

## Press release

Sibiu, 7th of September 2007

### Youth Statement of St. Maurice presented during the EEA3

Today, 7th of September 2007, three young women, Julia Maria Koszewska (Roman-Catholic, Poland), Petra Schnabel (Lutheran, Germany) and Jooa Vuorinen (Orthodox, Finland), presented the Youth Statement of St. Maurice which was written by 40 young delegates and stewards on their EEA3 preparatory meeting in St. Maurice, Switzerland and approved during a hearing of the young delegates during the Assembly.

The young delegates stressed the importance the Statement should be given to in the Assembly Message. Different delegates of the Assembly supported during the reactions on the official first draft of the Assembly message. The statement of the young delegates should be taken as a ideal example for the Assembly message. One of the delegates even announced: „We should take the Youth Statement as the Assembly Message.“

The statement of the young delegates avoids having only superficial, but stresses on concrete commitments the European churches should engage in. So, the young Christians ask for an inter-religious dialogue process, which shall come to a similar result to the *Charta Oecumenica*, asking for the churches' engagement for the establishing of an European Peace Agency and name the protection of Human Rights as one of the main tasks of churches. Particular importance is laid on the evaluation and further implementation of the results of the EEA2 in Graz 1997 and especially of the *Charta Oecumenica*.

For interviews and questions, please contact:

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Or just ask us. We are the people with the yellow caps ☺

## Appendix – The Youth Statement of the EEA3

**Statement of young delegates from all over Europe to the Third European Ecumenical Assembly (EEA3) agreed on during the young delegates' meeting from the 27th-30<sup>th</sup> of July 2007, St. Maurice, Switzerland, and during the young delegates' hearing at the EEA3 on the 5th of September 2007.**

The young *oikoumene* stands for the living renewal of the conciliary process for justice, peace and the integrity of the creation. The results of the EEA2 (Graz, 1997) have to be implemented and further reflected upon during the EEA3 and the *Charta Oecumenica* taken as basis. Therefore, we recommend the following commitments to the delegates.

### **Unity**

Unity does not mean uniformity, but can exist as unity in diversity. We commit ourselves to meet other denominations and traditions with open minds and hearts. One example is the Ecumenical Youth Movement, which unites young people of all denominations in the following of Jesus Christ. These young women and men are not the future of the churches, but their present.

### **Spirituality**

We acknowledge spirituality as expression of faith in all its varieties. We commit ourselves to step into an open dialogue of equal partners with respects to spirituality, taking into account that not only for young people the variety of spiritual life is an important pillar of faith.

### **Witness**

We ask churches to stop competing among themselves and start truly living the Gospel. For we do not witness to the power dynamics of our churches but to Christ.

We engage ourselves not to focus on controversy between verbal and non-verbal witness: action and word should go hand in hand.

### **Europe**

Every person is created by God and as such has dignity and value. Thus, we insist that European churches and European states stand up for the protection of Human Rights. This is the basis for shaping a Europe according to the needs of the people.

### **Migration**

Migration is a fact that has to be acknowledged and met with the idea of human dignity, hospitality and the right of free movement. But mobility and the freedom of movement have remained a privilege for people from EU countries. We engage ourselves to oppose the barriers (restrictions of visa, social difference and financial limits) for people from EU-countries and Non-EU-countries and to enable and promote an equal, ecumenical and European dialogue.

### **Religions**

Diversity of religions has shaped the coexistence of humans in Europe. We commit ourselves to take Sibiu as a starting point of a renewed inter-religious dialogue. The outcome of this process shall be marked by a common declaration similar to the *Charta Oecumenica*.

### **Creation**

God is the creator of the world we live in and are part of. But instead of living responsibly, we – by an unsustainable lifestyle – contribute to environmental disastrous developments, such as climate change.

We commit ourselves to rethinking our lifestyle in accordance with the biblical witness. This has to be done by concrete steps, such as buying fair-trade products, using renewable energies, reducing our carbon emissions and changing our consumption pattern to a sustainable scenario.

### **Peace**

Peace is not a simple notion – it can be lived on personal level, on the church level and in relationship among churches and governments. Peace is primary about personal attitude: if our soul is not peaceful, we cannot achieve peace with the others.

We commit ourselves to address the silently supported weapon trading and to permanent lobby against weapon producing companies. As counterpart of the European Military Agency we demand the establishing of a European Peace Agency.

### **Justice**

As parts of society the churches are also part of systems of injustice.

We commit ourselves to address the demands and needs of our neighbours to more justice all over the world, to plead loudly against oppressive migration policies and the supremacy of the industrialized countries in the global interaction, promote equal chances of education for every man and woman as foundation of empowerment.

**We stress to truly pursue and work on the follow-up and implementation of these commitments as an obligation to ourselves, the delegates of the EEA3 and the churches' decision taking bodies. This not only represents the precondition for the motivation and further work of young ecumenists, but marks the trustworthiness of the ecumenical movement.**