european christian **environmental** network

European Christian Environmental Network
Structure and Organisation

(1) INTRODUCTION

(1.1)In recent years it has become increasingly clear that the European churches need to collaborate more closely on environmental issues. Ecological threats transcend national boundaries and are often best addressed by joint efforts, in addition to the ongoing work on local issues. In June 1997, the Second European Ecumenical Assembly (EEA2) in Graz (Austria) gave explicit substance to this need for a common witness in adopting the recommendation (5.4) "that network of persons with environmental responsibilities" within the churches should be set up at a European level.

(1.2) From 21-25 October 1998, 60 people gathered at the Orthodox Academy of Vilemov in the Czech Republic in order to implement this recommendation. They came from 24 countries in both eastern and western Europe, representing Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican and Roman-Catholic churches. The Conference of European Churches provided support and organisational assistance. The participants agreed the urgent need for increased collaboration and unanimously decided to found a network, under the name European Christian Environmental Network.

(1.3) In 1999, ECEN proposed that the period from September 1 to the second Sunday of October be observed as a period of celebration of the Creator and Creation. Its advocacy helped secure the initiative's endorsement at the 2007 European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu. We have continued to engage in the development of the Season of Creation.

(1.4) The network engages in regular activities with its members (Assemblies, Working-Coalitions, sustained communication). Each member of the network remains independent. No member can speak on behalf of the network. Joint activities depend on the initiative and consent of the members. To be effective, the network must be able to count on the commitment of its members.

(1.5) After being hosted by the CEC office from 1998, the network was given a legal basis by the creation of an "Association to Support ECEN" in January 2025. The statutes of this charity were built consistently with the present constitution. They exclusively reflect the purpose of ECEN and give it the necessary tools to achieve its aims. The Association to Support ECEN is mandated by ECEN to receive the financial contributions.

(2) AIMS

The aims of the ECEN are to work towards the development of sustainability at all levels, community, regional, national and European. This embraces not only the ecological, but also the social, spiritual, political and economic dimension of life. It seeks to do this by:

- promoting environmental responsibility based on our Christian faith
- pooling information and expertise
- encouraging and supporting members in developing practical actions
- raising ecological awareness and commitment of the European churches for example on ecotheology and ecospirituality
- analysing social and political implications of environmental issues and promoting joint activities to address them
- identifying environmental issues arising at the European level and suggesting to the churches ways of dealing with them
- encouraging the dialogue on environmental issues among the different regions of Europe

- developing global links with similar international networks
- stimulating appropriate collaboration with NGOs, interreligious groups and European organisations and institutions.

(3) MEMBERSHIP

(3.1) Membership of ECEN is open to:

- European churches or their ecumenical bodies
- Organisations working on behalf of or in close co-operation with European churches, upon approval of the Assembly

Membership is subject to the payment of fees, the amount of which is to be set at the discretion of each member in accordance with its means. Members are encouraged to mandate a delegate to represent them.

Only delegates of members of ECEN have the right to vote at Assemblies on matters related to the statutes, structure, organisation and priorities of the network. Only delegates of members of the network can be elected as members of the Enabling Team.

Membership requests are considered by the Enabling Team, subject to approval of the Assembly.

(3.2) We welcome individuals as Friends of ECEN. Friends can contribute to the debates but don't have the right to vote.

(3.3) Members and Friends shall respect ECEN's Christian and ecumenical character and seek to recognise the faith shared across Christian traditions. They shall engage with one another in a spirit of mutual respect, openness and dialogue, respecting theological differences and refraining from conduct that undermines ecumenical cooperation.

(4) ASSEMBLIES

(4.1) Members and friends come together at Assemblies of ECEN generally every two years in order to advance the networking process, to reflect on common priorities, to take decisions on the general course and future priorities of the network as well as to elect an Enabling Team.

(4.2) Members as well as friends of the network are invited to Assemblies at least three months before the Assembly takes place. If the number of members and friends wishing to attend exceeds the number of places available, the Enabling Team may select from among the applicants according to regional, confessional, gender criteria and programme priorities.

(4.3) Decisions during business sessions need to be adopted by the majority of votes of the members present. Recommendations put to a vote should take into account regional, confessional and/or gender related sensibilities.

(4.4) The Assembly may produce a short paper for dissemination to ECEN members with any recommendations from the Assembly. The final version of this will be agreed by the first meeting of the Enabling Team following the Assembly.

(4.5) If the Enabling Team deems it appropriate the Assembly may meet 'on line'. This Assembly would be as valid as any 'in person' meeting.

(5) ENABLING TEAM

(5.1) The Assemblies of ECEN elect an Enabling Team, which conducts the work of the network between Assemblies. Its responsibilities include in particular: to keep the network going, to encourage new members to join, to organise and prepare the Assembly, to encourage and facilitate join activities, to co-ordinate the working coalitions, to ensure communication between members and to supervise the website, to supervise the budget of the network.

(5.2) The Enabling Team should have between 6 and 12 members elected by the Assembly, among which a majority of Churche's delegates, and up to 6 additional 6 members to be delegated by the Council of Bishops' Conferences of Europe (CCEE), the Conference of European Churches (CEC), the European Christian Environmental research Network (ECErN),

the European Youth Council in Europe (EYCE), the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), the World Council of Churches (WCC). The list of those organisations may be reviewed on a regular basis.
Its composition must strive to balance confessions, regions and gender, while reflecting a balance between subregional representatives of the network and European-wide or worldwide bodies.
(5.3) The Executive Secretary of the Network and the Communication officer are to be in attendance at the meetings of the Enabling Team.
(5.4) The election of the ECEN Moderator should take place at an Enabling Team meeting, either at the Assembly or at the first meeting of the Enabling Team following an Assembly.
(5.5) The Enabling Team should meet no fewer than four times a year. And usually every two months.
(5.6) The members of the Enabling Team are ex-officio members of the "Association to Support ECEN", which has four trustees: President, Treasurer, Secretary and Trustee. Nominations of the trustees have to be in conformity with French law. They take place in the first meeting of the Enabling Team following the Assembly and ahead of the Annual General Assembly of the Association to Support ECEN.
The Treasurer of the Association to Support ECEN may be invited to the Enabling Team.

(6) WORKING COALITIONS
(6.1) Within the general framework given by the Assembly, the Enabling Team may establish working coalitions (working groups), in which members and associated members work together on specific themes or as specific regions during and between Assemblies.
(6.2) Each coalition has a facilitator, who is responsible for the communication between the members of the coalition, for facilitating the activities of the coalition and for reporting to the Enabling Team and the Assembly.
(6.3) Each Assembly reviews the work of the coalitions.

(7) EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AND COMMUNICATION OFFICER
(7.1) The Enabling Team is responsible for appointing an Executive Secretary and a Communications Officer. Financial or employment responsibilities, if any, are to be managed by the Association Supporting ECEN.
(7.2) The tasks of the Executive Secretary and of the Communication Officer are described in Terms of Reference that may be adapted by the Enabling Team.

(8) BUDGET
(8.1) The budget of ECEN is proposed by the Enabling Team. The accounts are administered and supervised by the "Association to Support ECEN" , which presents it to the Enabling Team.
(8.2) No financial commitments on behalf of ECEN can be made without prior consultation with the trustees of the "Association to Support ECEN".

(9) CONCLUSIONS
(9.1) These statutes were adopted by the ECEN Assembly in Loccum, October 1999 and adapted in Brussels, September 2026, following the creation of the "Association to Support ECEN" .
(9.2) Changes to these statutes can be adopted by a majority of votes of members present at ECEN Assemblies.

Loccum, 29 October 1999 Brussels, 1 September 2026

European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN)