

Acknowledgements

This publication and the preceding 1st volume (2019) are the outcome of a research project that began in 2015 after a lengthy period of preparation and ended in 2018 with a conference held in cooperation with and on the premises of the Pontifical Gregorian University, the Gregoriana, in Rome. In vol. 1 of this publication we announced that there would be 3 volumes in all. We have since seen that we can accommodate all contributions in 2 volumes. Therefore, there will not be a 3rd volume.

The project itself and the two volumes of findings owe much to many! Invaluable guidance and assistance was received from colleagues in various European countries who consented to act as associates: Prof. Dr. Rocco D'Ambrosio, Prof. Dr. Paul Dekker, Dr. Anna Domaradzka, Prof. Dr. Johan von Essen, and Prof. Dr. Vasilios Makkrides. Also, valuable help was enjoyed from two fellows of the Maecenata Institute, Prof. Dr. Frank Adloff and Prof. Dr. Eva Maria Hinterhuber, and from the Director of the Maecenata Foundation's MENA Study Centre, Prof. Dr. Udo Steinbach.

Particular thanks are due to all contributors to both volumes of findings. The chapters add particular viewpoints which will, I hope, enable readers to gain a fuller picture of a complex and varied process. Also, a large number of key personalities, both academics and practitioners in the field, were ready to be interviewed, to join discussions, to participate in conferences, and to offer their expertise in many other ways. To all of them, a sincere and heart-felt thank-you!

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To provide food for thought on the issue of the relationship between religious communities and civil society in Europe will hopefully contribute to a debate which I have felt is necessary as part of the discussions both within civil society and civil society research, and within the Christian Churches and other religious communities about their role in modern society. Presenting a wide a range of by no means necessarily homogenous cases and arguments, will, I hope, fulfil this purpose, and I would be more than happy if this project were to spark off a wider and more detailed debate. Most emphatically, these publications are not intended to close, but rather to open the discussion.

Needless to say, the blame for any omissions and shortcomings is due to me – and possibly in some cases to the authors – only.

Berlin, in October 2019
Rupert Graf Strachwitz

