestos (Centre for Post-Information and Accreditation of Technical Skills for Migrants, Repatriates, Refugees) aims at supporting the social inclusion of immigrants, refugees and repatriates in the labour market. In the framework of the same European initiative (Equal Initiative), the Synodal service Ecumenical Program for Refugees (ERP) in two more projects co-funded by the EU, the projects ISTOS and ANADRASIS that work on the social integration of migrants, repatriates and refugees.

(December 2002 - December 2003) and in the second phase of the Christian Action and Networking against Trafficking of Women (CAT and CAT II projects) which have been funded by the European Commission[43]. The project joined together ongoing activities of different churches and church-related organisations from all over Europe, active in the fight against trafficking, a cross-sectional activity of high priority in the European context (CCME-Caritas Europa 2002). The participation in both CAT and CAT II projects, enables the OCG to establish and develop horizontal links at the European arena level[44] (links with other religious organisations). What is more, the participation of churches in similar initiatives such as CAT enables the churches and churches related organisation to interact with European institutions that deal with these issues (i.e. European Commission, Directorate-General Justice and Home Affairs), permitting the development of vertical links of communication between the EU and the faith based organisations.

C. Europeanisation and transnational church activities

This section focuses on the transnational activities, the relations beyond the domestic arena of activity that the OCG develops at the European level. The hypothesis here is that Europeanisation may result in a new perspective of transnational cooperation with institutions and organisations in the context of promoting new organisational and programmatic activities[45]. In particular, Church personnel, ranged from high rank hierarchs to lay executive staff of the OCG is likely to get engaged in extra-national forums and networks, thus developing contacts and possible influence aimed at Brussels decision-making process. Therefore, the objective of the section that follows is to present some facets of the of OCG's activity at the European level so as to trace EU adjustments. Namely, the aim is to document changes in the way that the OCG use relations with other religious organisations and churches

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[43] The CAT project has been initiated by the CCME and the Catholic Caritas Europa and was financially supported by the EU-STOP programme (CCME-Caritas Europa 2002). The second phase of the project (CAT II) was coordinated by the CCME and funded by the EU-AGIS Programme and (since December 2003) the World Council of Churches' Diaconia and Solidarity team (CCME-Caritas Europa 2003).

[44] Indeed, the exchange of views, the sharing experience of collaboration, and the developed of common making-policy among church related organization on issues of women trafficking was among the aims of this project which seek to bring together faith based organizations (see CCME-Caritas Europa 2002; 2003).

[45] Ladrech (2002: 399) argues that Europeanization of political parties may result in new perspective on transnational cooperation with institutions and organization with parties from other EU member in the context of promoting new organizational and programmatic activities.

(horizontal communicative and participatory links) in order to influence EU developments and to explore the development of new vertical links between the OCG and EU institutions.

i) **Horizontal communicative and participatory links**

The OCG has clearly stated its objective to communicate and participate with other church delegations and European church organizations in Brussels. The OCG transnational activity in Europe is manifested mainly through its membership to transnational church structures such as the Council of European Churches (CEC), the World Council of Churches[46] (WCC), the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) etc, that represent Christian churches at the European level. These ecumenical church organizations provided the main platform on which the OCG builds up its network of communication and participation at the European level and participates indirectly in shaping the European developments on several issues social, cultural, bioethical, educational, ecological etc. These are the main channels through which the OCG develops activities at the European level, via participation in special working groups and committees of these church organizations that monitor and influence the work of the EU on issues related to church interests.

Since it is not possible here to analyse extensively the entire network of the OCG's relations at the European level[47], the paper would seek to examine the partnership of the OCG with the Roman Catholic Church at the European context. The example is deliberately chosen. To the extent that the relations between the two churches were never harmonious the

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[46] As it is evident by its name the WCC is not an European religious organization, but a global religious institution, however in many ways has a vocation primarily European (Mehl 1993: 309).

[47] An important dimension of the transnational activities of the churches at the European level is their participation in the ecumenical dialogue (inter-Christian and inter-religious). A detailed elaboration of the OCG's participation in the ecumenical movement as part of its transnational activities in Europe is beyond the scope of this article. Nevertheless, what is important to note here is that several obstacles in the ecumenical dialogue seems not to disturb seriously the process of the OCG transnational cooperation with Christians churches of different dogmas (see, Christodoulos 2002a). Moreover, to pursuit cooperation on practical, moral and social issues at the European level is perceived by the OCG's hierarchs as a task easier to accomplish and also more fruitful than that of the theological dialogue (Press Office of the Holy Synod 2002b: 170). In addition, the collaboration and cooperation at the European level, is viewed by the OCG as the way that progressively will enable the churches to approach each other and overcome problems in their relationship (see Christodoulos 2002b). In overall, for the OCG, the cooperation with other religious actors in the EU context is not imperative to be based on good ecumenical rapports between religious actors.

development of such a partnership gives a strong evidence of the degree to which the European integration process affects the OCG's relations at the European arena. Of course, the fact that the OCG uses its membership in ecumenical church organization as a mode of developing church activity aiming at Brussels decision-making is not less important, however it is a less surprising step in the context of confirming its position as religious actor within the European public space.

The network of communication and participation between the Roman Catholic Church and the OCG at the European level

In the general context of engaging the Orthodox churches in dialogue on issues related to European integration, a COMECE (Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community) delegation has visited the OCG on 26-27 January 2000[48] with the aim to study together with the OCG the potential for further cooperation at the European level and even the develop of a common strategy for the shaping of the new Europe. The prospect of collaborating with COMECE was welcomed by the OCG as a positive step in its attempt to successfully accomplish its work and mission in Brussels[49]. This meeting put the basis for establishing further liaison between the two actors in Brussels (Ignatios 2001a: 24-26).

However, the landmark in establishing collaboration and participation links with the Vatican was the visit of John-Paul II, in Athens, on 4-5 May 2001. Despite the fact that the OCG was initially against the official visit of the Pope in Greece[50], producing in this way a new source of conflict between the Greek government and the OCG (Prodromou 2004), this visit turned to be the beginning of a new era in the relations between the two churches, which until then were seen each other with suspicion. On 4 May 2001, there was a common

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[48] Except of the OCG, COMECE delegations have visited also the leaders the orthodox churches in Belarus (1999), Bulgaria (2001), Romania (2000), Russia (1997 and 2001), Serbia (1999 and 2000), the Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church (2002) and also the Ecumenical Patriarchate (2001).

[49] See, the address of the President of the Special Synodal Committee for the Pursuit of European Issues, to the President of COMECE Bishop Josef Homeyer, on January 27, 2000 (Ignatios 2001a: 25).

[50] As the President of the Synodal Committee for Inter-Orthodox and Inter-Christian Relations admitted to Cardinal Kasper and his delegation, the visit of John-Paul II met with strong opposition in the core of the OCG, while by the opening to the Roman Catholic Church the OCG faced a real danger of internal schism (Ambrosios 2003: 203).

declaration[51] made, by the prelates of the Catholic and the OCG, before the Bema of St. Paul, which marked the opening of further collaboration between the two churches on many issues including the European[52] ones. The initial declaration of cooperation on European issues gave its place to actual cooperation established by reciprocal visits of the delegations of both sides.

A delegation of the OCG visited Vatican, for the first time in its recent history, from 8 until 12 March 2002. This was at the invitation of the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity[53] Cardinal Walter Kasper. As the Archbishop Christodoulos stated to the Standing Holy Synod of the Church of Greece (Holy Synod, Press Office 2002a: 197) the objective of this meeting was the exchange of views and information with the appropriate committees of the Roman Catholic Church over several issues with the view of the EU laws and proposals to the people of Europe. Moreover, the delegation[54] was sent to Rome with the objective to create a bridge of communication, reconciliation and trust among the two churches in the European Union, so that their 'witness as Christians to be more intense, more trustful and more fruitful' (Theodorou 2002: 252). In the name of the shared responsibility of the Christian Churches for the future of European people the two churches were in search of finding 'a way of positive influence on the developments in the European continent' (Holy Synod, Press Office 2002a: 197). In the same spirit, during the reception in audience of the delegation the Pope observed, on 11 March 2002, that 'the hour of collaboration has struck' (Theodorou 2002: 253). The rationale for this new spirit of collaboration was to redress the secularisation of the European polity. This can be seen in the perceived disavowal of transcendental accounts of 'man' by Europeans and the stated need for Europe to find its 'Christian roots' so as to face the developed tendency towards refusal of the transcendental dimensions of the man and for leading Europe to find its Christian roots.

During this visit the Greek delegation participated in special meetings with the appropriate Vatican committees, in the context of which they exchanged views and submitted proposals

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[51] For the full text of this declaration see, Pope John Paul II and His Beatitude Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece (2001).

[52] With regard to Europe, at this common declaration the two prelates confirmed their intentions to do everything in their power, 'so that the Christian roots of Europe and its Christian soul may be preserved inviolate', arguing that the emerging tendency to transform certain European countries into secular states without any reference to religion constitutes 'a retraction and a denial of their spiritual legacy' (Pope John Paul II and His Beatitude Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece 2001: 392).

[53] This is the body of the Roman Catholic Church which is engaged in ecumenical work.

[54] Metropolitan of Attiki Panteleimon, was the head of the delegation of the OCG (Press Office of the Holy Synod 200b: 170).

for developing a common policy of action and presence in the EU included all the 'big issues that are linked to modern Europe'. An extensive number of social, cultural, educational, ecological issues were on the agenda of this meeting[55] (including bioethics issues, the problem of social exclusion, demographic problem, abortions, religious education) but also the relations of the churches with the EU and the secularisation of Europe and issues such as Christian heritage and identity in Europe and its place in the European Constitution that was in the process of drafting at that time. These issues related to the new European reality which is under construction offer the basis for the collaboration of both churches despite the dogmatic differences that keep them apart.

The commitment to collaborate and communicate in Europe, marked also the agenda[56] of the second meeting that took place in Athens, on 10-14 February 2003, during the reciprocal visit of the Cardinal Kasper and his delegation. The objective of the talks between the two delegations was again to broaden collaboration between the two churches and draw a common policy in Europe. The discussions and decisions taken during these talks reflected this concern[57].

ii)   Vertical communicative and participatory links

Together with its horizontal links at the transnational level, the OCG tries to develop also its vertical links with European institutions, namely the European Parliament and the European Commission. The main avenue of relations with both the above-mentioned European institutions is the contacts of the OGC office in Brussels. The recent election of the

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[55] For the agenda of this meeting see, Press Office of the Holy Synod (2002a: 197).

[56] The agenda of the second meeting was broad covering a variety of issues (Christian heritage and identity in Europe and its place in the European Constitution, bioethical and environmental issues, protection of Human Rights, terrorism and the role of religion, economical and social inequality, religious and racial discriminations issues, issues of immigration, issues regarding young people etc.)

[57] At his address the President of the Synodal committee for Inter-Orthodox and Inter-Christian Relations (11.02.2003), talking on the behalf of the OCG, stated (Ambrosios 2003: 202) that the two churches should strengthen the exchange of visits and channels of communication. In this view, he proposed the exchange of visits on the level of clerical and lay executive staff of the Church and the organization of common conferences to explore social issues. The extension of collaboration of the OCG with the COMECE on European matters was also proposed as a measure of immediate priority so as to include meetings on a regular and fixed basis between the Synodal Committees of the OCG e.g. the Special Synodal Committee for Pursuit of European Issues, the Special Synodal Committee for Bioethics, etc. with the competent COMECE Committees.

director of the representation office of the OCG to the EU (Bishop Athanasios), as member of the CEC Central Committee during the 12th Assembly of CEC (25 June - 2 July 2003)[58] is a very positive development for OCG not only because it leads to further engagement of the OCG in the CEC's work in Europe, but also because it enables the OCG to come closer to the EU organs. Since his election as member of the Central Committee of the CEC, Bishop Athanasios Chantzopoulos of Achaia has participated in several CEC delegations that met with EU officials[59].

In addition to that, a number of OCG delegations consisted of ecclesiastic and lay representatives have visited Brussels following invitations of the Greek Euro-deputies, especially those who belong to the European People's Party and European Democrats Group (EPP-ED)[60]. The first visit took place on 24-27 July 2001, after the invitation of a Greek member of the EPP-ED group (Ignatios 2001b: 701) and since then a number of similar visits allowed members of the OCG to meet Greek Euro-parliamentarians, to visit the European Parliament, to come in contact and exchange views on issues related to European church activities. These visits function as additional channels of communication for the OCG, not only with Greek members of the European Parliament and Greek officials of the European Commission but also with several other EU officials as well with other European churches

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[58] During the visit of a CEC delegation in Athens (8-10 April 2002), the OCG expressed its solid commitment to get more closely attached to the work of CEC and together with the CEC explored ways of further collaboration on questions related to the future of the European Union. It was in the context, that the OCG promised full participation at the 12th Assembly of the CEC in Trondheim, Norway (CEC 2002b). In fact, the OCG, achieved to get two of its members elected at the CEC Central Committee. Together with the director of the Office of the OCG in Brussels, Mrs Katerina Karkala-Zorba was also elected as member of the new CEC Central Committee (CEC 2003a : 14).

[59] See for instance the meeting of CEC and COMECE with the Greek (CEC-COMECE 2003) and Luxembourg Presidency of the European Union (CEC 2005).

[60] The EPP-ED Group has a special relation with the churches in the EU, including the Orthodox churches. Since April 1996, the EPP-ED Group in collaboration with the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate is organising series of dialogues with representatives of several Orthodox churches in the context of its broader dialogue it has establishes with Christian churches and other religions (EPP-ED Group 1998). Therefore, it is not surprising that out of the nine Greek Euro-deputies to whom the Archbishop Christodoulos expressed his gratitude, in 2004, for inviting OCG delegations to visit Brussels (Christodoulos 2004a: 98) five of them were members of the EPP-ED group (Dimitrakopoulos Georges, Hatzidakis Konstantinos, Trakatellis Antonios, Xarchakos Stavros, Zacharakis Christos), whlist three of them were members of PES (Group of the Party of European Socialists: Karamanou Anna, Koukiadis Ioannis, Tsatsos Dimitris) and one (Bakopoulos Emmanuel) was member of GUE/NGL (European United Left-Nordic Green Left).

organisations[61]. In other words, they not only strengthened the vertical communicative links between the OCG and the European Parliament and European Commission but, they also reinforce, the horizontal ties of communication between the OCG and other European religious actors.

D. Europeanisation and discursive change

Whilst, the European dimension seems to be broadly integrated into the present structure of organization, and is also reflected in the OCG's logic of policy-making and in the network of transnational activities, when it comes to its discourse on Europe and the EU one can easily see a certain resistance to Europeanisation. In fact, Christodoulos' public rhetoric tends to focus on the potential dangers for Hellenism and Greek national identity originated from the European integration process, aiming to position the Church as the guardian of the voice of the Greek people within the 'cultural melting pot of the EU' (Mavrogordatos 2003: 133; Prodromou 2004: 479). By underlining the harvest challenges and threats that the participation in the EU could entail for the Greek nation, the OCG attempts to convince the potential protégés of how vulnerable they are to the dangers of the EU integration process, and then, as expected, after having attempted to convince them, the OCG comes forward and offers voluntary its service as protector from further damage[62]. The proposed service that the OCG offers to the Greek people is the preservation of its distinctiveness (of its national identity) within the EU structures[63]. This protection proposal which the OCG offers to Greek people could also be read as an argumentation favoring the active presence and involvement of the OCG in the EU process, as the only option for achieving the harmonious coexistence of Europe and Greece without fatal consequences for the future of the Greek people. In other words, the OCG exploits its symbolic role as protector of the Greek nation, using its close relation with the Greek national identity[64] and the role that the national narrative[65] has already

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[61] For more details see, Ignatios (2001b: 701); Press Office of the Holy Synod (2002d: 818).

[62] Poggi (2001: 68) argues that this mechanism of creating insecurity is the most valuable in fostering continuing dependency of the power subjects on whatever the power holder can supply. Obviously the OCG seeks to take advantages of a new concern about Greek national identity which the European integration process and especially the project of a common European identity may generate.

[63] See, Christodoulos (2000b: 43; 2004b: 10).

[64] Alike the Jewish (Tsoukalas 1994; Lekkas 1996: 181), Irish,, Polish (Lekkas 1996: 181) and most of Balkan national identities (Pollis 1993: 348; Lekkas 1996: 181, footnote 24), religion is a crucial element of the Greek national identity. Orthodox religion is so much intertwined with nation in Greece that Greekness and Greek

attributed to orthodox religion and church: that of the champion of the nation[66], of the ark of the nation's soul,[67] for projecting this role within the European framework. It uses its identification with the 'endangered' Greek nation (Mavrogordatos 2003: 134) for justifying its role at the European level. Although, the reference to the threats of European integration process may be read as an effort of the OCG to justify its place and role within the European supranational structures in the name of Greek nation's interests, as protector of the Greek nation to the EU still portraying EU as a threat to the Greek people indicates an ambivalent fit between OCG's discourse and the EU.

However, the discourse of the OCG on the EU and European integration is not static, but subject to many factors that play a role in re-orientated this discourse towards a less rigid and critical view on the EU. Despite the tendency of the OCG to underline the potential threats of the EU process on Greek national identity, the overall discourse of the OCG indicates a change towards 'mellowing' of its discourse on the EU which is not negligible. The fact that the OCG obtained a recognized status within the EU is related to its 'softer' discourse on the EU[68]. The recent positions of the OCG on the EU underline this point. In the speeches and official positions of the OCG, the EU is projected not only as a big challenge but also as a big opportunity for the OCG. Contrary to what happen in the past, now the OGC

Orthodoxy turn out to define the same notion; nation and Orthodoxy are seen as one inseparable unity (Pollis 1993: 348; Lekkas 1996: 181, footnote 24; Mavrogordatos 2003: 129).

[65] The prolonged fusion of Orthodox identity and Greek national identity over the centuries is a key-element in the narration of the Greek nation as primordial and continuous entity into history: assuming that Orthodox and national identity are inseparable, Orthodoxy (both as a basis of people identity and as institution (Orthodox Church) is conceived as the vehicle, through which Greeks preserved their national identity in their pre-independence period (Tsoukalas 1995: 295-297, 300-302).

[66] As Kitromilides (1994: 178) notes, the assumption that the Orthodox Christianity and the Orthodox Church preserved during ottoman occupation the Greek national identity is one of the 'greatest anachronisms' of European historiography in the sense that injects national content into traditional religious distinction.

[67] The identification of the church with the country's holy ark, with the guardian of the nation's soul is a usual phenomenon among nations whose national histories involves oppression under a foreign denomination, especially if the religion of the oppressor is different from the one of the oppressed people at of the people as that of Greece (Rémond 2001: 13-14). The Greek case is a classic example.

[68] Anastassiadis (2003: 7) argues that the Church's aggressive discourse towards Europeans disappeared when the Orthodox churches managed to obtain a status of recognition within the Community. He obviously refers to the establishment of the Orthodox Liaison office in Brussels in 1995. It is reasonable to assume that the fact that the OCG obtain recognized status within the EU, by opening its own representation office to the EU should have even more dramatic effects in changing the OCG's rhetoric on the EU.

is searching its 'own place in Europe' (Christodoulos 2000a: 79-83) and refers to EU as 'our common home (=oikos)' (Christodoulos 2001b: 41). At this point it should be noted that this statement is very different from previous ones made by the present Archbishop on Europe. For instance, in 1982 (Christodoulos 1982: 63), shortly after the accession of Greece in the EC, he asserted that there is a lot of things that separate Greeks from Europe and in a rather critical tone cast doubt over the value of Europeans 'as the new friends' of the Greek nation. Moreover, the EU is considered now as an entity to which the OCG ought to be related to and ought to participate. The idea which has started to be projected is that of the OCG as a partner of the EU, as 'a contributor in the building of the European Home' (Church of Greece 2002). The OCG will come to the point to make her own suggestions on the model of Europe: her suggestion is to work 'for a more Human Europe' (see Holy Synod 2002b: 470; Zorbas 2002: 357).

Also, since the establishment of its status at the European level and especially since the mobilization of the OCG during the drafting of the future European constitution that aimed in addressing their shared concerns of the churches on the European Convention's work to the EU institutions[69], the OCG has started to put more emphasis on its role as

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[69] The drafting of the Constitutional Treaty of the European Union, proposed by the EU Convention on the Future of Europe, attracted the interest of the European Christian churches (see for instance, CEC 2003b) and brought about the formation of churches' coalition that aimed in addressing in common to the EU institutions their concerns the European Convention's work (see for instance CEC 2002a; CEC-COMECE 2003). Their requests concern mainly three points: a) a religious reference set in the future European Constitutional Treaty b) legal provisions set in the constitutional treaty, by which the EU should declare its respect for the existing relations between member states, churches and religious communities and c) the establishment of a structured dialogue between the institutions of the EU and the churches (CEC-COMECE 2003).

The OCG joined the other European churches in their effort to lobby on the European Constitution drafting and participated in this coalition with various ways. For instance, the director of the Representation office in Brussels, participated in the common meeting of CEC and COMECE with the Greek EU presidency on 28 January 2003, in which the church representatives addressed their concerns on the European Constitution drafting and lobbied on the issues mentioned above (CEC-COMECE 2003). In the same context, the Holy Synod of the OCG made a statement on 30 March 2002 in which it noticed that the EU can not ignore its Christian long-term influence and asked "for the recognition of the Christian influence in the Preamble of the European Constitution which refers to the history of Europe (Holy Synod of the Church of Greece 2002c). Also the Holy Synod of the OCG, submitted its proposals to the Valéry Giscard d'Estaing responsible for drafting the new European Constitution on the 20.02.2003 (Holly Synod of the Church of Greece 2003: 206-207). Whilst, during the period of the Greek Presidency at the EU, the Archbishop Christodoulos in a letter addressed to the then

defender of the European (Christian) civilization and the European people in general than to its role as guardian of Greek nation[70] and harmonizing its discourse with that of the other churches[71].

It should also be noted, that in contrast to the first years of Christodoulos administration the EU is not perceived anymore as a threat to the OCG, at least not at the discourse level. The ID crisis[72] gives a first evidence of that change. Indeed, Archbishop Christodoulos had stated initially, at his opening speech before the Holy Synod in 1999, that it was likely, the EU to impose the separation of state-church in Greece or other law regulations that would lead to the lose of OCG's privileges within the Greek state (Christodoulos 2000: 130-135). During the ID card conflict (spring 2000-autum 2001), the actual involvement of the EU in the decision of the Greek government became a politicised issue[73] of the highly mediated public debate that accompanied the conflict. In fact, those in favour of keeping the faith on identity cards suggested that the conflict was the 'result of external pressure' and held the European Union alongside with religious minorities inside and outside Greece responsible for exerting influence on the government to eliminate religion from identity cards (Molokotos-Liederman 2003a: 15). Whilst on the other hand, those in favour of omitting the

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Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis (dated 23 January 2003), he repeated the three above-mentioned demands made by the European churches on the European Constitution.

[70] See for instance, Holy Synod of the Church of Greece (2002c).

[71] There is not sufficient scope within this paper to assess the influence of transnational activities on the discourse of the OCG. However, what we can note at this point is that the communicative and participatory ties of the OCG with other religious actors of the European arena have also influenced its discourse on Europe (in terms of style and content) in the sense that is now more harmonious with the discourse of the rest of religious actors in Europe.

[72] As ID card crisis is defined here the controversy between the Greek government of the time (PASOK) with the OCG that started off in May 2000, when the former decided to implement the decision of the independent Hellenic Personal Protection Data Authority according to which the sensitive personal data including religious affiliation should not be mentioned in the identity cards of the Greek citizens (Stavrakakis 2003: 153-154; Molokotos-Liederman 2003: 291). The OCG, which perceived this decision as a direct attack to its institutional monopoly, refused to accept it (Mavrogordatos 2003: 122-123) and mobilised its mechanism (organisation of mass rallies in Thessaloniki and Athens, organisation of petition etc) with the aim to change it (Prodromou 2004: 474).

[73] It is characteristic of the degree that the European influence became an issue related to this debate that a Greek Euro-parliamentarian (Alenxandros Alavanos) posed direct questions to EU institutions (European Commission and European Parliament) asking them whether or not the mention of religious affiliation on the Greek ID cards was finally in conformity with the European norms.

religious affiliation from the ID cards, very often referred to Greek obligation to respect both national and international law provisions and to conform with the European norms. As the argument went, since no other European country records religion on public documents, Greece was due to do the same (Molokotos-Liederman 2003a: 15; 2003b: 303). The same view shared also the Greek government that used the EU context in order to justify the decision to remove the mention of religion from the Greek identity cards (Prodromou 2004: 479).

With the view of the previous statement of Christodoulos on the EU's external pressure on the Greek state, one could expect that the OCG would have accused the EU for imposing norms that lead to weaken church authority within the Greek society. However, Archbishop Christodoulos and the hierarchy of the OCG, were careful not to point the finger at the EU as having been involved directly or indirectly to the decision of the Greek government to omit the religious reference from the Greek identity card. They argued instead, that the EU was not in any way involved in the issue accusing the Greek government of making instrumental use of the EU (i.e. that uses the EU and the need to comply to its norms as for imposing its own policies)[74].

Despite its tendency to use the threats of homogenization within the EU, in order to justified its role as protector of the Greek nation at the national and European level, the OCG avoided framing the ID issue as an indicator of this threats[75]. It attempted instead to disconnect the ID card issue from the EU frame arguing that the EU had never put any pressure to the Greek government to take this decision. This position shows that there is a considerable change on the OCG's discourse on the EU itself. Although, in the beginning it was openly named as a potential danger, as a threat to its status within the Greek society) that came about in a very short time.

On the whole, the OCG's discourse on European integration and the EU displays a complex adaptation and change. The reference to the threats of Europe ('melting pot' etc.) makes clear that the OCG is in place to exploit EU-related issues such as the threat of the European in order to increase its own authority within and outside the domestic framework of its activities. Also the discourse of the church on the EU confirms that the influence of pre-existing national frameworks is a important factor in framing the Europeanisation course of a

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[74] See, Christodoulos (2000b: 302; 2000c: 320-321).

[75] An opposite view holds Prodromou (2004: 479) who argues that Christodoulos' populist discourse framed the ID card episode as indicator 'of the threats of homogenisation posed by the religious pluralism and political liberalism of the EU'.

domestic actor. The fact that religion and national identities are intertwined in Greece and the church is considered as an ark of the nation, have its own effect on the discourse that the OCG shapes on the EU.

Conclusion

This paper tried to explore the OCG in relation to European integration process proposing a different perspective than the one which is usually adopted. The aim here was not to study the role of the OCG in the European process of Greece, but to explore the effects of the EU on the OCG itself. In other words, the aim was to monitor OCG's response to the altered conditions generated by the developments of the EU and also its attempts to have an effect on the EU integration process. The intention was twofold: on one hand it aimed to bring new insights in the study of the OCG and the overall relationship of the latter with European integration by illustrating facets of OCG adjustments to EU impact, and on the other hand to contribute to a more systematic research on the EU's impact on churches and religious actors by providing a framework of analysis based on the exploration of the effects of the EU in four basic categories by which we can trace EU impact at both the national and supranational level.

Space constraints prevented a detailed elaboration and what was presented here was only some aspects of the OCG adaptation and change, related to its recent decision to play an active role in the enlarged public space of the EU. However, it cannot but point out that despite the fact that this is only the beginning of its new European experience, still the impact of the EU on the OCG has started already to become evident by changes and adaptation of the OCG across several levels. In specific, the entrance to the supranational European level of action entailed: adjustments in the institutional structures of organization (at the domestic and European level) so as to permit the development of vertical links (with EU institutions) and horizontal links (with other religious actors active at the European levels); certain reorientation in the Church's policy-making logic with the inclusion of EU-related issues in the agenda of the OCG; development of a communicative and participatory network at the EU level aiming at Brussels decision-making process; and finally changes at the discourse level. Moreover, as the case of the drafting of the Constitutional Treaty of the European Union shows, the OCG does not only respond to the altered conditions generated by the development of the EU but also attempts to have an effect on the EU integration process.

The diffusion, though, of the EU impact seems to be still uneven across several levels of the OCG activity. Whilst, the European dimension is broadly integrated into the present

structure of organization, in the OCG's logic of policy-making and in the network of transnational activities, still its discourse on Europe and the EU illustrates that changes at the ideological/identity level are not always instant, but need more time to come to the surface. To the extent thought, that Europeanisation as domestic impacts is not limited to structural and policy changes and can also shape discourses and identities it may be possible in the future that the anti-western and anti-European attitude of the OCG, will become gradually less rigid following deepening of integration in the EU developments. Although, this may seems to be an oversimplified approach at the moment, still there are indications in the discourse of the OCG on the EU that show changes to this direction ('mellowing' towards the EU). Nevertheless, everything will be depended on the further evolution of the OCG's Europeanisation process and the influence of the pre-existing national framework in shaping the course of OCG course of Europeanisation.

The challenge of the OCG in the future, would be to balance between successful adaptation and changes in the institutional structures, programmatic aims and transnational relations and its aim to position itself as guardian of the Greek people within the EU by projecting an image of the EU as a potential threat for the Greek orthodox people. Recently thought, within the context of lobbying the EU Convention on the Future of Europe the OCG had developed a discourse which position itself not simply as protector of the Greek nation but as a guardian of the European civilization and European people.

In overall, the OCG is particularly interested in the opportunities that the participation in the European integration process offers and to the extent that the EU is defined not just as an economic and political cooperation but also as a spiritual and cultural entity (Christodoulos 2001b: 36; 2004b: 11) the OCG will continue to embrace European integration. In other words, to the extent that European integration process continues to leave a space for churches to act at the European level, the EU integration cannot be entirely disruptive of OCG's ideological priorities or principles. Finally, the enthronement of Christodoulos as new head of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church on 9 May 1998 is a landmark of a new phase of OCG's activism that it is not limited only in the Greek public sphere (Alivizatos 1999), but is extended also to the European one.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CAT	Christian Action and Networking against Trafficking of Women
CCME	Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe
CEC	Conference of European Churches
COMECE	Commissio Episcopatuum Communitatis Europensis/Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community
EP	Ecumenical Patriarchate
EPP-ED	European People's Party and European Democrats
ERP	Ecumenical Program for Refugees
EU	European Union
GUE/NGL	European United Left-Nordic Green Left
KEM.M.ME.PAP	Centre for Post-Information and Accreditation of Technical Skills for Migrants, Repatriates, Refugees
KSPM	Centre for Support to Repatriated Emigrants
OCG	Orthodox Church of Greece
PES	Group of the Party of European Socialists
WCC	World Council of Churches