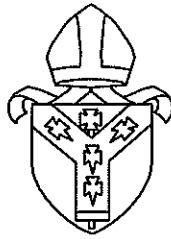


Evangelische Kirche  
in Deutschland

Vorsitzender des Rates



Archbishop  
of Canterbury



THE ARCHBISHOP  
CHURCH OF SWEDEN

HE Nicholas Sarkozy  
President of the Council of the European Union  
Council of the European Union  
Rue de la Loi  
175 B-1048 Brussels  
Belgium

8<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Your Excellency,

Drawing on our trust in God, creator of heaven and earth, and on a living faith in Christ, we call upon our governments to strengthen their commitment to addressing the challenge of climate change, a challenge which threatens the flourishing of the world, which is the theatre of God's redemptive glory. We write to you ahead of the European Summit, 11-12 December 2008, to urge you to ensure that climate considerations are not marginalised in the search to find short and medium term solutions to immediate economic pressures.

When governments announced the EU's climate ambitions in March 2007, we welcomed the international leadership that the EU was providing, even if we felt that the emissions reductions targets were not sufficiently aligned with the prevailing scientific evidence. We also welcomed the European Commission's January 2008 climate change package as a clear signal of the EU's intent to deliver on these promises, even if we have subsequently pressed for certain elements to be strengthened.

The final legislative package to be agreed in December needs to be judged from the perspective of environmental effectiveness and the degree to which it can stimulate the innovation necessary to achieve the transition to a low carbon and sustainable economy. This transition needs to be grounded in a shared understanding of social justice and environmental integrity. This necessitates recognising explicitly the interconnection and interdependence of God's creation, demonstrated by humanity's relationship with the environment.

A successful outcome to these negotiations is a prerequisite to a robust and equitable post-2012 settlement in Copenhagen, December 2009. This is perceptible in the course of the currently ongoing COP-14 negotiations in Poznan. Through conversations with our partner churches from around the world, many of whom are experiencing the pressing realities of climate change on a daily basis, we are conscious that Europe's progress is being closely monitored. The outcome of these negotiations will be crucial if the ambitions of governments and societies such as the US, China and India are to be raised. We are concerned, therefore, that as the global climate negotiations approach a critical moment, Europe appears to be using the current financial and economic crisis to modify key elements in its own climate package.

Herrenhäuser Straße 12  
30419 Hannover  
Germany

Lambeth Palace  
London SE1 7JU  
United Kingdom

Sysslomansgatan 4  
751 70 Uppsala  
Sweden

We are worried that several governments want to increase yet further the quantity of carbon credits that they are allowed to buy from developing countries, as an alternative to making actual cuts in their own greenhouse gas emissions. We believe that these credits would only cancel out increases in EU emissions; they would not result in a net reduction in global emissions. Access to external carbon credits needs to supplement rather than supplant cuts in domestic emissions. Unless the EU can signal its intent to drastically cut its carbon emissions through purposeful domestic action, it is difficult to see how it can persuade developing and emerging economies to stabilise, and in time, reduce their own emissions.

How the European Council resolves this issue, will be seen by many as a tipping point in the EU's understanding of, and commitment to the idea of sustainable development. The challenge of resuscitating economic growth cannot be treated in isolation from the challenges of promoting sustainable development. The choice is not between economic growth and environmental protection. The work of eco-justice (*eco*-logical and *eco*-nomic) is one work. Our economic and environmental fortunes are inextricably linked. Working sustainably for the global common good and respecting the integrity of God's creation are not alternatives – they are one and the same. To think and act otherwise is neither 'common' nor 'good'.

We now know that global economic growth over the past 50 years has been accompanied by accelerated environmental decline and climate stress. The financial, food and fuel crisis of 2008 strongly suggest that the dominant economic models of the twentieth century have their limitations when viewed in and from a global perspective. Learning to live within our planet's means is the new challenge and we must approach it with a sense of realism, a sense of justice and a sober assessment of the legacy we are creating for our children's children.

We support the analysis underpinning the United Nations Environment Programme's *Global Green New Deal* initiative launched in October 2008. Re-focusing the global economy towards investments in clean technologies and natural infrastructure such as forests and soils offers the most promising options for real and sustainable growth: combating climate change and triggering an employment boom in the 21st Century. The supposition that environmental protection yields significant economic benefits, as well as ecological gains, is substantiated by Europe's own emerging green economy, which, according to the European Commission (January 2008), currently boasts a 227 billion Euro turnover with 3.4 million jobs.

The current financial crisis and economic recession represent less a threat and more a historic opportunity to bring about tomorrow's low carbon economy today. We are encouraged that US President-elect Barack Obama has responded to this challenge by pledging to invest \$75 billion to create 5 million new 'green collar' jobs by 2020 as part of a wider package of measures on climate change. Although this pledge has yet to be realised, Europe's leaders must not retreat from taking similar action.

We understand that agreement has yet to be reached as to how the substantial revenues to be accrued from the auctioning of emissions permits under a reformed Emissions Trading Scheme should be allocated or managed. The conclusion of that negotiation must enhance the EU's credibility and effectiveness. We suggest that revenues should be used to drive Europe's decarbonisation and to support mitigation and adaption measures internationally, not least in the developing world. In this respect, it is imperative that Europe's own low carbon transition empowers the development of many of the poorest countries rather than contributing to their further marginalisation.

We recognise that the challenges facing the European Summit when it meets in Brussels will be immense. Meeting the imperatives of competitiveness and climate change will require a radical change in economic modelling and in the ways in which we think of economic growth. With European public opinion consistently placing climate change at, or close to the top of its priorities, we believe that this is change that people can believe in and support.

Please be assured that you and other Heads of Government will be in our thoughts and prayers at this critical juncture.

Wolfgang Huber + Rowan Cantuar: + Anders Wejryd .

Bishop Dr Wolfgang Huber  
Chairman  
EKD Council

The Most Revd and Rt Hon  
Dr Rowan Williams  
Archbishop of Canterbury

The Most Revd  
Anders Wejryd  
Archbishop of the Church of  
Sweden

cc: Dr Angela Merkel, Federal Chancellor of Germany  
The Rt Hon Gordon Brown, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom  
The Hon Mr Fredrik Reinfeldt, Prime Minister of Sweden  
HE José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission

