



**EFECW**

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN  
FORUM OECUMENIQUE DE FEMMES CHRETIENNES D'EUROPE  
ÖKUMENISCHES FORUM CHRISTLICHER FRAUEN IN EUROPA

## **XIth General Assembly 5-9 August 2022, Strasbourg, France**

### **Message**

***Hope and Responsibility: « ...always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope that you have» (1 Peter 3,15)***

In the year of the 40th anniversary of the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women the XI General Assembly was held at C.I.A.R.U.S, Strasbourg, France. More than 80 participants, including over 20 young women, from 24 countries and all Christian traditions came together to share in prayer, fellowship, discussion and worship on the theme of “Hope and Responsibility”. We thank the women of the French Forum for their hospitality and their efforts in organising this event.

This was the first meeting to take place in person since the Covid pandemic, and against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine. Even though Covid-19 had impacted our work and lives, it had not stopped us from moving forward and communicating with one another. We were glad to celebrate that we could now see and connect with each other face to face after so many virtual sessions. The presence of our sisters from Ukraine, who were able to join us, despite the war in their country, was very emotional and touched us all.

A highlight of the General Assembly was a visit to the Palais de l'Europe, where we were received by Ambassador Marie Fontanelle, Permanent Representative of France to the Council of Europe. She spoke about human and women's rights, the ongoing work of the Council with the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) and the work of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) through the evaluation national reports.

As well as celebrating the past 40 years we took time to look ahead, so as to ensure we go forward sustainably, and continue the witness of the Forum across Europe in years to come. We identified our immediate priorities for the next four years.

We committed to speaking out with Hope and Responsibility:

*In the world:*

- Against harassment, abuse, rape, torture and violence against women in general and especially as a weapon of war.
- Against domestic violence.
- In support of equality, justice and peace.
- For the protection of human rights for all.
- About the contribution of women to peace-building.



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- For the care of the environment and the promotion of climate justice
- To affirm the importance of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue.
- To empower and to encourage women to nurture and enrich their spirituality rooted in the Bible.

### *In the EFECW*

- To increase the visibility of the EFECW in churches, ecumenical organisations and societies.
- To achieve the recognition and meaningful participation of women within our churches.
- By developing and supporting projects that contribute to the social, political and economic empowerment of women.
- By welcoming diversity through involving women of different generations, cultures, ethnicities, gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as women with disabilities.
- To ensure the voices of migrant and refugee women are heard and present among us.
- By re-launching Charta Oecumenica as a sign of hope (signed in Strasbourg in 2001).

The Forum has an important and distinctive witness within the life of our churches and in society. The new Coordinating Committee, elected at the General Assembly, is entrusted to develop an action plan to ensure the sustainability and renewal of the Forum.

The new Co-ordinating Committee is composed of:

#### **Co-Presidents**

Marijana Ajzenkol, Serbia, Roman Catholic

Marianna Apresyan, Armenia, Armenian Apostolic Church (Eastern Orthodox)

Carin Gardbring, Sweden, Lutheran

#### **Coordinating Committee Members**

Jelena Ljubenočić, Serbia, Orthodox

Anthea Sully, UK-England, Methodist

Iudita Etelca Vincze, Romania, Reformed

Hannah Wehner, Germany, Lutheran

We are brought together as women of faith through God's Spirit. Renewed by our gathering, may we witness to the Hope of Christ within us.

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Email: [info@efecw.net](mailto:info@efecw.net) - website: [www.efecw.net](http://www.efecw.net)

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