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Greetings: Rev. Walter Lüssi, OIKOSNET



General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches

31 May – 6 June 2018, Novi Sad, Serbia

“You shall be my witnesses” Acts 1:8

Honourable participants of this General Assembly of CEC, brothers and sisters in Christ

My name is Walter Lüssi, I come from Switzerland, I'm a member of the Reformed Church but here as President and on behalf of the board of Oikosnet Europe, a partnerorganisation of CEC.

I speak in English.

Let me first briefly introduce Oikosnet Europe: Oikosnet Europe is a network of some 40 Christian academies and laity centres in Europe. Today the member organisations represent Churches of the Reformation, Catholic and Orthodox Confessions from 18 countries in Europe.

The history of the organisation dates back to the year 1955. It was 1955 when the director of the Sigtuna Foundation in Sweden, Olov Hartman, and the director of the German Academy Bad Boll, Eberhard Müller, came up with the idea to establish a European association, later called Oikosnet Europe.

During the last years the main focus for common projects of our network have been religion and democracy, social development, ecumenical formation, sustainability, migration and gender issues.

In March 2017 the Board of Oikosnet Europe released a public statement on the Future of Europe called "For a Europe in Conviviality – A Europe of and for the people – Just and Participatory". – I would like to point out to you that many of our



members deal especially with the European question. As a European association, we are affected by related developments and it is our responsibility to contribute to constructive responses through our expertise and with other civil society actors.

We decided to put the issue of Europe to the forefront. The members of Oikosnet Europe will meet for the Annual Conference in September this year. It will take place in the Orthodox Academy of Crete and its main theme will be ... we call it: "Europe with different eyes: The case of Greece for example". Beside this we brought on the way a project in which different member organisations deal in a joint cooperation with the role of religion in the media. And at the conference in September we will also present a new project named "Strengthening civil society, deliberative discourses and democratic structures in Europe". I'm looking very much forward meeting there again Bishop Ioannis Sakellariou.

I focus on this issue because I can see in this days how eager the member churches of CEC deal with the problems of our time and how seriously you as delegates are engaged with the future of the Christian faith on the continent and with the spiritual progress of the peoples of Europe.

Please take also advantage of our expertise. Make use of it. Found ways and forms how we can be a more active and substantial part of your own process. As different as the centres and academies of Oikosnet Europe might be today, they are all joined in their belief that as a faith based organisation there is a need to act out responsibility for society and living together peacefully and that real and deep exchanges and education in different ways is important to achieve this.

I thank CEC for its own hospitality and I thank all of you for your attention.

2018, June 5

Rev. Walter Lüssi, President of Oikosnet Europa