

Climate change is a matter for all

The Conference of European Churches acknowledges steps forward in response to climate change and calls for continuing and further intensified action

The Conference of European Churches welcomes progress achieved through the Paris Agreement on climate change, which came into effect on 4 November 2016. We are encouraged by modest but solid advances throughout the negotiations leading to this agreement and the continuing work of implementation at the recent United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP22) in Marrakesh.

A positive spirit marked these negotiations, which demonstrated the willingness of an increasing number of states across the world to work together in looking for a constructive global response to climate change. We were encouraged as well to note a growing openness of states to enter into dialogue with non-state actors and civil society. Climate change is a matter for all.

Climate change is a moral and ethical challenge that goes beyond denominational and religious differences. Faith communities must play a clear role in responding to widespread ecological devastation and building up sustainable communities. This action is stronger when we work together. CEC welcomes such efforts in Marrakesh under the leadership of the World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, and ACT Alliance. Through these bodies, the European churches, including CEC and the European Christian Environmental Network were represented.

In response to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and outcomes of COP22 in Marrakesh, the Conference of European Churches calls on the European Union to commit to further action. This includes strengthening already existing commitments on reducing greenhouse gases and increasing use of renewable energy. We also encourage the EU and European states to promote policies favouring divestment from fossil fuels and contributing a fair amount of finance supporting vulnerable countries in their adaptation to climate change. The window of opportunity for urgent action must not be lost.

The Conference of European Churches calls on churches in Europe and Christians everywhere to join in our common struggle for climate justice. We acknowledge and feel encouraged that many churches have already adopted environmental strategies aimed at saving energy and promoting renewable energy and divestment from fossil fuels. We encourage our membership to build upon these good examples.

Climate change, sustainable development, and care for creation are intertwined with our Christian faith. It is part of our responsibility to be good stewards of this world and carrying out the Christian mission in it. Effective response to climate change and the building up of a sustainable global society begins with each of us.