

## Public Issues Statements

### Climate change and the eco-crisis

The world faces a future defining crisis brought about by human exploitation of the earth and its resources. According to the Judeo-Christian tradition, human beings are responsible for stewarding the material world – dominion, not domination – and remain called to take responsibility for shaping its resources.

Furthermore, the Scriptures also stress the theological imperative of the interconnectedness of all Creation. Every part of creation matters, so this limits anthropocentrism and calls for a better sharing in the community of Creation.

The eco-crisis, caused by climate change and human agency, is immediate and urgent. Climate change is affecting all, but first and foremost, those who have contributed least to its reasons. This leads to insecurities and has impacts on everyday lives of every part of Creation. Responsible stewardship of the earth means taking action now – at every level of society – to dethrone the idol of consumerist growth. The choices become more stark by the day.

CEC urges Christians to lament their own complicity in this, not loving our neighbour as ourself and dominating the earth rather than stewarding it for the sake of present and future generations. But, lament only has value if churches commit to sacrificial action for the sake of the world.

### Migration/Displacement

Migration, including mass migration is not a new phenomenon. The Second World War caused huge population displacements leading to great human misery as flight from persecution did not guarantee safety outside their homeland. The last two decades have created even more displacement. Wars, conflicts and the impact of climate-change (to name but three) have driven some of the world's most vulnerable people to risk everything for the sake of safety and a better future for themselves and their children.

The human cost of this can be seen today in the aftermath of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the civil war in Sudan, Syria and elsewhere. The absence of safe passages has resulted in the deaths of men, women and children in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea along other borders. The search for security is natural for human beings. The yearning for a better future is part of what makes people human. Europe should respond with hospitality. The experience of European countries and their churches in the reception and welcome in the last sixteen months of around six million Ukrainian refugees is encouraging.

Christians heed the call of Jesus Christ to care for the stranger, the neighbour, the other – seeing our own interests tied up with the interests of others. We reject the increasing use of language



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that categorises or dehumanises people on the move. We encourage a use of imaginative language that looks through the eyes of the sufferer and places oneself in their place.

Diversity and difference are to be celebrated. The movement of people can, in safe circumstances, be seen as a gift which blesses communities with the richness of diversity.

CEC calls for churches in Europe (and across the globe) to care for those who suffer, to love their neighbour as themselves, to challenge political rhetoric and behaviour that normalises the suffering of people who have already lost enough ...Churches must be advocates of international standards created after World War II, in particular the 1951 Refugee Convention, and prioritise the generous welcome of those whom God leads to our own homes.

## Ukraine

The illegal and brutal invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation is condemned without reservation. There is no pretext upon which the invasion of an independent country can be justified – politically, legally or morally. CEC stands with the people of Ukraine as they seek to protect their own people and territory. Its territorial integrity must be recognised globally.

The assembly has heard powerful stories of injustice and suffering. We pray together for and with those who suffer from the impacts of this war. We mourn the countless loss of life of women, men, young and old. We mourn the wounds, pain and trauma inflicted. We mourn with those forced to flee their homes and loved ones. We “weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15-18).

We acknowledge the efforts of churches and Christians, among many others, who offered humanitarian assistance, welcome and spiritual care for those affected, and continue to do so.

We have heard steps that need to be taken in order to pave the way towards justice and peace in the future. As a fellowship of churches, we are challenged to discern our role as followers of Christ in loving our enemy and as agents for justice, reconciliation, peace and unity in a time when such notions seem remote.

The threat of nuclear weapons is to be condemned. Human rights abuses – even in the context of war – cannot be excused. Those who launched this war, who propagandise with lies and misinformation, who celebrate violence and domination must be held to account.

CEC calls on churches, governments and civil society to support Ukraine’s resistance to Russia’s aggression. The road to a future peace will not be easy. Churches, especially those currently divided according to political or regional alignment, contribute to the conflict and suffering and must seek to be peacemakers, agents of justice and truth, advocates of accountability and human rights.