



THE GLOBAL CATHOLIC  
CLIMATE MOVEMENT



## 1. A short presentation of this Reflection Day (what is it about, why the theme, why it is so important for the Church, what are the implication)

COMECE, CCEE, Justice and Peace Europe and Global Catholic Climate Movement organised the *First European Laudato Si' Reflection Day* on the theme of “**Sustainable finance in Europe and the Church**”. The meeting has been held on **6 June 2018 from 10:30 to 16:30** at the COMECE Secretariat in Brussels. As a response to the call for action of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*, representatives of the European Bishops' Conferences and Catholic institutions (dioceses, religious orders, banks, universities and civil society organizations) are invited to reflect and discuss on the role of the Catholic Church in promoting sustainable finance.

### Why the theme?

On 31 January 2018, a High-Level Expert Group on Sustainable Finance (HLEG) has set out strategic recommendations for a financial system that supports sustainable investments. The recommendations of the High-Level Expert from the basis of the action plan on sustainable finance, adopted by the Commission in March 2018, that will be detailed in the occasion of the meeting.

Catholic institutions are leading the fossil fuels divestment movement worldwide ([Catholic Divest Invest Hub](#)). High level catholic institutions joined past divestment announcements; among them €7.5 billion Catholic banks and Caritas Internationalis on April 22, 2018 (Card.Tagle, President of Caritas Internationalis: “*The poor are suffering greatly from the climate crisis and fossil fuels are among the main drivers of this injustice. That is why Caritas Internationalis has decided not to invest in fossil fuels anymore. We encourage our member organizations and other groups or organizations connected to the Church to do the same.*”) and the Belgian Bishops Conference on October 4, 2017 (“*On April 6, 2017, the Belgian bishops signed the Charter for the Good Management of Church Properties, in which they invite church institutions to incorporate ethical criteria into financial investments, that are in line with the Social Teaching of the Church. They associate themselves with the appeal of Ecokerk and Oikocredit to integrate the appeal of the encyclical Laudato Si' into the policy of financial investments... In the coming years, efforts must be made to fully replace investments in exploration and exploitation of fossil fuels with investments in sustainable development, renewable energy and the transition to a low-carbon economy*”).

## **Why it is so important for the Church?**

The Church has recognised for many centuries the call to care for people on the margins of society as key to living out our Mission as followers of Christ. The “preferential option for the poor” is a key driving principle within Catholic Social Teaching, and the desired goal is social and economic justice. Over the last century, a body of teaching has also emerged which reminds us of our responsibility to care for the diversity of life on Earth including the ecological systems that support life as a fundamental concern for Catholics. These recent teachings inform considerations about how people ought to invest their money. In his encyclical, **Laudato Si’: on care for our common home**, released in June 2015, Pope Francis explains in much more detail how ecological destruction is linked to the pursuit for justice. The meeting has constituted an important moment to reflect on the message of the **Laudato Si’** in the occasion of the **3rd anniversary of the release of the Pope Francis’s Encyclical**.

The role of the Church in the promotion of climate justice deserves a particular attention also in the light of the recent document “*Oeconomicae et pecuniariae quaestiones. Considerations for an Ethical Discernment Regarding Some Aspects of the Present Economic-Financial System*”, released by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery For Promoting Integral Human Development. With several references to the Encyclical *Laudato Si’*, the document is clear about the urgent need of “*develop new forms of economy and of finance, with rules and regulations directed towards the enlargement of the common good and respect for human dignity along the lines indicated by the social teachings of the Church.*”

For the first time, the three main networks of the Bishops Conferences in Europe, together with the Global Catholic CLimate Movement, give a unique testimony on how concretely committed is the European Catholic Church in responding to the urgent call launched by Pope Francis for the care of our common home.

## **2. A short presentation of the 4 promoters**

*The Council of the Bishops’ Conferences of Europe (CCEE) encompasses the current 33 European Bishops’ Conferences, represented by their Presidents, the Archbishops of Luxembourg, of the Principality of Monaco, the Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus and the Bishop of Chişinău (Moldova Rep.), the Eparchial Bishop of Mukachevo and the Apostolic Administrator of Estonia. The current President is Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, Archbishop of Genoa; the Vice-Presidents are Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of of Westminster, and Mgr Stanisław Gądecki, Archbishop of Poznań. The CCEE General Secretary is Mgr Duarte da Cunha. The Secretariat is based at St Gallen (Switzerland). [www.ccee.eu](http://www.ccee.eu)*

*COMECE is the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union. It is partnering the political processes of the EU in the areas of relevance to the Episcopates of its*

*Member states. COMECE monitors the activities of the European Union and informs the Episcopates in such matters; and it communicates to the European institutions and authorities the opinions and views of the Episcopates of the EU Member states concerning European integration.*

***Justice and Peace Europe** is a European network of 31 national Justice and Peace Commissions, working for the promotion of justice, peace, respect for human dignity and the care of creation. It contributes to raising awareness of the Catholic social doctrine in the European societies and the European institutions. The creation of the network goes back to 1972. An annual concerted action and an international workshop are key elements of the network activities. During the general assembly in October 2018 in Barcelona the members of Justice and Peace Europe engaged in joint four year strategic work plan “Care for Creation, Justice and Peace”.*

***Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM)** Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) - a coalition of more than 650 Catholic member organizations in all continents that serves the Catholic family worldwide to turn Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si’* encyclical into action for climate justice, by undergoing our own ecological conversion, transforming our lifestyles and calling for bold public policies together with the wider climate movement - recently launched the "Catholic Divest-Reinvest program" as a response to the *Laudato Si’* encyclical, to encourage Catholic institutions to divest from fossil fuel companies and invest only on socially and ethically responsible companies that do not cause harm to people and the environment.*  
[www.catholicclimatemovement.global](http://www.catholicclimatemovement.global)

### **3. The programme of the meeting**

## **Sustainable finance in Europe and the Church**

### **First “Laudato Si”- Reflection Day**

**When:** Wednesday, 6 June 2018

**Where:** COMECE Secretariat, Sq de Meeus 19, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

**Organised by:** Consilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europæ (CCEE)  
Commission of the Bishop’s Conferences of the EU (COMECE)  
Justice and Peace Europe  
Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM)

**Moderators:**

Fr. Luis Okulik – Secretary of the CCEE Commission for Social Pastoral Care

Michael Kuhn – Advisor for Ecology & Sustainability and Education, Culture and Youth policy of COMECE

Stefan Lunte – Secretary General of Justice and Peace Europe

10.30 – 10.45

**Welcome and introduction**

H.E. Mgr. Jean-Claude Hollerich, *Archbishop of Luxembourg, President of COMECE and President of Justice and Peace Europe*

10.45 – 11.45

**Sustainable Finance – a new priority for the European Union**

Ms. Molly Scott Cato, *Member of the European Parliament and rapporteur of the EP report on sustainable finance*

Mr. Martin Spolc, *Head of Unit in the Directorate general FISMA of European Commission, in charge of Sustainable Finance*

11.45 – 12.15

**Coherence in an era of Climate Change: Ethical investment a challenge for the Church**

Ms. Lorna Gold, *Trócaire and Vice Chair of the Global Catholic Climate Movement*

12.30 – 13.00

Laudato Si' Midday Prayer

13.00 – 14.00	Sandwich lunch
14.00 – 15.15	<p><b>Best practices of sustainable finances in the Church</b></p> <p><b>Diocese :</b> Mag. Marlies Hofer - Perktold, <i>Head of the Division for Finances and Controlling, Diocese of Innsbruck, Austria</i></p> <p><b>Bishop’s Conference:</b> Mr. Karel Malfliet, <i>«Ecockerk» Belgium</i></p> <p><b>Religious Order:</b> Sr. Sheila Kinsey, FCJM, <i>Executive Co-secretary of the JPIC Commission of Union of Superior Generals and the International Union of Superior Generals</i></p> <p><b>Catholic Bank:</b> Mr. Andreas Machnik, <i>Paxbank Köln</i></p>
15.15 – 15.45	Comments and questions
15.45 – 16.30	Reflection and Recommendations

## **5. The participants (a few lines concerning who they are, who they represents)**

Representatives of the European Bishops’ Conferences, in particular addressing the persons in charge for environment in the Bishops’ Conferences and the general secretaries. Representatives of Catholic institutions: dioceses, religious orders, banks, universities and civil society organizations.

## **6. The outcomes/results**

The first Laudato Si’ Reflection Day involved representatives of the European Bishops’ Conferences and Catholic movements for a common discernment on these signs of the times to answer the urgent call to action of *Laudato Si*.

The meeting has been the occasion to go in depth with the role of the Catholic Church in promoting sustainable finance. After a formal approval by promoters, the recommendations proposed by speakers and attendees on the theme of “Catholic Church and Sustainable Finance” will also be

presented in the occasion of the International Conference on the 3rd Anniversary of Laudato si' (Vatican City, 5-6 July 2018):

## **7. Informations**

Photos are already online at the following

link: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/comece/albums/72157669833425608>

Feel free to use them as you prefer (please credit **COMECE**).