

Europe Be Faithful for Our Common Home

As the global energy crisis and conflicts are highlighting once again our continent's vulnerability, we call on the European Union (EU) to be faithful to its founding values on human dignity and human rights, and set courageous goals to safeguard the present and the future. We demand just climate action that protects the most vulnerable now and secures the rights of future generations, including the phasing out of fossil fuels.

Since its foundation almost 70 years ago, Europe has been a leader in protecting human rights. Since the 1970s, Europe has led the way on climate and environmental action, including through the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. It has shown that change guided by the pursuit of the common good is not only possible, but essential: phasing out coal, starting to make polluters accountable, and establishing ambitious new frameworks such as the European Green Deal.

Despite the many global crises we face, this must not obscure the urgent need to stop climate breakdown by continuing on the path of greenhouse gas emissions reduction. Europe faces a stark choice: lead the phase-out of fossil fuels, or side with the most polluting companies responsible for half of global carbon emissions.¹

We express our deep concern that the EU is currently dismantling its own legislation and turning its back on its role as a global climate leader. Too often, 'simplification' has led to deregulation, for instance, through the ongoing 'Omnibus' legislation²: delaying climate commitments, increasing fossil fuel dependence, weakening due diligence, and cutting social and environmental safeguards.

We raise our voices against injustice and stand in solidarity with those fleeing violence and suffering from the impacts of the climate crisis, extractivism and conflicts fuelled by fossil fuel dependence. The EU must remember the values and principles of its founders: protecting human rights and preserving peace. To this end, decisive action to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels is vital.

Care for our common home: A moral imperative

In recent years, faith leaders representing the world's major religions have been united in calling on the international community to urgently respond to the climate crisis and protect our common home.³ In Genesis, humanity is called to "till and to keep the Garden" (Gen. 2:15).

For Christians, care for creation is not optional, rather it is "essential to a life of virtue" (*Laudato Si'*, 217).⁴ Today, reading the "signs of the times" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 4) and the Christian commandment to "love one another" (Jn 13:34) leads us to ask: What does it mean to love one's neighbour at a time of deepening ecological crisis, which disproportionately impacts the poorest?

We must address urgent moral questions about responsibility, accountability, and the structures that perpetuate harm. Pope Francis warned that "technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels [...] needs to be progressively replaced without delay" (*Laudato Si'*, 165). To continue expanding fossil fuel production, which would devastate so many lives and livelihoods, is to perpetuate what Pope John Paul II names as "the structures of sin" (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 36) — in other words, the social,

economic and political systems that are rooted in a “desire for excessive profit” (ibid, 47) and which spread injustice.

Pope Leo XIV, in his message to COP30, spoke for the most vulnerable: “To them, climate change is not a distant threat, and to ignore these people is to deny our shared humanity.”⁵ We know that communities vulnerable to climate change are to be found not only in the Global South but also in Europe, including older people at risk from extreme heat, the homeless, farmers whose crops are destroyed by more frequent and intense droughts, floods and storms, women and children, people with underlying health conditions, people living in energy poverty and those most affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

To be faithful in Europe means upholding the dignity of every human being, the intrinsic value of all creation, and acting with courage and urgency in the face of ecological crisis. It means a just, rapid transition away from fossil fuels to a renewables-based, circular economy to protect our common home.

European faith communities call for action

Inspired by the imperative to care for creation and united with the recent Manifesto of Bishops of the Global South⁶, we, European faith communities, together with all people of goodwill, call for action. Following the first conference on fossil fuel phase-out with significant European involvement, **we urge EU leaders to respond to the overwhelming majority of its citizens supporting stronger climate action⁷ and:**

- **Immediately end all exploration for fossil fuels and rapidly phase out coal, oil and gas extraction**, as the International Energy Agency has said is necessary.⁸ **End permits for new fossil fuel infrastructure**, which is expensive and risky. Reject false solutions such as unproven carbon removal technologies and international carbon credits.
- **Develop a strategy to end the EU’s fossil fuel dependence** and phase out coal by 2030, gas by 2035 and oil by 2040. Establish an EU-wide roadmap to phase out fossil fuel production, import and consumption, aligned with science and equity, and integrate these targets and timelines into its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).
- **Stop fossil fuel subsidies and introduce a permanent tax on the profits of fossil fuel companies**. Direct revenues from fossil fuel profit taxes into the energy transition, including support for targeted consumer protection measures to guarantee vulnerable households and firms the right to energy, while also encouraging energy savings.
- **Prioritise funding for a socially just transition within the next EU budget** (Multiannual Financial Framework), in accordance with the ‘do no significant harm’ principle.⁹ Massively scale up investment in energy efficiency, electrification and renewable energy, respecting the rights of indigenous people and local communities. Save resources by strongly supporting decentralisation and sufficiency,¹⁰ and implement the Social Climate Fund. Ensure a just transition for workers, economic diversification, strong social protection, and inclusive social dialogue.
- **Support a global fossil fuel phase-out by providing ambitious and accessible climate finance** in the form of grants rather than loans, while increasing funding for adaptation and loss and damage. Free up resources for the Global South to invest in climate action by cancelling unsustainable debts and supporting just taxation, including through visionary engagement in the UN Tax Convention negotiations.

Europe's historical responsibility and opportunity

As the first continent to embrace the fossil-fuel-powered economy, Europe holds a historic duty and opportunity to lead the transition to a new era away from fossil fuels. The welfare of every person is at stake. We are already facing the first signs of climate chaos and our children will continue to see worse impacts yet, unless we urgently end fossil fuels.

You have the unprecedented responsibility to choose the path of courage, peace and the common good.

As Pope Leo XIV said: "God will ask us if we have cultivated and cared for the world that he created... What will be our answer?"¹¹

We assure you of our prayers in your important mission, look forward to further dialogue and are ready to work with you towards a future where everyone can flourish.

Signatories:

Laudato Si' Movement

Caritas Europa

CIDSE

Jesuit European Social Centre (JESC)

Justice & Peace Europe

New Humanity of the Focolare Movement

Pax Christi International

Jesuit Refugee Service Europe

European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN)

Initiative of Christians for Europe (IXE)

Together for Europe

Quaker Council for European Affairs

International Federation of Catholic Parochial Youth Movements (FIMCAP)

World Student Christian Federation in Europe

Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe

Andante Europa (European Alliance of Catholic Women's Organisations)

UISG-USG Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES), Jesuits, General Curia/Rome (JPIC)

EcoOne

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Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania, Romania

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CCFD-Terre Solidaire, France

Secours Catholique - Caritas France, France

Entraide et Fraternité, Belgium

FEC - Faith and Cooperation Foundation, Portugal
FOCSIV, Italy
KOO, Austria
Trócaire, Ireland
Christian Aid Ireland, Ireland
Caritas Danmark, Denmark
Caritas Sverige, Sweden
Justice et Paix France, France
Justice and Peace Denmark, Denmark
Justice and Peace Synodal Commission Greece, Greece
National Commission for Justice and Peace, Portugal
Spanish Commission for Justice and Peace, Spain
Netzwerk Eine Erde - Das ökumenische Netzwerk, Germany
Association of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI), Ireland
AGESCI - Association of Italian Catholic Guides and Scouts, Italy
Christian Associations of Italian Workers (ACLI), Italy
International ACLI Federation, Italy
Community of the Diaconate in Italy, Italy
Fondazione Lanza, Italy
Italian Catholic Action, Italy
Union of Major Superiors of Italy, Italy
Italian Catholic Scout Movement for Adults (MASCI), Italy
Association of Salesian Cooperators - Italy/Malta/Middle East Region, Italy and Malta
VIS - International Volunteering for Development, Italy
Pax Christi Italy, Italy
Pope John XXIII Community Association, Italy
Ecclesial Movement for Cultural Commitment (MEIC), Italy
Christian Life Community (CVX Italy), Italy
Movimento Rinascita Cristiana, Italy
Aggiornamenti Sociali, Italy
ASCS - Scalabrinian Agency for Development Cooperation, Italy
Scalabrinian Foundation, Italy
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Jesuit French-speaking Province of Western Europe (France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Greece)
Euro-Mediterranean Province of the Jesuits (Italy, Malta and Romania)
Jesuits in the European Low Countries (Flanders/Belgium and the Netherlands)
Franciscan Friars (Order of Friars Minor) - France and Belgium Province
Salesians of Don Bosco, France/Belgium South Province
French Province of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans), France
Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco, France-Belgium Province
Society of Helpers, France-Belgium Province

Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary, France-Switzerland Province
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Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Hub of the Vedruna Province Europe, Spain and Italy
Knock Shrine, Ireland
Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, Ireland
Casa Velha, Portugal
Centre Avec, Belgium
Action Vivre Ensemble, Belgium
Centre for Research and Social Action (CERAS), France
Chrétien Unis pour la Terre, France
Fondacio International, France
Fondacio France, France
Lutte et Contemplation, France
Action Catholique des Milieux Indépendants (ACI), France
Mouvement Chrétien des Retraités, France
Eccleria (formerly Christian Movement of Executives), France
Lay Fraternity of Charles de Foucauld, France
Académie pour une Écologie Intégrale, France
National Coordination Team of the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) France, France
Laudato Si' Network - CVX France (CLC), France
Espérer pour le vivant (Hope for the Living), France
Oeko-logia, France
Economy of Francesco France Hub, France
horizont3000 - NGO for Development Cooperation, Austria
ARGE Schöpfungsverantwortung, Austria
Missionsprokur St. Gabriel International of the Steyler Missionaries, Austria
Christians for Future, Germany

Christliche Initiative Klimagerechtigkeit, Germany
Laudato Si'-Netzwerk (Laudato Si' Network in German-speaking countries), Germany and Austria
Ukama Centre Nuremberg, Germany
Eco Congregation Ireland, Ireland
Don Bosco Aid, Ireland
Misean Cara, Ireland
EcoQuakers Ireland, Ireland
Naphimnusz/Canticle of the Sun Association, Hungary
Laudato Si' Intercultural Association, Luxembourg
Eco-social Platform Laudato Si' Málaga, Spain
Welthaus Graz, Austria
Welthaus Vorarlberg, Austria
Centre Hélène et Jean Bastaire, France
Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession, Hermannstadt/Sibiu, Romania
Žít Laudato si' Česká republika (Live Laudato Si' Czech Republic), Czech Republic

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