16.5 RAPPORT 4 – DEPUTATE EKUMENISITEIT BINNELANDS – VRYE GEREFORMEERDE KERKE IN SUID-AFRIKA (VGK) (Art 171)

16.5 REPORT 4 – DEPUTIES ECUMENICITY INLAND – FREE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA (FRCSA) (Art 171)

A. Dr JA Erasmus stel die Rapport.
Dr JA Erasmus tables the Report.

B. Die Rapport word staande die Sinode afgehandel.
The Report is concluded while the Synod is in session.

C. **RAPPORT / REPORT**

1. Opdrag (Acta 2018:322, 3.1.1)	**1. Mandate (Acta 2018; 322, 3.1.1)**
1.1 Die te benoeme Deputate kry opdrag om voort te gaan met die gesprekvoering met die VGKSA.	1.1 The to be appointed Deputies are instructed to continue deliberations with the FRCSA.
Besluit: Kennis geneem.	**Decision: Noted.**
2. Sake waarvan die Sinode kennis neem	**2. Matters that the Synod takes note of**
2.1 *Uitvoering van opdrag* Agtergrond	2.1 *Fulfilment of task* Background
2.1.1 Gesprekke tussen die VGKSA en die GKSA word reeds sedert die begin 1950's gevoer.	2.1.1 Deliberations between the FRCSA and GKSA have been going on since the start of the 1950s.
2.1.2 In 2008 vra die GKSA aan die VGKSA wat in die weg staan van eenheid tussen die kerkgemeen-skappe.	2.1.2 In 2008 the GKSA enquired from the FRCSA what was standing in the way of unity between the two denominations.
2.1.3 In die jare hierna word indringend besin oor sake wat eenheid in weg staan.	2.1.3 Since then the matters standing in the way of unity have been seriously considered.
2.1.4 Sedert Sinode 2018 het die Deputate op 16 Oktober 2019 gesprek gevoer met Deputate van die VGKSA.	2.1.4 Subsequent to Synod 2018 the deputies met with the Deputies of the FRCSA on 16 October 2019.
2.1.5 Die VGKSA se Sinode het vergader van 12-16 April 2021 en ds Coen Vrey het namens die GKSA 'n groeteboodskap oorgedra.	2.1.5 Rev. Coen Vrey conveyed greetings on behalf of the GKSA at the FRCSA's Synod held 12-16 April 2021.
2.1.6 Tydens hierdie Sinode neem die VGKSA sekere besluite rakende die voortgang en aard van die nasionale gesprek. Die besluit van die VGKSA Sinode 2021 insake die nasionale gesprek lui as volg: *5. To continue deliberations between deputies at a national level, but to inform RCSA deputies that the following three issues form stumbling blocks in achieving unity:* *a. The Memorandum of Ecumenical Relationship with the DRCSA;* *b. Allowing women to the office*	2.1.6 During this Synod the FRCSA made certain decisions related to the continuation and nature of national deliberations. The decisions reached at the FRCSA Synod 2021 pertaining to national deliberations are as follows: *5. To continue deliberations between deputies at a national level, but to inform RCSA deputies that the following three issues form stumbling blocks in achieving unity:* *a. The Memorandum of Ecumenical Relationship with the DRCSA.* *b. Allowing women to the office of*

of deacon, without distinguishing their position from how the diaconal office is defined in the Belgic Confession (Art 30) as set forth in the CO; *c. The acceptance of the Cloete versifications of the Psalms.* ***Grounds:*** *6. National deliberations are:* *a. To stay informed about developments in each other's federations and matters of mutual interest.* *b. After appeals have been turned down by consecutive Synods, it appears that the decisions on the three matters are here to stay.*	*deacon, without distinguishing their position from how the diaconal office is defined in the Belgic Confession (Art 30) as set forth in the CO;* *c. The acceptance of the Cloete versifications of the Psalms.* ***Grounds:*** *6. National deliberations are:* *a. To stay informed about developments in each other's federations and matters of mutual interest.* *b. After appeals have been turned down by consecutive Synods, it appears that the decisions on the three matters are here to stay.*
<u>Plaaslike kerke se kontak groei</u>	<u>Local churches' contact grows</u>
2.1.7 Wat wel opmerklik is, is dat die plaaslike gesprekke tussen kerke vanuit die VGKSA en die GKSA goed ontwikkel.	2.1.7 It is worth noting that the discussions between local churches of the FRCSA and GKSA are developing well.
2.1.8 Plaaslike gesprekke toon op die oog af elkeen egter 'n eie tendens: - Die Pretoria-gesprek ontwikkel sodanig dat daar gekyk word na 'n eie tipe meerdere vergadering. - Die Kaapstad-gesprek ontwikkel sodanig dat daar – met behoud en erkenning van verskille – akkommoderend saamgewerk word in die uitlewing van eenheid . - Die Johannesburg-gesprek kom tans eers van die grond af	2.1.8 Local deliberations, however, seem to be following their own trends: - The Pretoria deliberations are developing to the extent that an own major assembly is being considered. - The Cape Town deliberations are developing to the extent that there is accommodating collaboration in the practical application of unity – duly acknowledging and maintinaing differences. - The Johannesburg deliberations are only just starting.
2.1.9 In plaaslike gesprekke is daar baie stimuli om die nasionale gesprek verder te vat.	2.1.9 The progress in local deliberations is enough to stimulate progress on national level.
2.1.10 Op 1 September 2022 ontmoet die Deputate met Deputate van die VGKSA. Die gesprek is gevoer met 'n duidelike fokus om uit die gestolde "*hieroor-verskil-ons-stilstand"* te probeer beweeg na "*Hoe gaan ons konstruktief verder met mekaar?"*	2.1.10 The Deputies met with Deputies of the FRCSA on 1 September 2022. The discussion centred on moving away from the "this-is-how-we-differ impasse" to "how are we going to have a constructive discussion?"
2.1.11 Tydens die gesprek het die Deputate van die VGKSA wel – soos die opdrag deur hulle Sinode gegee is – aan die Deputate van die GKSA aangedui dat die drie sake in pad van eenheid staan, maar hulle vertrekpunt as Deputate was om werklik verder te wil gaan in gesprek	2.1.11 During the deliberations the Deputies of the FRCSA – upon instruction of their Synod – indicated to the Deputies of the GKSA that there are three issues in the way of unity, but that they truly wish to engage in discussion and find a way.

en dat ons ‘n pad moet vind.	
2.1.12 Die voorstel vanaf die VGKSA was spesifiek om aandag te gee aan moontlike terreine van samewerking, soos: - Kerkverband – dat ons steeds daaroor sal praat - Teologiese Opleiding - Kerkorde - Sending, kerkplanting - Toetsing van 2020-vertaling - Sending/liturgie – waaroor reeds gesprekke plaasvind	2.1.12 The FRCSA’s suggestion was to specifically attend to possible areas of cooperation, such as: - Denomination – to continue discussions - Theological training - Church order - Mission, church planting - Testing of 2020 translation - Mission/liturgy – which are already being discussed
2.1.13 In die gesprekke tussen die GKSA en die VGKSA moet die eenheid in leer, diens en tug steeds die uiteindelike fokus wees, maar die pad moet geleidelike gestap word waarop daar steeds ‘n groter belewing van die eenheid in Christus wat reeds bestaan, na vore kom – om so ook groter vertroue te vorm.	2.1.13 The discussions between the GKSA and FRCSA must focus on unity in doctrine, service and discipline, but it should be gradual process where the experience of growing unity in Christ leads to growing trust.
2.1.14 Uit die gespek van 1 September 2022, is ‘n vergadering gereël vir 27 Oktober 2022 wat by Die Kandelaar gemeente plaasgevind het.	2.1.14 The meeting of 1 September 2022 gave rise to another on 27 October 2022, held at Die Kandelaar congregation.
2.1.15 By dié vergadering is daar gehoor hoe die GKSA en VGKSA gemeentes in die Kaap saamwerk en ook hoe die GKSA en VGKSA gemeentes in Pretoria saamwerk.	2.1.15 The meeting heard how GKSA and FRCSA congregations in the Cape as well as in Pretoria are collaborating.
2.1.16 Binne die moontlike terreine van samewerking op nasionale vlak en die samewerking wat reeds tussen plaaslike gemeentes plaasvind, het ons die geleentheid om daadwerklik verder te besin oor ons ekumeniese verhouding en om te midde van verskille, konstruktief die pad verder te stap.	2.1.16 Given the possible areas of cooperation on national level and the collaboration already taking place in local congregations, we have the opportunity to seriously consider our ecumenical relationship and to follow constructively move forward, despite our differences.
Besluit: Punte 2.1 tot 2.1.16 kennis geneem.	**Decision: Points 2.1 to 2.1.16 noted.**
3. Sake waaroor die Sinode besluit	**3. Matters that the Synod decides on**
3.1 *Aanbevelings (Opdragte aan te benoeme Deputate)*	3.1 *Recommendations (Instructions to the to be appointed Deputies)*
3.1.1 Die te benoeme Deputate kry opdrag om voort te gaan met die gesprekvoering met die VGKSA.	3.1.1 The to be appointed Deputies should be instructed to continue deliberating with the FRCSA.
Besluit: Goedgekeur.	**Decision: Approved.**