



Church and Peace

International Office

***Church and Peace - the ecumenical peace church network
of communities, training centres, peace organisations
and peace service agencies in Europe***

Peace building, sustainable development key to Europe's future, says Church and Peace

Schoeffengrund/GERMANY, 7 February 2017 - The European Union must reclaim its origins as a project of peace and reconciliation, Church and Peace has underlined in a response to an invitation from the Conference of European Churches (CEC) to reflect on the current situation in Europe.

Church and Peace is encouraging the European fellowship of churches, national councils of churches and organisations in partnership to advocate for a “radical rethinking of European social and economic policies”.

Peace building and sustainable development need to be at the core if the “European project” is to meet the crucial social, economic and political challenges it is facing, says the European peace church network.

“We would like CEC to urge the EU in line with the founding values to strengthen its peace building capacity, its development assistance, non-violent intervention in conflict situations and work towards just peace in accordance with the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development,” says Church and Peace Chairperson Antje Heider-Rottwilm in the network's response to CEC's [open letter “What future for Europe?”](#).

Heider-Rottwilm names the attempts to build up and strengthen military capacities of the European Union, such as the discussion about creating joint European armed forces distinct from NATO as a chief concern for Church and Peace, an organisation in partnership with CEC.

She points to the particular example of the move to expand the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) - originally geared towards development cooperation, disarmament and non-military conflict prevention - to build military capacity in partner countries in Africa and other regions.

Church and Peace sees the UN [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDG) as the basis to tackle current challenges. The so-called Global Goals, particularly those around peace, justice, development, sustainability and the environment, could provide a transformational framework for EU policies, according to the network.

Placing the SDG agenda at the core of the European political agenda with a comprehensive implementation roadmap would be a way to strengthen a community of shared values, adds Heider-Rottwilm.

“Developing a forward looking transformational policy framework on the basis of the SDG agenda could ... assist in overcoming the present lack of trust of EU citizens in the European project, since it can provide for a new vision, a new civil contract for the future.”

Church and Peace's response to the open letter “What future for Europe?” is a contribution to a broad process of consultation between CEC and its membership leading to the next CEC General Assembly in 2018. The response is available on the [Church and Peace website](#).

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