Brussels, 29.9.2026

Subject: A faith-based appeal for European leadership at COP31

To President von der Leyen, Vice President Ribera, Climate Commissioner Hoekstra and Chair of the EP delegation to COP31,

This summer, Europe has experienced the climate crisis more ferociously than ever before. Heatwaves and wildfires swept across France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Croatia, Germany, Portugal, Belgium and the Netherlands, taking tens of thousands of lives and forcing hundreds of thousands from their homes. This is a foretaste of what our sisters and brothers in the Global South have endured for years. Nepal's catastrophic floods and landslides this year, which killed thousands, are only the most recent tragedy born of our collective inaction. As Pope Leo XIV has said: "*Creation is crying out in floods, droughts, storms and relentless heat... One in three people live in great vulnerability because of these climate changes. To them, climate change is not a distant threat, and to ignore these people is to deny our shared humanity.*"

COP31 in Antalya is widely described as an implementation COP: the year the mechanisms previously agreed — the Global Goal on Adaptation, the Loss and Damage Fund, the Belém-Antalya Mechanism for a just transition away from fossil fuels — must move from pledges to reality, or risk becoming empty promises. The decisions you take at COP31 will also reflect the authenticity of your commitment to today's most vulnerable communities, young people and to future generations. As Pope Francis poignantly reminded us: "*Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded*" (Laudato Si' 13).

Building on our previous COP29 and COP30 letters, together with faith-based organisations across Europe, we, the European Laudato Si' Alliance (ELSiA), ask for your deepest commitment to action during COP31, at a moment when global leadership is needed more than ever. In continuity with the "*Europe, Be Faithful for Our Common Home*" campaign supported by 170 Christian organisations, we ask you not to allow the EU's ambition on climate action to be weakened by short-term responses to the many interconnected global crises, but instead to remain faithful to the EU's founding principles and lead by example in protecting the most vulnerable and our Common Home.

We ask the European Union to bring the following four commitments to COP31:

1. Accelerate fossil fuel phase out and renewables-based electrification

Belém saw calls for a fossil fuel roadmap blocked, despite pressure from dozens of countries including the EU. Aligning with Pope Francis's call for "*efficient, obligatory and easily monitored*"

elimination of fossil fuels, we ask you to champion the Belém/Santa Marta fossil-phase-out roadmap as an ongoing process rather than a one-off report; adopt a binding EU roadmap to phase out fossil fuels — coal by 2030, gas by 2035, oil by 2040; end fossil fuel subsidies and new exploration permits; and ensure EU-backed finance, including the European Investment Bank, fully exits fossil fuel support.

The COP Presidency's proposed 35% electrification target by 2035 could be an important step towards fossil fuel phase-out, if explicitly tied to renewable sources and to the Just Transition processes. Otherwise, it risks becoming a technical substitute for the ecological conversion this moment asks of us, rather than an important part of the solution. It is critical that electrification is based on energy efficiency and renewables, and does not increase fossil fuel dependence or extractivism.

Fundamentally, sufficiency must become central to EU policies by lowering overall energy demand and meeting real needs, rather than fuelling unjust and unsustainable consumption.

2. Secure a just transition agenda anchored in the next EU budget (MFF)

A just transition must leave no one behind and identify those most at risk both locally and globally: workers in fossil fuel-dependent sectors, vulnerable households, marginalised communities and Indigenous peoples. COP31 should build on progress made at the SB64 UNFCCC talks in Bonn and deliver a strong Just Transition Mechanism (JTM). The Belém-Antalya Mechanism represented a significant step forward in embedding justice and rights into climate action. To ensure it is more than symbolic, the EU must support its operationalisation, including economic diversification, support for training and reskilling, and the integration of just transition principles into national climate plans, rooted in the polluter pays principle and 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities'.

A just transition agenda must also be coherent at home. Therefore, we urge the EU to prioritise funding for a socially just transition within the next EU budget - specifically, by raising the climate and environment spending target from the current 35% to 50% (35% for climate and 15% for biodiversity), and strictly applying and enforcing the ‘do no significant harm’ principle.

3. Deliver on climate finance based on the needs of the most vulnerable countries

The EU has repeatedly pledged to support the most vulnerable, yet these pledges have too often fallen short. We ask the EU and its member states to come to COP31 with concrete new multi-annual pledges toward the NCQG (New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance); to close the adaptation gap by tripling adaptation finance by 2035; to urgently replenish the Loss and Damage Fund, now entering its first phase of disbursement, to meet the growing needs of affected and displaced communities; all prioritising grant-based finance over loans, so as not to deepen the debt burdens of low- and middle-income countries. It is time to move beyond words to action, and ensure that climate finance translates into genuine support for those who need it most.

The EU has shown ambition in setting a binding 2040 climate target. At the same time, measures such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) raise important questions about coherence. An approach centred mainly on mobilising private capital, while asking developing countries to meet EU-comparable standards, risks straining the trust those measures depend on. A credible climate-trade agenda — ambitious at home, and backed by genuine public finance abroad — would strengthen, not weaken, the EU's position at COP31.

4. Set clear goals to build global food systems focused on food sovereignty and agroecology

Food systems account for roughly one third of global greenhouse gas emissions, and the nutrition of half of humanity is already at risk from climate shocks. Yet they receive less than 3% of public climate finance and discussions on food transition are still at a deadlock. While the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Agriculture and Food Security is due to conclude at COP31, SB64 deferred all of the key decisions. We ask the EU to support a time-bound, implementation-centred outcome rather than delaying action with a further procedural extension.

We urge the EU to champion agroecology as a just and ecological response to the climate crisis — domestically, through clear food-sovereignty and agroecology goals within CAP reform, and globally, by advocating for agroecology's explicit recognition as the central approach to transforming food systems, redirecting climate finance accordingly, and integrating it into the Just Transition Mechanism, so that no community is left behind.

A shared responsibility

As bishops from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean wrote ahead of COP30: "*The urgency of this moment leaves no room for delays, compromises or half-measures.*" We share that conviction — and we echo it: many of our organisations and partners are rooted in communities across the Global South, and in solidarity with them, we ask you to carry this conviction to Antalya. We remain ready to accompany your work — in the discernment it requires and the decisions it demands — ahead of COP31.

Yours sincerely,

The undersigned organisations

The eight European Laudato Si' Alliance (ELSiA) members:

Caritas Europa	**CIDSE**	**Don Bosco International**	**JESC**
Justice & Peace Europe	**Laudato Si' Movement**	**New Humanity NGO**	**Pax Christi International**

The signatories of the Europe, Be Faithful to Our Common Home campaign:

JRS Europe	European Christian Environmental Network	WCCM (World Community for Christian	Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES), Society

	(ECEN)	Meditation)	of Jesus (Jesuits)
International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs (ICMICA-MIIC) - Pax Romana	EcoOne (Focolare Movement)	Integral Ecology Department, Spanish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Spain	Secours Catholique-Caritas France, France
FOCSIV, Italy	Cordaid, Netherlands	KOO, Austria	FEC - Faith and Cooperation Foundation, Portugal
Broederlijk Delen, Belgium	Caritas Finland, Finland	Caritas Sverige, Sweden	Evangelical-Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania
Union of Major Superiors of Italy (USMI), Italy	Association of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI), Ireland	PAX, Netherlands	Rede Cuidar da Casa Comum (Caring for Our Common Home Network), Portugal
National Commission for Justice and Peace, Portugal	Justice and Peace Commission Greece, Greece	Justice and Peace Denmark, Denmark	Jesuit Central European Province (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Lithuania and Latvia)
Euro-Mediterranean Province of the Jesuits (Italy, Malta and Romania)	Jesuits in the European Low Countries (Flanders/Belgium and the Netherlands)	Irish Province of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), Ireland	Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, Ireland
Misean Cara, Ireland	Community of the Diaconate in Italy, Italy	AGESCI - Association of Italian Catholic Guides and Scouts, Italy	Christian Associations of Italian Workers (ACLI), Italy
International ACLI Federation, Italy	Italian Catholic Scout Movement for Adults (MASCI), Italy	VIS - International Volunteering for Development, Italy	Fondazione Lanza, Italy
Aggiornamenti Sociali, Italy	Scalabrinian Foundation, Italy	Pax Christi Italy, Italy	French Province of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans), France
Franciscan Friars (Order of Friars Minor) - France and Belgium Province	Salesians Ireland, Ireland	Dominican Sisters Cabra, Ireland	Presentation Sisters in Ireland, Ireland
Medical Missionaries of Mary, Ireland	Sisters of St John of God, Ireland	Congregation of Sisters of Bon Secours, Ireland	Montfort Missionaries, Italy
Missionary Community of	Xavières Missionaries of	Sainte-Marie de la	JPIC Network of the

Villaregia, Italy	Christ Jesus, France	Pierre-qui-Vire Abbey, France	Congregation of Jesus (CJ), Spain
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Hub of the Vedruna Province Europe, Spain and Italy	Église Verte, France	Lutte et Contemplation, France	Chrétiens Unis pour la Terre, France
Christliche Initiative Klimagerechtigkeit, Germany	Christians for Future, Germany	Laudato Si' Alliantie Nederland, Netherlands	Laudato Si' Intercultural Association, Luxembourg
Justícia i Pau Barcelona (Justice and Peace Barcelona), Spain	Integral Ecology Delegation, Archdiocese of Zaragoza, Spain	Diocesan Secretariat for the Care of Creation, Diocese of Córdoba, Spain	Diocesan Commission for Integral Ecology, Diocese of Vitoria, Spain
Christian Life Community (CVX Italy), Italy	Action Catholique des Milieux Indépendants (ACI), France	Missionsprokur St. Gabriel International of the Steyler Missionaries, Austria	Ukama Centre Nuremberg, Germany
Žít Laudato si' Česká republika, Czech Republic	Economy of Francesco France Hub, France	Centre for Research and Social Action (CERAS), France	Centre Hélène et Jean Bastaire, France
Laudato Si' Navarra-Nafarroa, Spain	Eco-social Platform Laudato Si' Málaga, Spain	Les Poissons Roses, France	Baptisés du Grand Paris, France
CVX (CLC) in the Gulf of Lion, France			

Notes and key references

The European Laudato Si' Alliance (ELSiA) is a network of Catholic organisations working together to bring the encyclical letter Laudato Si' to life. Founded in 2019, it is currently composed of eight members. They are: Caritas Europa, CIDSE, Don Bosco International, Jesuit European Social Centre, Justice and Peace Europe, Laudato Si' Movement, New Humanity NGO (Focolare), Pax Christi International, and COMECE as an observer. ELSiA intends to promote ecological justice and the social teaching of the Church as a shared and coordinated commitment of Catholic Alliances.

Catholic Episcopal Conferences and Councils of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean on the Occasion of COP30: *A call for climate justice and the Common Home: Ecological conversion, transformation and resistance to false solutions*, June 2025, available at: https://secam.org/wp-content/uploads/ENG_The-Churches-Global-South-on-ocassion-of-COP30-1.pdf

Laudato Si' Movement, "*Europe, Be Faithful for Our Common Home"*, May 2026, available at: https://laudatosimovement.org/eubefaithful/

Pope Leo, Address to bishops and cardinals of the Global South participating in COP30, 17 November 2025, available at: https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-11/pope-leo-xiv-videomessage-cop30-amazon-global-south-bishops.html

Pope Francis, *Laudate Deum* 59, 2023, available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html

