

## THE CHURCHES AND FAITH COMMUNITIES OF EUROPE HAVE A ROLE AND A VOICE IN RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Press release

The 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly of European Christian Environmental Network concluded in Balatonszarszo (Hungary) on 30 September, 2014.

More than 100 delegates and guests from 24 countries, engaged in works on care for creation, attended the Assembly under the theme of *'Energy and Climate Change - the Churches' Role and Voice'* offered a place for discussion, worships and sharing of the churches' concerns related to climate change and energy use.

The meeting paid particular attention to Creation time, which is celebrated from 1 September until mid-October in many churches across Europe. Worship service, in the presence of church leaders from Hungary, emphasising this topic, formed a special part of the Assembly programme.

The Assembly adopted a letter to the churches in Europe which highlights: *'We are called to act locally with a global outlook. As churches and faith communities we are called to care for our neighbour and our neighbour is every living creature in God's creation. We call upon the churches and church leaders across Europe to respond to the spiritual and practical crisis of climate change.'*

*"Time is limited. Nations of the world will meet at the United Nations Climate Negotiations in Paris in December 2015. People all over the world are hoping for a fair, ambitious and binding new treaty as one way to overcome the climate threat. People of faith are making a pilgrimage, both real and metaphorical, towards this date. Get involved, learn, pray and take action to help bring about a successful outcome."*

In the separate letter to the EU, in view of expected upcoming decisions on future EU climate policy, the Assembly urges the Union to step up its ambition in reducing CO2 emissions, energy saving efforts and promotion of renewable energy. It also encourages the Union to play an active role in the UN climate negotiations leading to the COP meeting in Paris next year.

The EU is urged to consider the use of fossil fuels, the major driver contributing to climate change, and to outline policies for disinvestment in fossil fuels.

Taking into account the different views of participants on the use of nuclear energy, the Assembly outlined a process for continuing discussions and clarifying divergences in positions in the follow-up process, which includes a separate consultation on this theme next year.

In taking inspiration from the motivating presentation by Bishop James Jones from Church of England the Assembly emphasised: *'We pray as a community of faith. We listen to each other and we share our fears but we also share our hopes; fears for the foreseeable impact of climate change and hopes for the possibilities of change and a renewed world.'*

*Follow the example of Our Lord and pray that God's will be done on earth as it is heaven.*

*Holy Jesus*

*Child of Adam*

*Come in Glory*

*And renew the face of the Earth*

*European Christian Environmental Network is closely linked to the Conference of European Churches. It provides a Europe-wide platform for cooperation of Churches in responding to challenges in taking care for creation. The Conference of European Churches demonstrates through its activities its engagement with work on the environment.*