

Conference of European Churches
Governing Board

Brussels, 20 – 22 November 2019

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<u>Topic:</u>	ECEN Assembly 2020: Reconciled with creation - a call for urgent action on climate and biodiversity
<u>Agenda Item:</u>	15
Staff in charge:	Peter Pavlovic
<u>Recommendation:</u>	<i>For information and comments</i>
<u>Annex:</u>	Not applicable
<u>Earlier docs:</u>	Not applicable

Conference of European Churches

1. Title

ECEN Assembly 2020: 'Reconciled with creation - a call for urgent action on climate and biodiversity'

2. Responsible

European Christian Environmental Network
Peter Pavlovic

3. Background

European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) is a network working closely with CEC and in a partnership with the World Council of Churches (WCC), as well as Council of Roman Catholic Bishop Conferences in Europe (CCEE). ECEN usually organises an international Assembly every two years. The last Assembly, which brought together delegates and experts from 23 countries in Europe, took place in 2018 in Katowice, Poland. ECEN Assemblies offer a broad ecumenical platform for cooperation and sharing among representatives from Anglican, Orthodox, Protestant and Roman-Catholic churches.

Climate change and sustainable development have become defining challenges of the early decades of the 21st century. The report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) from October 2018 highlighted an unprecedented speed and far-reaching impacts of climate change. Political efforts addressing climate change and sustainable development, incl. Paris climate accord, outcomes of annual COPs, efforts of UN, EU and many individual countries are mounting up.

Pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and response to climate change are linked to an ethical dimension and broader questions of a sustainable future. Churches and faith communities have been increasingly aware of these challenges. Churches in Europe are more and more engaged in responding to multifaceted impacts of climate change, efforts for sustainable future and avoiding ecological destruction. In their approach, they unite an emphasis on spiritual and ethical aspects with diverse practical activities, which faith communities are often engaged in at grassroots levels in communities across the continent. Care of creation, in the form of numerous projects has become in recent years a visible part of environmental awareness of churches work in Europe. The task of exchange of experience and mutual support is in these efforts more important than ever before.

An essential aspect of the ECEN 2020 Assembly will be relating work of European churches in ecology and care for creation to the 2021 Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Karlsruhe. Partnership and close cooperation between ECEN and WCC have been successfully developing for years. The WCC Assembly in Europe, the first after more than 5 decades, offers a unique opportunity for manifesting close link and support of

European churches to the Assembly in many ways. ECEN has the ambition to emphasise this link in highlighting joint efforts of churches in Europe and WCC in works on care for creation and ecological justice, and through the conference contribute to a meaningful way leading to the WCC Assembly 2021.

The theme of the WCC Assembly 'Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity,' offers a thematic frame for the ECEN 2020 Assembly. This will be further developed in the programme of ECEN event, in which be highlighted in particular efforts of churches for development sustainable development practices and governance supporting these practices. Detailed programme of the Assembly will be developed in coordination with WCC, in particular, WCC working group on climate change.

The ECEN Assembly will further offer a space for sharing and exchange of experience among activities of churches in addressing ecological challenges and in efforts for care for creation and sustainable development, as well as a space for elaborating theological aspects of this engagement. The timing of the Assembly will enable to highlight in a joint celebration the Day of creation, 1st September, that is respected and celebrated in increasing number of churches across the continent.

Aims/Objectives

Aims of the ECEN Assembly are:

- Offer space for sharing and exchange of environmental action in the churches in Europe and the world, and to intensify work of churches in Europe and cooperation with partners;
- Underline the ethical, spiritual and theological dimension of the environmental engagement of the churches;
- Highlight an effort of churches for a global coordinated action on climate change and sustainable development and support of theme of sustainable development and ecological justice in WCC Assembly 2021 in Karlsruhe;
- Provide churches with guidance and support in their environmental work, and to develop their capacity for networking, cooperation and joint action.

4. Local partners

Evangelical Landeskirche Baden

5. Time and Venue

Time: 29 August - 2 September 2020

Venue: Evangelical Academy Bad Herrenalb, Germany

6. Participants

The Assembly will gather up to 100 delegates from churches (CEC Member Churches and Roman Catholic Church) in Europe and their guest from other continents involved in protection of environment and care for creation

7. Expected outcome

- Deepening the awareness of ecumenical cooperation, networking and coordination of churches' programmes on addressing climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Reinforcement of awareness of ethics, theology and the role of churches in addressing ecological disruption and efforts for sustainable development.
- Highlighting the theme of sustainable development and ecological justice and role of the churches in addressing these challenges in view of the upcoming WCC Assembly 2021 in Karlsruhe.
- Strengthening a common platform for sharing among churches in Europe in view of joint churches' action on care for creation in concrete partnership programmes.

11. Tentative Budget

45 000Euro