



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

Department for Planning
and Operations

lutheranworld.org

STATEMENT ON EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF LATVIA AND LWF COMMUNION RELATIONS

12 August 2021

GENEVA, Switzerland

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has received the news that the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia (ELCL) has decided to join the International Lutheran Council (ILC).

Acknowledging the right of the LWF member churches to make decisions about their affiliations, the LWF is concerned about this particular decision and its implications on ELCL's ongoing participation in the life of the communion.

The LWF and its 148 member churches share a theological self-understanding that is rooted in Holy Scriptures, the confessions of the Lutheran Church, particularly the Ecumenical Creeds, Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism.

Communion relations, expressed in joint worship and common witness in the world, are a gift, before being a task. United around the gospel of God's gift of justification by grace through faith, LWF member churches embrace diversity as they jointly witness to Christ. They seek to include each other, dealing with differences while jointly articulating the gospel message of Christ for the present time, and supporting each other for vibrant witness to this message in their respective contexts.

Membership criteria in the ILC subject churches to a set of theological principles, commitments, and practices. Several of these are at odds with what LWF member churches hold in common.

The LWF has reached out to the leadership of the ELCL to understand how it sees its ongoing relationship with the LWF as a communion of churches. Dialogue is required to find out how the ELCL intends to remain in communion, given its recent decision, or whether the policy positions required by its membership in ILC will force the church to make choices about its current ecclesial relations.

The Lutheran World Federation is a global communion of 148 churches in the Lutheran tradition, representing over 77.8 million Christians in 99 countries. The LWF acts on behalf of its member churches in areas of ecumenical and interfaith relations, theology, humanitarian assistance, human rights, communication and the various aspects of mission and development.

###

Visit our website: www.lutheranworld.org. Follow the LWF on www.facebook.com/lutheranworld and www.twitter.com/lutheranworld.