

Conference of European Churches  
Governing Board  
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Public Issues Proposal

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**Act now for a future with hope**

*Conference of European Churches statement on COP24 and a sustainable future*

Climate change is a serious threat to our future. Conference of European Churches (CEC) welcomes a growing engagement of decision makers, as well as many initiatives among the churches and elsewhere responding to climate challenge. We believe much more needs to be done. The CEC calls for ambitious and immediate action from governments of individual countries and the European Union, as well as from individuals, enterprises and other public institutions to step up efforts to address climate change.

The recent [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\) report](#) urges rapid, far-reaching, and unprecedented action to limit global warming to no more than 1.5°C. Individually and collectively we must reduce our environmental impact and rapidly transition to a low-carbon economy with a more just distribution of resources. As a disproportionately high contributor to climate change, Europe and the European Union have a special responsibility in this regard. The people of Europe expect joint and committed action.

As people of faith, we believe that responding to climate change and our hope for a sustainable life are linked to our ethical choices. Efforts for reduction of our carbon footprints have to start from acknowledgment of our individual responsibilities. This includes our own commitment in CEC. A lifestyle and economy that do not respect the world around us are not sustainable. We need to acknowledge mistakes of the past and reverse the attitude to creation from dominance and misuse to more stewardship and respect.

What is at stake is not only our future but the future of those living elsewhere and suffer from our consumption choices and lifestyle. Disproportionately, the impacts of climate change are felt by those who are most vulnerable but who contributed least to the problem. This will include future generations; those yet to come. Climate change needs to be addressed as an issue of justice.

In supporting the recent statement of [the European Christian Environmental Network \(ECEN\)](#) we underline the need to work together with hope for the future. Science can tell us what is happening; faith tells us why we must respond. We call upon governments of individual countries, the European Union and political decision makers to:

- Act accordingly: commit to reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions to align with the IPCC report target of global warming of no more than 1.5 °C.

- Work for a sustainable future and establish adequate mechanisms to support the most vulnerable. This includes allocating in a transparent way finance to address loss and damage caused by climate change in vulnerable parts of the world; to support implementation of sustainable development goals, to intensify efforts for energy saving and renewable energy production; and to promote an economy of sustainable production and consumption.
- In anticipation of the forthcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24) in Katowice we call for a visible and determined action plan with a clear time frame and commitment from all involved parties. We call for measures to develop trust to help overcome the obstacles to reach an agreement on a meaningful joint action.

We encourage CEC member churches:

- continue and intensify efforts to bring about a more sustainable and equitable lifestyle in parishes and church communities across the continent; to respect creation, promote a just transition to a low carbon economy, act for intergenerational justice, share best practices among churches on these issues and work as much as possible together.
- engage in advocacy and dialogue with political decision makers to express our concerns and to urge increased action in response to climate change.
- develop theological resources on care for creation, engage in this work in an open ecumenical spirit; that address the crisis and promise a vision of a more just and sustainable future.

Effective response to the threat of climate change requires a long-term effort, commitment and a profound transformation. Achieving this demands endurance. When grounded in faith it leads to a hope that cannot disappoint as “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”