**Pilgrimage of Climate Justice
to the 21st United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, 2015**

**Initiator:** Climate of Justice – A platform for climate and development promoted by churches, mission agencies and development services

**Responsible body:** An alliance, consisting of “Platform for Climate and Development” members and other partners of the ecumenical community in Germany and France

**Time Frame:** 13th of September, 2015 - 28th of November, 2015; eleven weeks

Route/ Distance: Flensburg - Paris (ca. 1,350 km), the route follows the old pilgrimage "Via Baltica"; daily section of the route = about 20 km; a second rout coming from the south of Germany will be developed

**Thoughts about the pilgrimage:**

Taking up the impulse of the World Council of Churches, the alliance invites to join the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace to Paris, from September till November 2015. The pilgrimage will be divided into 11 sections, offering the opportunity to join for single sections, being part of the whole at the same time. Together, we will visit places of power and points of pain for climate justice. Spiritual impulses and encounters make it possible to experience the pilgrimage as a community. Furthermore people on site can be involved through workshops and actions on climate justice.

The "Pilgrimage to Paris" is inviting interested groups, regardless if they walk on the route or if they will come from other directions, joining the pilgrimage at a certain place of the route. B groups will have to organize themselves, as the main organization will not take responsibility outside the fixed sections of the pilgrimage.

**Goals:**

1. We support and follow the call of the 10th general assembly of the World Council of Churches and invite everyone to join in a "Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace", which focuses on climate justice. By means of this pilgrimage to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, 2015, we want to stress the public debate concerning issues of justice (distributive justice; equalization of burdens) and highlight the global dimensions of climate change. By bringing experiential reports and voices of the global south into prominence, we seek to raise the urgently needed awareness that our political as well as our individual actions have significant impacts on societies in the global south.
2. "Option for the Poor" is the core of the biblical understanding of justice. Out of this understanding, we are obliged to raise our voices for the weakest and most vulnerable of our global community. Because “The victims of climate change represent the new expression of the poor, the widows and strangers, those for whom especially the love of god applies." (Minute on Climate Justice Busan; referring to Deuteronomy 10: 17-18).
3. The idea of the pilgrimage offers the opportunity to go on one's way together with different people and to sensitize people for climate justice. An effect on the general public is intended as well. Furthermore, as many supporters as possible shall be won to support a list of demands, which is making a clear statement about the level of expectations of the World Community of Churches and the Ecumenical Movement regarding the Climate Change Conference in Paris and beyond. This list of demands is supposed to be handed over in Paris at a central place.
4. The existing engagement of single groups or initiatives for the purpose of climate justice shall be made visible and tangible. On our path, we want to visit so called “points of power”, examples of best practice in terms of climate protection, through which we will highlight alternative options for action and encourage to create new engagement. At the same time, the points of pain are supposed to be pointed out, where great efforts as well as political guidance are still needed, which we as actors can influence.
5. Another goal and guessed outcome is to create a network of church and non-church organizations on the topic of climate justice along the pilgrimage to Paris.

**Target group:**

The pilgrimage is an ecumenical action. The main target group are people of church and municipal communities, in order to make them aware about the issues of climate justice in their concrete contexts. At the same time we hope for co-operations with all those who are fighting for climate justice (environmental groups, people engaged in development cooperation, One-World-networks, member churches of the ACK, youth groups etc.)

**Concept:**

* For the overall organization and coordination, as well as public relations work a staff member working at a coordination workplace will start her work soon in autumn 2014. We also recommend creating a part time workplace for PR and another part time workplace for developing the southern route in Germany.
* From the very first start, there will be a close co-operation with the project officer for pilgrimage of the Evangelical Church in Germany.
* The main path of the pilgrimage will lead through Germany, in order to relief the organization of the alliance.
* The route will be divided into twelve weekly sections, each with a maximum length of about 20 km per day. The responsibility is with each section-coordination
* There will be a kind of "baton", an element or symbol, which will be handed over from one group of pilgrims to the next. Another idea is to have many small pieces, which in the end evolve to a whole. A first idea is to design sheets of each section, e.g. about climate justice, with positive messages on it etc. Those could be used to guide the way to the conference centre, or could be placed at a central place in Paris.
* Each section should be divided into 4 to 5 days of pilgrimage, followed by 2 to 3 days to rest with time for workshops and actions. The different sections should start on Fridays or Saturdays, to allow the participation of as many people as possible.
* The maximum daily length of 20km is oriented to the pilgrimage by foot, but it is possible to use other climate friendly means of transportation as well.
* For each section of the pilgrimage another group will be responsible (section coordination). The team composition in each section in Germany will be organized through the specific members of the climate-platform with regard to their location. An overview of the different sections and regional church districts is attached to the basic planning document.
* To organize the different sections in France, a close co-operation with the local churches, their institutions and orders, Christian youth organizations and others will be indispensable. They will have to be organized through the members of the climate platform and their partnership networks, as well as through the support of the development services or dioceses.
* For the design of spiritual contents, agendas and actions, materials will be produced (as there are banners or roll-ups) together with members of the alliance.
* A minibus, if possible donated (for instance by a producer of electric cars), will be available during the whole pilgrimage for the transport of materials and luggage
* To prepare a section, the following persons could be involved:
* a pastor of pilgrimage or the regional responsible officer (recommendation on paths to go, taking part in the development of spiritual inputs)
* the responsible ones with regard to content for each section (e.g. organizing visits at places of pain)
* the responsible ones in terms of logistic (organization of climate friendly food
* on the route segments, organization of roosts, accompaniment of the group by the minibus, preparing of actions)
* representatives of the hosting churches or congregations on each section
* the persons responsible for public relations (contact to local media, publishing articles, agenda-setting, photos)
* The pilgrimage will start on Sunday, 13th September with a great service in Flensburg, followed by an opening action. The service will be planned by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany, together with ecumenical partners
* The arrival of a group of pilgrims, coming from the North would be desirable. They would hand over the "baton" to the group of pilgrims in Flensburg (maybe a concrete result out of the climate negotiations in Copenhagen, smoothening the way for a climate resolution in Paris).
* From the 13th September till the 21st, the consultation of churches and their partners from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany will take place. The participants will take part in preparing and planning of the opening service.
* There will be a great closing event (e.g. closing service) in France, where the "baton" or another symbol will be handed over. In order to organize this event, there will be an additional group, consisting of members of the climate-platform, churches and institutions in France as well as other partners. Furthermore, this event ought to be planned with great attention to the actions of other NGOs and climate networks (CAN - climate action network). The Act Alliance will be part of organizing the last step of the pilgrimage.
* There might be a conference, organized by the European Conference of Churches (KEK), European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) and the Council of European Bishop's Conferences, at the same time.

**Financing**

Bread for the World and Misereor have agreed on financing a big part of the personnel costs for 2 coordinators and a part time position for communication of the project. Different church district and dioceses, aid organizations and mission agencies have added financial support.

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